



EMC News

February 5, 2003

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NNL FOR PESTICIDES COMMITTEE REPORT

Submitted by Stephen C. Nicholson

On January 31, Stephen Nicholson attended a meeting with members of the Tompkins County Health Department, Monika Roth of Cornell Co-op Extension, and the Bureau of Weights and Measures. Public education and enforcement responsibilities were discussed and assigned.

- CCE will field calls through their "Growline" at 272-2292 ext. 161.
- The EMC will help CCE revise brochures from Westchester County, and provide the Lawn/Landscape Industry with information and possibly a workshop at the Tompkins County Tax Assessment Office demonstrating the process for generating mailing addresses for neighbors of clients.
- The Bureau of Weights and Measures will monitor and enforce the required signage at all retail stores selling lawn care pesticides.
- The Health Department will write letters to all appropriate pesticide applicators in the area, and coordinate press releases and publications.

Several meetings at CCE are scheduled, with the EMC invited to help provide information:

February 25, "How to comply with NNL"- for the Lawn/Landscape Industry.

March 4, "Garden Center compliance for managers"- round table discussion.

March 25, "Understanding the NNL for Pesticides and Implications for Yard Care this Season"- for the public.

April 9, "Low Maintenance Lawn Care without Pesticides" - for the public.

MUNICIPAL REPORT - Town of Dryden

Submitted by Joyce Gerbasi

The NYS DOT is trying to relocate in Dryden. Due to the problems with the Intermunicipal Agreement, among others, the original site on Hanshaw Road will not be possible. This means that the site will probably be on Ellis Road, requiring an expansion of the water system from the Village of Dryden, and possible annexation of the land to the Village. There have been concerns from a nearby business as to the noise and appearance of the facility. There will be salt storage on site, which the state representatives assure us will be properly contained to avoid leaching in the area.

Red Mill Bridge - the possible solutions to maintaining this historic structure while still having a useful bridge were discussed by the ERC some time ago. We agreed (most of us) that the sensible solution was to build a new bridge and replace the outside frame so that the old bridge would still appear to be there. This was rejected by the State Office of Historic Preservation, who chose the option of retaining the bridge as is, and building a new adjoining one. The ERC had been very concerned over the environmental effects this would have on the adjoining land, which is marshy, as well the necessity of purchasing new land to run the road and bridge. There are also concerns that the bridge crosses a trout stream, and that maintenance to prevent the lead paint on the bridge from contaminating the creek will be needed. The town's suggestion of assistance to move the bridge to one of the town's walking trails has not been seriously considered.

There are still on-going battles which have led to law suits on what the town highway department has the right to do as far as cutting down trees and

ditching to improve the town roads. This is particularly volatile in situations where the road preceded the town, and is not officially deeded to the town. There have also been complaints that the traffic path has been too rigorously followed, leading to increases of land on one side of the road, and decreases on the other. All of this will be an issue for some time!

The Conservation Advisory Committee has finished its draft of the Open Space Inventory for the town, and will be presenting it to the planning committee in the near future. If the town board approves the draft, the committee is then eligible for status as a Conservation Advisory Board, which means that environmental issues must be offered to us for review.

There are no Municipal Reports scheduled for the March EMC News. The Towns of Caroline, Danby, and Dryden and the City of Ithaca will report in the April EMC News.

See you at the next EMC Meeting!
February 12, 2003

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS!

Reprinted with permission from The Ithaca Journal. The following editorial appeared in the January 15, 2003 issue of The Ithaca Journal by opinion editor Joseph Schwartz.

Few among us had an easy time understanding or choosing another electrical provider this fall and winter. For many area residents, the choice of numerous energy providers was too daunting and they choose to stick to the default option: NYSEG.

A group of local residents took this whole issue to another level by negotiating with NYSEG Solutions and forming their own local electrical cooperative. "We were told that we needed 100 subscribers to get group rates," said Danby resident Dan Klein, one of the people who helped found this group, whose formal name is "Co-opPlus Energy Cooperative of Central New York, Inc." Today, the group includes 149 households with 164 accounts stretching from Corning to Waterloo.

The cooperative became incorporated on Nov. 29, 2002, in Ithaca. Its founding directors include Klein, Kenny Christianson, Alison Christie, Heather McDaniel and Kirk Smith. In order to join, members must already have accounts within NYSEG's service area. Co-opPlus contracts with NYSEG Solutions for its power and made its first energy purchase on Jan. 6, 2003.

Aside from finding its members a better price for their electricity, the founders of Co-opPlus plan to seek more energy-efficient services and renewable energy sources for their electrical power.

We are impressed with this small cooperative's efforts for several reasons. Large businesses typically are the only power customers that can get better deals on energy due to the simple fact that they buy in bulk. Individual homeowners have virtually no market clout. A cooperative effort such as this elevates the buying power of even the smallest homeowner to that of a large commercial user.

Co-opPlus officials say that NYSEG Solutions is offering them a group rate that nets their members a savings of 5 percent to 10 percent below what subscribers are paying for the default NYSEG fixed-price service.

The cooperative's effort to eventually seek more efficiency and renewable sources also deserves praise. Today, renewable sources of electricity are not common in this region because it is easier to depend on traditional, fossil fuel or nuclear sources. A growing demand for cleaner, renewable sources would eventually create an economic incentive for change.

Co-opPlus Energy isn't the first local cooperative. Several years ago, Tompkins County officials teamed with other governments nearby to garner their own purchasing clout. But to our knowledge, Co-op Plus is the first energy cooperative created by and for local residents.

The cooperative is not finished growing and is still taking new members. According to Klein, the deadline for locking in current rates is April 30, 2003.

If you are interested in more information about the energy cooperative, contact Kenny Christianson at (607) 277-1566, or send a request via e-mail to: co-opplusenergy@yahoo.com.

We wish them the best of luck.