

Environmental Improvements

IDEM Programs Help Businesses, Communities

By Rick Bossingham

In the face of an ever-changing economy, new and established businesses have abundant resources available to support them in the Hoosier state. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) works in many ways to assist businesses with reducing or eliminating unnecessary waste, implementing environmental innovations that can increase their sustainability, and improving environmental performance and compliance.

Not only do businesses and communities help protect Hoosiers and our environment when they understand, achieve and exceed environmental responsibilities, pollution prevention reduces operational costs and saves money in the long run. Through the following programs and initiatives managed by IDEM's Office of Pollution Prevention and Technical Assistance (OPPTA), businesses and communities can find free, confidential compliance assistance, free technical assistance on pollution prevention, incentives and recognition for extraordinary environmental performance, and connections with other companies and organizations eager to share beneficial information and experience.

The **Compliance & Technical Assistance Program** (CTAP) is a free, confidential effort designed to help Hoosier businesses understand and meet their environmental responsibilities. CTAP is a non-regulatory division of IDEM, which means CTAP staff will never issue a violation, fee or permit. CTAP staff members are legally obligated to keep information confidential and assist Indiana businesses through onsite consultations, permit application assistance, training and workshops, online resources and general information assistance via telephone. CTAP offers a Quality Assurance Guarantee, which assures customers that IDEM will not issue a Notice of Violation assessing a gravity-based penalty against a regulated entity that has sought out, received and relied upon CTAP's written compliance assistance prior to the alleged violation.

Reducing and eliminating waste is one way to make business greener, and OPPTA provides confidential pollution prevention assistance. A **Pollution Prevention Opportunity Assessment** can help Indiana businesses identify money-saving improvements by lowering operating expenses, using fewer raw materials, conserving energy, decreasing wastes and emissions, meeting and reducing regulatory requirements, and improving employee safety, as well as projecting a positive company image. Upon request, a pollution prevention engineer will tour facilities and identify opportunities to substitute for hazardous chemicals, trim energy use and implement more efficient work practices.

The Indiana **Partners for Pollution Prevention** (Partners) is an organization comprised of Indiana industries and businesses that are interested in pollution prevention, as well as the financial and environmental benefits pollution prevention projects can bring. The Partners provide a forum in which Indiana businesses can network and exchange ideas about pollution prevention and other innovative efforts and discuss how pollution prevention

fits into current and future IDEM programs. The Partners realize that pollution prevention is the arena in which the environment and economics can meet on common ground.

IDEM wants to recognize those organizations that exceed regulatory requirements. The **Indiana Environmental Stewardship Program** (ESP) is a voluntary, performance-based leadership program designed to recognize and reward Indiana businesses for going above and beyond current environmental regulations. Indiana businesses are recognized as ESP members after implementing an environmental management system and committing to continual environmental improvement by implementing pollution prevention and source reduction activities. In return for exemplary environmental performance, members receive incentives from IDEM. These include regulatory flexibility, public recognition and networking opportunities.

The **Indiana CLEAN Community Challenge** helps communities identify and address their environmental impacts in order to improve efficiency of government services and the quality of life for residents. The Challenge is designed to be flexible – local governments implement an environmental management system, called a Quality of Life Plan, and choose the activities that fit their community goals. The CLEAN Community Challenge program will assist local governments in the planning, development and implementation of a comprehensive Quality of Life Plan that moves them closer to a sustainable future.

OPPTA's **Source Reduction and Recycling Branch** provides local businesses technical support for recycling and use of recycled materials, waste reduction and proper management of other municipal solid wastes. Assistance includes site visits and reviews to assess waste management methods and oversight reviews to federal stimulus funding applicants who submitted plans for material conservation programs.

At IDEM, we protect Hoosiers and our environment, and OPPTA engages, facilitates and assists businesses and communities that have the same goal. We understand the ongoing challenges that Indiana businesses and communities face, which are magnified during these difficult economic times. That is why we invite you to work with us, and together we will show that thoughtful action can improve both the environment and the economy.



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INFORMATION LINK

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