Outreach training: Colorado style

by John McWilliams
NETCSC Contributing Writer

Editor’s Note: John McWilliams is an outreach trainer with the Environmental Training Center at Red Rocks Community College in Golden, Colorado. In this article he shares with E-train readers how Colorado’s outreach program helps bring small wastewater treatment facilities into compliance while providing outreach trainers with a sense of satisfaction.

Colorado has an assistance program that puts experienced wastewater treatment operators in contact with less experienced operators to assist in the improved operation of the state’s wastewater treatment plants. The Colorado State Outreach Program, funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through 104(g)(1) grants to Red Rocks Community College, has been very successful in helping to bring many rural and remote treatment facilities into compliance.

Through a statewide wastewater publication, the Environmental Training Center at Red Rocks Community College recruited 10 Class A state certified wastewater treatment operators to serve as outreach trainers for the program. These operators are contracted to perform a Comprehensive Performance Evaluation (CPE) on wastewater treatment facilities having operational problems. These facilities are usually recommended for the program by the Colorado Department of Health and Environment. The facilities typically serve communities that have design flows of 200,000 to 500,000 gallons per day.

Outreach trainers use the results of the CPE with “POTW EXPERT,” an EPA computer program, and Retrofitting POTWs, an EPA publication, to determine if a wastewater facility can be brought into compliance.

The program identifies one of three situations that most closely resembles a specific plant:
1. Type I: The performance of a CPE indicates that operational problems are caused by limitations in operation, maintenance, or administration. The desired performance levels of a facility usually can be achieved with assistance.
2. Type II: This situation indicates marginal performance on a CPE. Assistance is expected to result in limited improvement of major treatment processes.
3. Type III: This situation is indicated when a CPE shows that only a major construction project would improve the performance of major unit processes.

Fortunately, most of the facilities fall into the first two categories where assistance from an experienced outreach trainer may be enough to bring the system into compliance and, at the very least, improve process control.

After determining a plant’s status, outreach trainers then assist the facilities by implementing a Composite Correction Program (CCP). This program systematically approaches the problems identified in the CPE. In some cases, implementing a daily or weekly process control log sheet is enough to make the difference. In other cases, providing training manuals for operations and certification opportunities to district operators has improved the knowledge of wastewater treatment operators. Overall, personal contact with experienced operators has significantly helped utility personnel who are isolated in rural areas of the state.

As certified operators in both water and wastewater, my wife Deborah and I got involved with the outreach training through a long-term teaching association with the Environmental Training Center at Red Rocks Community College. The college receives approximately 10 grants each year that provide assistance to the entire state.

We are currently completing our fourth CPE in the San Luis Valley in southern Colorado. This area is a very large high-plains plateau bordered to the east by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. It is known locally as the “Land of the Blue Sky.” The people are mostly

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Program to help small communities in regulatory process

Small communities may soon have key concerns and potential areas of conflict addressed earlier in the regulatory process thanks to a pilot program known as the Small Communities Outreach Project for Environmental Issues (SCOPe).

Because small communities are often at a disadvantage in terms of resources, information, and ability to participate in the regulatory process, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) initiated this program to give small communities the chance to actively participate in rulemaking.

An advisory council has been selected to provide direction and contacts for the project and includes Richard Phalunas, Ed.D., representing the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities and its sister organizations, the National Small Flows Clearinghouse and the National Drinking Water Clearinghouse.

"The program's goal," says Phalunas, "is to inform communities about the rulemaking process and enable their input into the process at a time when an understanding of their problems, ideas, and solutions can have an impact."

According to SCOPe consultants, if small communities were better informed and participated in the early stages of regulatory development, regulators could find solutions earlier in the rulemaking process. Costly changes in later stages could be avoided. In time, SCOPe hopes the quality of life in small communities will improve as a result of its efforts.

NETCSC seeks partners for 1999 training deliveries

The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) is planning its 1999 training schedule and seeks partners to work with in providing training for those working in small communities.

By sharing the cost of a training offering, NETCSC will ensure that its environmental training programs reach a broad audience while helping organizations offer courses that address local needs.

NETCSC will assist organizations by bearing some of the costs for training offerings of one or more of its wastewater, drinking water, and solid waste curricula. These courses may be targeted toward meeting the needs of local officials, operators of environmental facilities, regulatory officials, small community consultants, and/or trainers and technical assistance providers.

Through a network of NASPAA schools, information will flow between small communities, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other interested parties. Competitively selected member schools will select approximately 12 to 20 communities to participate in SCOPe. After the communities are chosen, SCOPe will track regulatory developments on behalf of participating communities and explain EPA rules and regulations in an understandable manner. Selected institutions also will gather information from small communities and relay it back to SCOPe headquarters for evaluation.

SCOPe will eventually provide a larger audience with information about small communities, how those communities responded to the proposed regulations, and a collection of tested outreach models. At this time, SCOPe is a pilot project limited to communities in the southeastern U.S. with the expectation that the program will expand to other regions. However, no time frame has been established for implementing SCOPe nationally.

Participating communities will be chosen by the following member institutions: the Southern Center for Studies in Public Policy at Clark, Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia; the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; and the Institute for Public Affairs and Policy, College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina.

For more information about SCOPe, you may visit their Web site at www.naspaa.org or call (202) 628-8965.

E-train welcomes articles, letters to the editor, news items, photographs, or other materials for publication. Please address correspondence to: E-train Editor NETCSC West Virginia University P.O. Box 6064 Morgantown, WV 26506-6064 (800) 624-8301 (304) 293-4191 www.netc.wvu.edu

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U.S.-Mexico group seeks NETCSC’s help

The United States-Mexico Foundation for Science invited the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) to the first ever meeting of representatives from the two countries to focus on environmental training.

Richard Phalunas, Ed.D., NETCSC’s director, made a presentation to organizations from both the U.S. and Mexico regarding resources available to assist border communities with wastewater, drinking water, and environmental training.

The meeting’s objective was to discuss resources that can be brought to the region to develop workforce capacity on both sides of the border, Phalunas said. To aid in achieving this goal, a $4 billion investment is being made in the border communities over the next 10 years by a number of federal and bi-national organizations.

NETCSC will help address the border region’s training needs and provide technical assistance and information for water and wastewater treatment in border communities. Meetings to define further the program’s involvement are now being scheduled.

“Tech Briefs” explain drinking water technologies

The National Drinking Water Clearinghouse (NDWC), a sister organization of the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities, assists small communities by collecting, developing, and providing timely information relevant to drinking water issues.

For the past two years, NDWC’s quarterly newsletter, On Tap, has contained “Tech Briefs”—four-page fact sheets that provide information about drinking water treatment technologies relevant to small systems.

The fact sheets are aimed at drinking water professionals, particularly small system operators. Tables and helpful illustrations are provided, as are additional resources. The eight “Tech Briefs” published so far include:

- Disinfection (Item #DWBLPE47)
- Filtration (Item #DWBLPE50)
- Corrosion Control (Item #DWBLPE52)
- Ion Exchange and Demineralization (Item #DWBLPE56)
- Organic Removal (Item #DWBLPE59)
- Package Plants (Item #DWBLPE63)
- Water Treatment Plant Residuals Management (Item #DWBLPE65)
- Lime Softening (Item #DWBLPE67)

To order any or all of the “Tech Briefs,” call the NDWC at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191. Request Item #ONTAP25. On Tap is also available on the Internet and may be downloaded from the NDWC’s Web site at www.ndwc.wvu.edu.

NETCSC online trainers’ discussion forum provides help

Environmental trainers have the opportunity to ask for advice, share experiences, or help fellow trainers, all from the convenience of a keyboard and Internet Web browser.

Join other trainers online at the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) trainers’ discussion forum where you can participate in current discussions on lowering the cost of training sessions, improving evaluations, or understanding how to use distance learning.

Users may read messages posted by others, reply to them, ask questions, or add comments concerning environmental training. Current users have found the forum to be a great way to network with colleagues who share a common interest.

To access the forum, visit NETCSC’s Web site at www.netc.wvu.edu.
WasteWise helps government reduce solid waste

What began as a way for businesses to save money by reducing and preventing solid waste has now expanded to include local, state, and tribal governments. Through a voluntary program known as WasteWise, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages organizations, businesses, and governments to join as partners and learn how to reduce the materials they use and generate less solid waste.

The program, which began in 1993 through EPA’s Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, allows its partners to set their own waste reduction goals based on their own circumstances. “We ask partners to commit to implementing or expanding a solid waste reduction program,” said Jeff Tumarkin, EPA WasteWise team member. “There are three components to the program: waste prevention, recyclables collection, and the purchase or manufacture of recycled products.”

Goals Set
Program participants set three-year goals in each of the three areas and report annually to EPA on their waste reduction progress, noted Tumarkin. “When local governments join the program, in addition to establishing internal goals, we encourage them to begin outreach programs and get area businesses involved.”

New partners receive a membership packet that includes a section on employee training, he said. “There’s a checklist of waste reduction activities that employers can go through during the training and some sample articles to explain to employees why they are participating in the program.”

Program Benefits
Tumarkin said that WasteWise partners enjoy benefits that include:
- Electronic communications—the WasteWise homepage provides program information and makes WasteWise publications available electronically;
- Helpline and resource library—a toll-free helpline is available to provide information and answer technical questions;
- WasteWise representatives—each partner has access to an individual representative who can provide assistance in designing and implementing a waste reduction program;
- Partner network—a network of organizations, businesses, and local, state, and tribal governments help partners learn cost-cutting waste reduction prevention methods;
- Recognition events—EPA sponsors regional and national forums to recognize the waste reduction efforts of existing partners and to welcome new partners;
- Publications—WasteWise distributes a variety of publications with topics that include employee education, packaging reductions, going paperless, waste prevention, remanufactured products, and donation programs.

For more information about EPA’s WasteWise program, call (800) EPA-WISE (372-9473). Or visit the program’s Web site at www.epa.gov/wastewise/.

Mississippi Recycling Coalition holds first conference

The newly formed Mississippi Recycling Coalition (MRC) held its first conference and trade show June 25 in Jackson, Mississippi. This marked the first statewide effort in Mississippi to provide information and education about recycling and solid waste reduction.

MRC President Robert Craig of Morris Recycling, Inc., a steel recycler, said the conference brought people together, helped recyclers gain exposure and learn about others in the recycling arena, and would ultimately help Mississippi’s economy. More than 100 people from the recycling community in Mississippi and other southern states attended. Seminars on the economics of recycling, setting up recycling programs in the community and the workplace, and the benefits of cooperative recycling were presented.

MRC is a statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the businesses, industries, governments, and citizens of Mississippi in waste reduction, material reuse, recycling, and composting. MRC’s goal is to push the state forward in solid waste reduction and recycling efforts by promoting responsible solid waste management.

MRC is committed to helping members improve their skills and techniques in recycling through education, workshops, special studies, research, and the exchange of ideas and technical knowledge. MRC plans to educate the public, government agencies, and the business community about the economics and environmental significance of waste reduction, recycling, and composting.

For more information, write to MRC at P.O. Box 13512, Jackson, MS 39236-3512, or call (601) 362-9044.
Solid waste management documents available on Internet

Two new documents outlining solid waste management practices are available on the Internet.

A factbook about solid waste management is available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Solid Waste. Municipal Solid Waste Factbook offers national and international data on waste prevention, recycling, waste-to-energy combustion, and land disposal. It also contains extensive data about state solid waste management programs.

To view or download the factbook on the Internet, visit www.epa.gov/factbook. To order the book on diskette, contact the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Information Center at (800) 424-9346 and request item number EPA/530-C-97-001.

New reference book updates statutes

The 1998 edition of Environmental Statutes is now available from Government Institutes (GI). This new edition is available as a 1,200-page softcover book and on CD-ROM. Every statute has been reviewed and updated with all the changes made by the 105th Congress, including the Water Pollution Act, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

Environmental Statutes, 1998 Edition includes the complete text for all of these statutes:
• Clean Air Act and Amendments of 1990,
• Pollution Prevention Act of 1990,
• Federal Water Pollution Control Act,
• Safe Drinking Water Act,
• Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act,
• Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and more.

The softcover book costs $69, and the CD-ROM costs $139, plus shipping and handling.

For more information or to order, call GI at (301) 921-2323, or visit their Web site at www.govinst.com.

Solid waste guidebook evaluates management options

A Guidebook for Rural Solid Waste Management Services provides information useful in evaluating the economic feasibility of alternative solid waste systems in small communities and rural areas in the South. The guidebook is now available from the Southern Rural Development Center and helps local decision makers:
• estimate solid waste volume in a specific area,
• summarize life-cycle costs of Subtitle "D" landfills,
• evaluate costs of directly hauling waste to a landfill versus operation of a transfer station,
• estimate capital and operating costs of community convenience centers,
• estimate capital and operating costs of rural collection systems, and
• identify waste stream reduction options.

The guidebook is available for $4 from the Southern Rural Development Center, Box 9656, Mississippi State, MS 39762, (601) 325-3207, fax (601) 325-8915. Please specify SRDC publication number 174.

NETCSC training skills handbook available


The handbook is a compilation of the training skills articles published in E-train from the August 1992 issue through the Winter 1998 issue. The articles provide training tips, techniques, and information. Chapter headings include Adult Education, Designing and Developing Curricula, Using Training Aids, Training, and Evaluation.

The three-hole-punched guide is comprehensive and includes graphics. The 8 1/2- by 11-inch format is easy to file, fax, copy, and update. Cost for the handbook is $8.50, plus shipping and handling. Request Item #RBKTR13.

To order, write to NETCSC, West Virginia University, P.O. Box 6064, Morgantown, WV 26506-6064, call (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191, or fax (304) 293-3161.
It seems that everyone is short of time these days. We’ve learned to budget this precious commodity in the same way we budget funding. Through needs analysis of consulting engineers, the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) learned that training designed to introduce small systems projects to consulting engineers might be better received if the sessions were abbreviated to fit their busy schedules.

The two-day, eight-hour curriculum, “Pieces of the Small Community Puzzle—Working Effectively in Small Communities on Environmental Projects,” developed by a team from the Midwest Assistance Program (MAP), the University of Northern Iowa, and The Ohio State University (OSU), took a big bite out of consultants’ time when it was offered as one unit. Some modifications needed to be made to fit the program to the participants’ schedules.

Karen Mancl, Ph.D., associate professor with the department of food, agricultural, and biological engineering at OSU, was enlisted to study how the training programs could be altered. Mancl had participated in developing the original curriculum for NETCSC in 1994 and had evaluated two other NETCSC-sponsored programs in 1995 and 1996. She wanted to build on the strengths of that original curriculum.

“NETCSC organized two workshops to evaluate the program to learn what strengths and weaknesses it might have, and MAP surveyed 97 consulting engineers,” Mancl says. “One of the biggest problems they found was that consulting engineers didn’t have the time to devote two days to training. Money is not necessarily a constraint, but time is. People preferred a one-day session instead of a two-day workshop.”

Needs analysis evaluations also showed that engineers face a number of challenges in the growing field of small community environmental projects. For instance, trainers cannot assume that engineers are familiar with different forms of treatment technology. Many consulting engineers have more experience working within a framework of larger urban systems and their personnel. Small communities operate from a different perspective.

“We often make an assumption that curriculum for consulting engineers need not include training about small systems technology,” Mancl says. “But it is not necessarily true that they all understand smaller systems. It’s not the fault of the engineers. It is an artifact of their schooling because university programs concentrate on large community systems, not small systems.”

Small systems technology added

Mancl designed a strategy that would maximize the impact of training for consulting engineers while condensing the sessions to a matter of hours. Her ideas for a modified curriculum resulted in a new “Pieces of the Small Community Puzzle” that consists of workshops using individual modules of the original NETCSC training combined with small systems technology information. Being from Ohio, Mancl modified the program to meet situations particular to that state.

Sessions of the updated training introduce engineers to various new and established small systems technologies. “This modified training program can help consulting engineers build their knowledge of small community systems,” Mancl says.

“Prior to this, engineers often had to seek out their own training, read on their own, and develop their skills with the smaller systems through individual experiences. If we’re going to see small community technologies applied, we have to recognize this.”

Working with the small community

In addition to the lack of knowledge about small systems technology, engineers said they needed to learn how to achieve better communications with the community leaders in towns where they might be working. This need is also addressed in the four training modules forming the foundation of the updated, as well as the original, curriculum. They include:

• “Starting Out Right” is a workshop that helps engineers become aware of the social, political, and economic climate particular to small communities and to identify positive ways of establishing a good working relationship.

• “Working with a Small Community” provides instruction on developing strategies to create win-win outcomes with community personnel in developing and completing environmental projects.

• “Community Needs Assessment and Technology” teaches methods of determining the needs of the community and presents
advantages and disadvantages of alternative technologies for small community projects.

- “Financial Packaging” helps engineers locate funding sources and establish financial management skills for environmental projects.

A new approach

The training program also takes into consideration the dynamics of the people involved in this training. Exercises, role-playing, and discussion are used in training sessions instead of a total lecture approach.

“From experience, we know that lecturing is not effective,” Mancl says. “That’s the wonderful thing about the curriculum we are using. It is not in a lecture format, but a facilitative set of discussions and exercises.”

These exercises are more stimulating than what Mancl refers to as “dry” lecturing, especially the modules that help develop a working relationship with the community’s people. “The role-plays help to point out, in an amusing and nonthreatening way, obstacles to avoid when working with a small community,” she says. “Technology elements need to be brought in with the same spirit.”

Through the needs analysis surveys, Mancl found that consultants felt they lacked knowledge of the technology, but consultants also wanted people skills training to learn how best to cooperate with the community leaders with whom they would be working. Mancl combined the technology training and the people skills training, proving that the two could be taught together to save both time and money.

NSFC develops ETI wastewater technology fact sheets

The National Small Flows Clearinghouse (NSFC) is releasing new wastewater technology fact sheets. Funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the fact sheets are part of the agency’s Environmental Technology Initiative (ETI) project, which gathers, assesses, and disseminates information about innovative and alternative wastewater technologies.

The fact sheets are intended to be used as a preliminary process selection tool for all those involved in identifying a wastewater technology for single family residences, clusters of homes, subdivisions, or communities.

Two types of fact sheets are being developed for each technology: a four-page technical overview for engineers, manufacturers, regulators, and other technical audiences and a two-page version for elected officials and the general public. Both fact sheets will describe how the technology works, its advantages and disadvantages, operation and maintenance, and costs. The technical fact sheets also will include design/process specifications, performance characteristics, and application results in the form of case studies.

Wastewater technology was the first addition to the original NETCSC modules’ exercises and examples. In the workshops using the new curriculum, Mancl combined Module A “Starting Out Right” with a two-hour session on wastewater reuse through irrigation. Seventy-two consultants, county engineers, regulatory officials, and small community service providers attended the workshop, and the format was well received.

“Combining the skills of working with small communities with new technology in a one-day workshop helps provide a concise and informative training session,” Mancl says. “This approach means that we don’t have to teach all four modules from NETCSC at once.”

The growing need to develop wastewater treatment facilities in small communities has created a new market for consulting engineers. Since this new market comes with special considerations to fit “Pieces of the Small Community Puzzle,” a different training delivery approach is needed.

Mancl’s reworking of the NETCSC training for consulting engineers works well to meet these needs. Future plans include workshops using three of the NETCSC modules plus additional technology sessions to be presented in the shortened one-day format.

For more information about this and other NETCSC curricula and training services, call NETCSC at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191 or fax (304) 293-3161. “Pieces of the Small Community Puzzle—Working Effectively in Small Communities on Environmental Projects” curriculum is available for $61, plus shipping and handling. Ask for Item #TRTPCD04.
Boosting the bottom line . . .

Recovering costs and generating revenue while training

by Diana G. Duran
NETCSC Contributing Writer

Editor's Note: This is the final article in a series on training budgets, costs, and revenue. The Spring 1998 E-train identified cost components, and the Summer 1998 E-train discussed ways to contain or reduce costs. In this article, four trainers offer successful strategies they've used to improve the bottom line.

Whether your organization is subsidized or self-supporting, for profit or not-for-profit, one factor is of great significance to the training budget: the bottom line. In addition to identifying cost components and trimming them as carefully as possible, the bottom line can be improved by recovering costs and generating revenue.

These two terms are closely related, but not exactly synonymous. Cost recovery is sometimes called “leveraging resources.” For example, after costs are identified, a co-sponsor may cover costs for promotion, speaker fees, food, materials, or other items, or work may be exchanged for services. No dollars are actually generated, but there is less or no direct expenditure of funds because someone else’s budget has picked up some of the expenses.

Revenue, on the other hand, is income and can be generated through charging registration fees, selling products, renting exhibit space, or collecting money from sponsors or co-sponsors, to name just a few.

In their line of work, environmental trainers often find resourceful ways to achieve their budgeting goals.

Leverage resources, form partnerships

Ralph D. Elliott, Ph.D., director of professional development at Clemson University, offers ways to leverage resources and increase program attendance and revenue by forming partnerships or co-sponsorships. He suggests that a co-sponsor be an organization or person who can lend credibility to your program, help you market the program, provide speakers or leads to speakers who can beef up your agenda, and give valuable input on the latest topics of concern to the profession or industry.

The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) regularly partners with national, regional, and local organizations to provide needed training. Co-sponsors’ responsibilities vary depending on the training being delivered, the needs of the area, the organization’s ability to assist in training, and other variables.

For example, if an organization is interested in a training partnership, NETCSC may provide a trainer and training materials while a co-sponsor might distribute promotional materials and secure the location. Another co-sponsor might provide the refreshments, equipment, and logistical support. This kind of partnership not only helps bring quality training to an area or group, it leverages existing resources so that training can be offered at a lower cost to all those involved.

Moreover, many of the onsite wastewater training centers and programs across the country routinely seek donations of systems and technology from manufacturers and other companies. These systems are then installed at the centers for hands-on learning at little or no cost. These same centers also use “sweat equity” and exchange in-kind services to maximize their resources.

Explore all the options

As the Spring newsletter article pointed out, trainers must calculate costs, then generate enough revenue to meet those costs and more. This profit, or “overage” as it is sometimes called, most often results from charging registration fees. Sometimes, however, those fees alone do not generate enough income. For example, there may be a maximum fee allowable or the market will not bear a high fee.

If that is the case, there are other options, such as selling exhibit or display space, which is common at larger conferences. In Clermont County, Ohio, Jean Roth Caudill, health district director of water and waste, used these methods to generate income for a much smaller, one-day regulations training for installers, electrical inspectors, sanitarians, and local county health department personnel.

“To attract participants, we knew we had to keep the registration fee down. Actually, we didn’t charge anything,” says Caudill. “We were able to do this by offering sponsorships to industry suppliers of onsite components, such as septic tanks, sand and gravel, and electrical components.”

continued on next page
Ralph Benson, a registered sanitarian with the health district, organized 24 sponsors, each of whom paid $25 to $50. In addition, Benson sold display space to local distributors, vendors, and suppliers.

“We asked for a donation of about $50 for a table-top display of their equipment and the components we were using for the training. We made about $800 total from the sponsorships and displays,” says Benson. “They had the opportunity to demonstrate to training participants how the components work, and the electrical components lent themselves well to this type of format.”

**Create promotion that sells**

Promotion costs make up about 20 percent of a training budget, and most training programs use a promotional piece, such as a brochure to advertise the training and solicit registrations. The design, production, and mailing of a brochure are all expensive, so the piece must be as effective as possible in order for revenue to cover those costs.

In his course, “Taking Pride in Service: Satisfying Our Customers in the 90s,” Elliott provides numerous techniques for creating brochures that build attendance at revenue-producing events:

- For conference courses, mail about 20 brochures to each speaker and ask them to circulate the brochures among their colleagues. Code the brochures to see who does the most to build enrollment.
- Include brochures on upcoming courses in the notebooks distributed to attendees to help sell future programs.
- Have brochures, catalogs, books, and other information about your organization available at the registration desk and also at the coffee breaks so participants will have an opportunity to learn more about your other offerings.
- Put a “route to” caption on your mailing piece or print a special note to the mail clerk so that brochures are forwarded rather than thrown away.
- Brochure copy should stress practical information and solutions to potential participant problems. Use words and phrases instead of long sentences, which are easier to read.
- Design a cover that has a benefit-oriented title, tag line, and a list of learning outcomes.
- Give a detailed explanation in the brochure of what the participants can expect to learn and bring back to their jobs.
- Include testimonials from former participants in your brochure, including the participant’s name, organization, and job title.

- Keep participant motives in mind, i.e., their need for being there, such as self-improvement, meeting colleagues and potential customers, discovering what the competition is doing, searching for new ideas and technology, and boosting creativity.

**Use quid pro quo tactics**

Depending on the audience and other variables, there are additional ways to advertise a training program besides using a brochure.

“We recently started a radio advertising campaign,” says Sue Allison, program director with the Department of Conference Activities and Special Courses at the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

“We haven’t seen so much a direct response like ‘I heard your ad for course so-and-so on the radio, and I want to sign up’ as we’ve seen a general rise in the awareness of our program as a whole.”

“We’ve also seen an increase in the broadcast of our public service announcements that highlight an instructor or course,” says Allison, adding that since the program bought an ad package, the station responds much better with the “free” publicity.

“It’s given us an extra boost. For the first time this past winter, we had more new students than we had repeat customers—that’s unheard of.”

Allison follows up with new students by sending them a $5 coupon toward their next class to get repeat business. “As the old saying goes, it costs five times more to get a new customer than it does to get a repeat customer. We offer a ‘bring-a-buddy’ discount on the class of choice for the student who gets a friend to sign up too, as well as a multiple registration discount of 10 percent,” she says.

“Pricing and price points are critical,” adds Allison. “Remember the 9s rule—that’s why prices are $29.99 instead of $30—psychologically $29.99 seems so much cheaper.

“Remember that there is such a thing as perceived value: courses shouldn’t be under priced. For example, we took a course that was $62 and lowered it to $59; on the other hand, we raised the price of a $67 course to $69; both saw increases in enrollment.” Consider how your audiences might respond to changes like these and try them, she says.

Allison uses activity cost accounting; that is, she assigns a cost to every activity and covers it in the overhead; for example, she adds a processing fee for maintaining transcripts for certificate programs.

Allison has found other ways to bolster the bottom line. She believes it helps to offer a certificate of completion for everything you can, for example, her series on grant writing.

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Training assistance available for environmental professionals at NETCSC

With changing regulations and technologies, it is even more important today that environmental professionals stay informed and educated. Reading E-train certainly helps, but sometimes hands-on workshops, training manuals, or even correspondence courses are needed to increase knowledge and skills.

But finding the right resources may sometimes be difficult. To address this concern, the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) offers a toll-free training assistance service to help answer questions.

NETCSC collects and maintains comprehensive repositories of environmental training information. Four specialized databases house information about available training materials, activities, organizations, and trainers.

“We've received calls from all over the country,” says Jeff Bailey, who helps staff the assistance line. “Operators, designers, consultants, installers, and many others find they need help in locating training sessions or trainers in their areas. We probably have that information. We can run a search of our databases, print out the information, and fax it to them relatively quickly.”

Others request information about the certification requirements in their states and training curricula that cover specific subjects such as onsite systems or drinking water treatment.

Recovering costs and generating revenue while training

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Then she takes successful courses and spins off related new courses; for instance, a non-profit management course was a spin-off of the grant writing series.

Expanding the market or identifying a new market niche also can pay off. John McWilliams, instructor at the Environmental Training Center at Red Rocks Community College in Golden, Colorado, targeted what might be considered a nontraditional audience for certification training seminars.

“Get women interested in becoming certified water and wastewater operators. The percentage of women in the field is relatively low,” he says. “But they might be motivated when they know they get equal pay for equal certification.

“Find out what people want. Send out surveys to local districts; ask them what their training needs are—do operators want certification training, degree training, review training?” he says. “What are current CEU requirements for maintaining certification? Find out how many operators they have and what category they might fit into.”

McWilliams, Elliott, Caudill, and Allison know they must be creative, resourceful, and smart to generate enough revenue “one way or another” to stay operational and to continue to offer much-needed environmental training to their audiences. On a daily basis, their work means raising the bottom line.

If there are ways in which you have successfully leveraged resources, formed partnerships, or improved the bottom line of your training program, consider sharing them with E-train readers by contacting the editor at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191 or faxing information to (304) 293-3161.

For more information about budgets or other training tips and techniques, contact NETCSC at P.O. Box 6064, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506-6064, call the numbers listed above, or access NETCSC's Web site at www.netc.wvu.edu.
NSF International develops accreditation program for onsite inspectors

NSF International (NSF), recognized for its expertise in the field of third-party, independent conformity assessment services, has initiated the development of a new accreditation program for professionals. This program will provide a means for demonstrating the skills and knowledge of those individuals providing onsite evaluations of drinking water supplies and wastewater treatment systems.

"Onsite evaluation of well and septic systems has become a commonly requested, and often required, service prior to the transfer of properties or in the event problems occur with the functioning of a system," said Tom Bruursema, general manager of NSF's Environmental and Research Services. "This program will offer the inspection industry a process by which to demonstrate the quality and integrity of their service through compliance with a national accreditation program. It also will help to standardize the industry when conducting the onsite evaluations and reporting of the findings."

NSF will be working closely with a variety of stakeholders during the program development phase, including the National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities, national and state associations, state training centers, local and state health departments, real estate companies, lending institutions, the inspection industry, and others. Various subcommittee activities are already underway, with representation by these many interested parties for the development of examinations, requirements for training, and maintenance of accreditation.

Individuals complying with the requirements of NSF Accreditation will have access to use of the NSF Mark, as recognized throughout the U.S. for compliance to strict national standards. This mark is now found on millions of products in the consumer and commercial markets worldwide. In addition, all individuals will be listed in a national database, available to anyone seeking a directory of competent professionals having achieved accreditation by NSF.

NSF maintains laboratories in Michigan and California and offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Washington, D.C.; Brussels, Belgium; Sydney, Australia; and Nairobi, Kenya.

For more information about the NSF Onsite Water and Wastewater Inspector Accreditation Program, visit the NSF's Web site at www.nsf.org or contact Bruursema at (800) NSF-MARK, extension 5575, or e-mail him at bruursema@nsf.org.

Outreach training: Colorado style

outreach trainer Deborah McWilliams inspects the lagoon outflow at the town of Antonito wastewater treatment facility.

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of Hispanic origin, and the economy is based mainly on agriculture. Towns in the valley have populations of 2,000 to 3,000.

Operations budgets are low, with utility operators sharing wastewater responsibilities with water treatment and road and street maintenance. Operators have limited training, which makes them ideal candidates for the outreach program. Most wastewater treatment systems are aerated lagoons, and the towns are spread out with miles of leaky vitreous clay pipe making up the collection systems. Infiltration in the summer from irrigation often quadruples normal inflows and hydraulically overloads these systems. Repairs and replacement of collection systems are long-term projects because of limited financial resources.

The Costilla County treatment plant has an aerated lagoon system that had a leak in the air manifold going to the air diffusers, causing poor treatment and an occasional violation. The sanitation district was able to make repairs to the aeration system with the aid of our help as outreach trainers, thus eliminating costly engineering and construction costs.

Sludge profiling is another area where a CPE has saved substantially in engineering costs. The town of La Jara now knows that it does not have a significant sludge accumulation in its lagoon and the operators can now monitor it themselves.

Likewise, the town of Antonito learned that it does have excessive sludge accumulation. We are currently working with the mayor and council members to find loans or grants for a sludge removal project that could cost an entire year's budget.

EPA and Red Rocks Community College should be proud of the Colorado State Outreach Program. It is an efficient program that saves small treatment plants more money than the program costs. In addition, the program's outreach trainers find their work personally satisfying. It enables us to appreciate other areas of our state and to know we have helped to provide a cleaner environment.
E-train continues its Internet journey

by Margaret Caigan McKenzie
NETCSC Contributing Writer

Editor’s Note: The following Web addresses were current at presstime. If you have a suggested site for E-train to review in an upcoming issue, please contact the E-train editor at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191.

During the past year E-train has reviewed a number of helpful Internet sites for trainers. Most of these sites previously reviewed contain general information that trainers can use across disciplines. Sometimes that is precisely the kind of information a trainer needs. At other times, however, a trainer needs a Web site dedicated to environmental issues. If that is what you are looking for, we've found three great sites for you.

Amazing Environmental Organization Web Directory

The Amazing Environmental Organization Web Directory's goal is to help people around the world locate environmentally-related Web pages. The site is maintained by its founder and a group of environmentalists in southern California. They strive to make this the most updated, comprehensive environmental directory on the Internet.

Log on to www.webdirectory.com/ to take a look at this site. The directory includes thousands of sites from more than 100 countries and is easy to use.

Similar to a library's card catalog, this site organizes environmental topics in broad subcategories such as education, government, pollution, sustainable development, and water resources. Information is extensively layered within each subcategory to help you narrow your search until you find the exact information you need. For example, within the pollution subcategory, you will find an extensive list of subtopics such as waste management, water pollution, and hazardous waste. You can continue to narrow your search by selecting either a descriptive listing of products, services, or organizations.

The information contained in this directory is so vast and well organized that you are almost certain to find what you need. If you do not find all the information you want, however, the directory points you to some of the Internet's most powerful search engines, such as Excite and Alta Vista.

The site also contains a bulletin board, letters from users of the site, and instructions for adding your own Web page to the directory.

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives Site

Another helpful Web site dedicated to environmental issues is the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). Their slogan is: “If you move your community, you can move the world!” It's located at www.iclei.org/.

ICLEI is comprised of approximately 300 local governments in partnership with residents and businesses. It serves as an international clearinghouse on sustainable development and environmental protection policies, programs, and techniques being implemented at the local level by local institutions. The council organizes training programs, publishes information on current environmental management practices, and serves as an advocate for local governments before national and international governments, agencies, and organizations.

The “Member’s Lounge” section of this site is available to ICLEI members only. This section contains full versions of ICLEI’s case studies and most of its publications. The “Contact” page provides information on how to become an ICLEI member. The remainder of the site is available to everyone, so feel free to search for the information you need by using ICLEI’s search engine.

There are five links at the bottom of every page to help you navigate through the Web site. These links include ICLEI’s home page, its software requirement page, its contact page that lists addresses for all of ICLEI’s secretariats and offices, the keyword search page, and a “Cities for Climate Protection Campaign” home page.

For further assistance, you can page ICLEI’s Web master between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. EST and get a quick response to your question.

EE-Link

If your interest is an environmental site developed specifically for teachers, students, continued on next page
and professionals, then log onto the Environmental Education Link (EE-Link) located at eelink.net/.

In response to comments from its users, the site has undergone a visual, organizational, and functional redesign. EE-Link has added an e-mail list for discussing environmental resources on the Internet.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funds the EE-Link Web site through its support of the Environmental Education and Training Partnership.

The teacher section is for K-12 teachers, college and university professors, teacher trainers, and staff at environmental education organizations and nature centers. The resources provided in this section include:

- EE on the Internet (helps beginners get started using the Internet as a resource);
- classroom activities for topics such as agriculture, sustainable development, water quality, and toxics and waste management;
- classroom resources such as curriculum directories or databases;
- resource library;
- EE literature;
- regional EE resources that put you in contact with EE programs and summer field programs around the world;
- general educational sites; and
- conferences and workshops.

The student section is for students K-12 and beyond. The resources provided in this section include:

- endangered species (EE-Link's most popular site with fact sheets, life histories, and images of endangered species);
- environmental facts;
- EE literature targeted at kids;
- higher education, including information about college programs that specialize in environmental issues;
- environmental jobs; and
- regional EE-Link programs that put you in contact with environmental programs and summer opportunities around the world.

The section for environmental professionals is for teacher trainers, policy researchers, academicians, and staff at environmental education organizations. The resources provided in this section include:

- online researching;
- online environmental communities;
- professional development resources, including training events;
- building your own Web site;
- links to programs at various environmental organizations; and
- Web-based environmental professional education and training.

EE-Link strives to link only to sites that are dedicated to promoting education and environmental information.

**NETCSC offers two new wastewater products**

The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) has developed two new products on wastewater topics based on customer needs. These products will be useful to wastewater treatment plant operators, technical assistance providers, and environmental trainers.

**NETCSC Troubleshooting Guide: Rotating Biological Contactors** is a job aid for operators of wastewater treatment plants that use rotating biological contactors. This troubleshooting poster (measures 10.5 by 16 inches) lists observations that are indicative of malfunctions, the probable cause of the conditions, what to check or monitor, and possible solutions in an easily accessible format.

The poster also can be used to supplement NETCSC’s curriculum “Troubleshooting and Optimizing Wastewater Treatment for Small Communities—Attached Growth.” Cost of the poster is $1.65. Request Item #TRPSOM09.

**NETCSC Troubleshooting Guide: Lagoons** is a job aid for operators of wastewater treatment plants that use lagoons. The poster format (measures 10.5 by 16 inches) provides three columns that list typical problems encountered in lagoon operation, the possible causes, and possible solutions. Operators can use it at the plant to help guide troubleshooting efforts, or it can be used in conjunction with NETCSC’s curriculum “Troubleshooting and Optimizing Wastewater Treatment for Small Communities—Lagoons.” Cost of the poster is $1.65. Request Item #TRPSOM08.

For more information or to order either of these products, call NETCSC at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191. Shipping and handling charges apply to all orders.
Training Needs Analysis Toolkit: Instruments, Exercises, Resources, and Surveys
Developed by Sharon Bartram and Brenda Gibson.

**Content:** The manual is divided into two parts. Part One discusses the importance of analyses of training needs, including starting analysis, using the activities, type of information gathered, ways to identify training needs, training strategies, and training plans.

Part Two has 22 activities that cover developing the organization, organizational climate, managing resources, and job skills.

**Use:** This manual will help trainers analyze training needs, select training strategies, and develop training plans to meet the identified needs. It contains reproducible handouts and exercises (worksheets) for gathering and processing information about training and development in an organization. Further, it provides guidance about the process of training needs analysis, shows how to convert information into training strategies and plans, and furnishes a variety of methods for gathering information at all levels of an organization.


Book with Word Perfect 6.1 diskette ..................$89.95

Book with MicroSoft Word 6.0 diskette ..................$89.95

(Plus shipping and handling)

**Contact:** HRD Press, 22 Amherst Road, Amherst, MA 01002-9709, or call (800) 822-2801.

Educating Your Community About Plastics Recycling: A Do-It-Yourself Kit
Developed by the American Plastics Council.

**Content:** This kit contains sample materials that are ready-to-use, camera-ready text, and visuals that can be cut and pasted into an “instant” promotional brochure for any plastics recycling program. These predesigned elements reflect a variety of program parameters, from those collecting only soft drink bottles to programs collecting mostly plastic bottles.

**Use:** The kit can be used to make the general public aware of a recycling program. Its message is to put the right materials into the appropriate collection containers. It focuses on educating a community about plastics recycling. Further, it provides an overview of issues applicable to all materials while highlighting factors unique to plastics.

**Contact:** American Plastics Council, 1275 K Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005, or call (800) 243-5790.

Compost . . . because a rind is a terrible thing to waste!

**Content:** This manual covers the following topics:
• Why compost?
• composting food scraps
• composting technologies
• program planning and source separation
• off-site composting
• on-site composting
• managing the compost site
• troubleshooting guide
• marketing
• referencing
• case studies

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Train-the-trainer workshops set for EPA Region VII

The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) is working with St. Louis University to offer “Assessing Wastewater Options for Small Communities,” a train-the-trainer program, at four different locations in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region VII in the spring, says John Hoornbeek, NETCSC training research associate.

The course is designed to help community outreach professionals work more effectively with small community officials. It will help local officials understand the process of developing or improving the wastewater treatment systems in their communities, says Hoornbeek.

As a train-the-trainer course, “Assessing Wastewater Options for Small Communities,” is designed for environmental trainers and technical assistance providers who work with community decision makers, including mayors, city or town council members, county officials, and planners. The course is focused on assisting those individuals who would deliver the material to local officials in small communities.

By the end of the course, participants should be able to provide instruction to small community decision makers on how to:

- explain what wastewater is and why it should be treated,
- communicate the community's wastewater treatment responsibilities,
- assess current and future wastewater treatment needs,
- identify appropriate wastewater technology options to meet their community's needs,
- identify appropriate financing options, and
- promote the long-term viability of the selected wastewater option.

“Assessing Wastewater Options for Small Communities” is scheduled for the following dates and locations:

- Jefferson City, Missouri: April 6–7, 1999, Runge Conservation Center
- Cedar Rapids, Iowa: April 19–20, 1999, Kirkwood Community College
- Emporia, Kansas: May 10–11, 1999, location to be announced
- Hastings, Nebraska: May 12–13, 1999, Hastings Community College

For more information about the program or to register, write to Sandy Miller, NETCSC, West Virginia University, P.O. Box 6064, Morgantown, WV 26506-6064, call (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191, extension 5536, or e-mail smiller@wvu.edu.

EPA/530-R-97-016 Booklet, 21 pages, 1997.....................................................................Free

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- appendices
- sample of dining survey
- samples of recordkeeping forms for incoming materials and managing compost loads
- equipment and suppliers

Included with the manual is a 30-minute video and a seven-minute summary video.

Use: The manual helps businesses and institutions with basic information about food-scrap composting and the technologies being used.

Manual only, 65 pages, 1996 .................. $22.50
Manual and one video ......................... $30
Manual, 30-minute video, and seven-minute video ............................................. $35

Contact: Cornell Resources Center, Cornell University, 7 Business & Technology Park, Ithaca, NY 14850, call (607) 255-2080, or fax (607) 255-9946.
We hope you enjoyed this issue of E-train. If you do not have a subscription, please fill out and return this coupon. If you have already returned a coupon, you do not need to send it to us again. Feel free to share this coupon with a colleague interested in receiving a free subscription to E-train.

Yes! I want to subscribe to E-train.

We're looking for contributing writers for future issues of E-train, says Richard Phalunas, Ed.D., NETCSC director. If environmental professionals wish to write a news or feature article about a program or topic that they would like to share with E-train readers, we would be happy to work with them, says Phalunas.

In addition, we are seeking writers to put together articles on particular topics for future newsletter issues.

NETCSC is willing to develop contacts with writers who are able to provide finished articles for publication in E-train, says Phalunas.

Anyone interested in writing for E-train should contact Randy Levelle, NETCSC senior program administrator, for further information. He can be reached at (800) 624-8301 or (304) 293-4191, extension 5539, or by e-mail at rlevelle@wvu.edu.