



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Release: Immediate
Date: January 29, 2001

Contact: Diana Kees, (919) 715-6515
Distribution: Targeted

Media Advisory

Environmental Management System Training in Gastonia Focuses on Strategies for Government Agencies

WHAT

Local, state and regional environmental and local government professionals will discuss the benefits of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) for North Carolina government agencies. Cities, counties, universities and state and federal agencies – from solid waste programs to wastewater treatment plants, from transportation services to laboratories – are beginning to use EMSs as an organizing tool to further management efficiency, enhance compliance responsibilities, reduce costs and boost their public image. Many federal agencies should be implementing EMSs in the coming months as a result of a presidential executive order.

An EMS is a tool that provides an organization with a method to systematically manage environmental activities, products and services and helps it achieve its environmental obligations and performance goals. A wide range of organizations, including manufacturers of electronics, automotive suppliers, utility companies, hotel chains and local government operations, have adopted EMSs. ISO 14001 is an international standard adopted in 1996 that many organizations use as a model for an EMS.

The workshop is sponsored by the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (DPPEA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The workshop will be held in Gastonia, the first city in North Carolina to move toward implementation of an EMS. The City of Burlington is also working toward putting its EMS into place.

WHEN/WHERE

Wednesday, Jan. 31, 8 a.m. - noon
Schiele Museum Auditorium, 1500 East Garrison Blvd., Gastonia

HIGHLIGHTS

Representatives of two municipalities who have implemented an EMS will be on hand to discuss the benefits and challenges of an EMS to government agencies. The City of Gastonia Wastewater Treatment Division began working with DENR in 1999 to develop and implement an EMS, which, with assistance from DPPEA, was designed according to the ISO 14001 standard and implemented in January 2000. A representative of the City of Charleston, S.C., will speak about its Commissioners of Public Works' June 1999 certification to ISO-14001. City departments that have been certified include the water treatment plant, wastewater collection, fleet vehicles, purchasing and customer service.

CONTACT

Beth Graves, DPPEA, (919) 715-6506/6500, beth.graves@ncmail.net.

###