

Product & Packaging Stewardship Review

MANAGING WASTE RESPONSIBLY

An information service for municipal governments
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INSIDE THIS SIX-PAGE ISSUE

PRO BC	2/6
Paint update	3/6
Guest column	4/6
Calendar	5/6
Editorial	6/6

IN MANITOBA

MPSC looks at the next 3 years

“Time flies when you’re having fun.” This is how the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation (MPSC) describes the recent past, as it approaches the end of the three-year Achieving Balance Business Plan this March 31 and prepares for its future.

The MPSC was established in 1995 as part of the province’s Waste Reduction and Prevention Act. It was a made-in-Manitoba response to the Canadian Industry Packaging Stewardship Initiative (CIPSI), a model developed by the Grocery Products Manufacturers Council). Intended ultimately as a national model, CIPSI was introduced to Ontario with great fanfare shortly afterwards, but could not get past the politics, with subsequent revival efforts during the second half of the 1990s all failing.

The Manitoba stewardship model put together by the province uses fees applied to beverage container sales to offset 80% of the cost of recycling a municipal basket of consumer packaging and fibres.

The MPSC’s original mandate contained some ambitious goals, which included:

- moving beyond residential recycling,
- moving beyond the “designated materials,”

- achieving 50% diversion,
- matching the recovery rates enjoyed by deposit-return systems in other provinces,
- moving beyond recycling to reduction and reuse,
- making recycling profitable,
- making “the polluter pay.”

This was a tall order and to quote the MPSC newsletter, *Stewardship Circle*, “There is only so much of this stuff that we have control over.”

While not achieving all its goals, the MPSC estimates that by the end of March it will have distributed \$25 million to support recycling programs, which will have diverted more than 180,000 metric tonnes of material from landfill.

It established the Student Action for Recycling (STAR) program and spent more than \$2 million on 3Rs

awareness programs and partnerships.

The organization also presents annual recycling workshops, the past two being held in Brandon and Winnipeg in October, 2000.

The future of the organization depends on “managing the various expectations,” notes the MPSC.

“It appears that we have enough dollars to continue to support efficient recycling programs, but any new programs will likely require new revenues, which means new levies (by regulation), voluntary contributions and increasing efficiency on municipal programs.”

After consultation with stakeholders, a new three-year plan was scheduled to be presented to the Manitoba Conservation Minister by February 1. Copies of the plan will be distributed to stakeholders and posted on the MPSC website: www.mpsc.com

(See guest column on page 4/6)

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IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Industry leaves BC plastics team, proposes "responsibility" group

The positioning on the stewardship front lines in British Columbia has seen some changes in the past couple of months.

First, representatives from CSR: Corporations Supporting Recycling, the Environment and Plastics Industry Council and the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors have withdrawn from the multi-stakeholder BC Rigid Plastic Container Steering Committee.

In a note to the committee members, the three organizations said further industry participation is "not an efficient way of proceeding."

"The more productive route is for the remaining members of the committee to finish their work and provide the Ministry with their findings," they wrote.

MIXED PERFORMANCE IN BLUE BOX

Last summer, on behalf of the steering committee, the Recycling Council of British Columbia commissioned a study of provincial plastics. In its *Inventory of Rigid Plastic Containers*, delivered last June, and in more recent updates, Enviro/RIS revealed PET beverage containers collected via the industry-run Encorp deposit-return system enjoyed a 71% return rate, while plastics in the municipally-operated curbside blue box program saw a mixed performance. HDPE bottles had a 13% recovery rate, while 33% of wide-mouth containers were returned through recycling. The only comparable performers to deposit-return containers were large HDPE milk jugs, 62.5% of which were recovered via the blue box.

MADE THE ROUNDS

About the same time as they left the plastics committee, CSR and other industry reps made the rounds of municipalities to introduce the new Producer Responsibility Organization of British Columbia (PRO BC) and to push the virtues of

recycling—and the possibility of some funding to municipalities—versus the deposit-return system currently in place.

The news release announcing the establishment of PRO BC describes it as a national initiative that aims "to improve the recovery rates of packaging materials and printed papers in municipal waste streams."

In a preamble, the PRO BC release says the province is falling behind other jurisdictions, that there have been "no recent initiatives to deal with solid waste" and that diversion efforts "have stalled." PRO BC's vision is reported to be "to re-establish BC as a leader in recycling and solid waste management."

The circulation of the PRO BC announcement came a month or so after the release of a Statistics Canada report (*Waste Management Industry Survey: Business and Government Sectors, 1998*) which showed BC has the highest per capita waste diversion rate in the country and the highest per capita residential diversion rate.

The team leading the PRO BC initiative comprises Adrian White, former president of the Nova Scotia Resource Recovery Fund Board, Geoff Rathbone, vice-president of the Toronto-based CSR, Cindy Burton, vice-president of GPC Canada (a government relations consultant), and Neil Hastie, president of Encorp Pacific, which operates the industry-run deposit-return program for beverage containers in BC.

NEXT STEPS TO BE DETERMINED

In mid-January, the BC Government wrote to the plastics steering committee, thanking it for the work undertaken to date. To be determined now are the next steps and who will carry them forward.

This could be the Province, the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment or the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, which is currently involved in a broader waste management review process.

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Anyone wishing to support the Fair Comment Project may email Ben Bennett at bbc@albedo.net Confidentiality is guaranteed.

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PPS
Review
January
2001

Page 2/6

New paint stewardship programs moving ahead in NS, Quebec

The Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour has recently completed the public comment period for proposed amendments to the Solid Waste-Resource Management regulations to ban paint from disposal and establish an industry stewardship program.

The program will be administered through the Resource Recovery Fund Board and will require all distributors of consumer paint, including latex, oil or solvent-based coatings, stain and paint to be registered with the Board.

The Board will collect funds based on full cost recovery to manage paint

collection at close to 90 Enviro-Depots across the province.

Actual costs have not yet been calculated. It is estimated, however, that they will be lower than they are in British Columbia, because the collection infrastructure already exists. It is likely that distributors will pass their costs on to consumers in the form of an "eco-fee" at the point of purchase.

MEANWHILE, IN QUEBEC...

Over the next few weeks an agreement should be reached by Quebec's government and the paint industry's stewardship board "Eco-Peinture," on a

proposed collection infrastructure. It is anticipated that it will be a combination of municipal deposits, with some return to retail, to meet the province's recovery target of 75% by 2008.

Eco-Peinture intends to charge brand owners 25 cents per unit sold in the province.

While other provinces have allowed brand owners to recover this levy through a point of purchase "eco-fee," the Quebec government regards this as another tax and has requested that if brand owners want to recover this levy, they increase the price of the product accordingly.

Briefly...

"WEEE" LEGISLATION MOVES AHEAD IN EUROPE

The management of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) is the subject of a directive working its way through the European Union legislative process. The directive currently leaves open the possibility of a collective or individual company approach to the handling of the material.

The Waste Paper, November 2000
(Community Recycling Network newsletter—UK)

BC LEADS THE COUNTRY IN WASTE DIVERSION

According to the Statistics Canada report, *Waste Management Industry Survey Business and Government Sectors 1998*, British Columbia leads the country in waste diversion with a per capita rate of 41% of residential solid waste. Nova Scotia ranks second at 39%, with Ontario in third place at 34%, just ahead of Manitoba at 33%. PEI's diversion rate was not available.

Statistics Canada — www.statcan.ca

BOTTLE DEPOSIT-RETURN LOBBY HAS NEW ALLY

One of the world's largest carpet manufacturers, Beaulieu, has joined forces with environmentalists in the US to increase the amount of PET bottles recovered for recycling. "Businesses and Environmentalists Allied for Recycling" (BEAR) will lobby government for legal changes for the introduction of bottle bill legislation (deposit-return systems) in non-bottle bill states.

www.beaulieu-usa.com

MT. EVEREST PROTECTED FROM PLASTIC BAG LITTER—FOR NOW

A Nepal district has banned plastic bags in the region of Mt. Everest. Bag manufacturers are preparing legal challenges to these bans.

Recycling Laws International, December 2000
— www.raymond.com

REFILLABLE PET BOTTLES RANKED #1 FOR ENVIRONMENT

In a newly-released report from the German Environment Agency, refillable PET bottles were deemed as the most environmentally-friendly beverage packaging from a life-cycle approach. Laminate cartons, like Tetra Pak and polycoat containers, were ranked as second best in the same report.

German Environment Agency

EPIC STUDY LOOKS AT ONTARIO PLASTICS

An Ontario Plastic Waste Management Strategy study is being developed by the Environment and Plastic Industry Council (EPIC). The initiative is directed by a steering committee of public and private representatives and is expected to be completed early this year. The study is reportedly sponsored by EPIC, CSR:Corporations Supporting Recycling and the Ontario Waste Diversion Organization. Technical work is being undertaken by Enviros/RIS.

News & Views, Winter 2000
(EPIC's newsletter)

PPS
Review
January
2001

Page 3/6

What is next for Manitoba?

by Jan Westlund

The Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation's (MPSC) new three-year business plan will go to the government by February 1 for an April 1 inception.

Observers waiting for the unveiling of the plan have had years of practice.

They never did get to see a final plan after suggesting revisions the last time around. This was the government-held review of MPSC's last draft business plan and its supporting legislation—the Multi-Material Stewardship (Interim) Agreement—which took place in conjunction with a review of the province's Waste Reduction and Prevention Act in February 1997.

TOOK TWO YEARS TO PUBLISH

The Conservative government of the day, apparently in disagreement with the public regarding improvements to the Manitoba Product Stewardship Program (MPSP), took two years to publish a proceeding from that process, without announcing any amendments.

Calls for the redistribution of levies to cover all material designated in the original legislation were heard at that time but never materialized.

Despite that goal's inclusion in the 1998 - 2001 business plan, the Manitoba Product Stewardship Board (MPSB) was unable to steer the private sector and the government into action.

Because of the voluntary nature of the program, there is little reason to expect that levies will be spread onto items other than beverage containers this time around.

LIKELY RELUCTANT

The government is likely reluctant to inflame the province's newspaper publishers; the Manitoba Product Stewardship Board (MPSB) is likely reluctant to demand extended producer responsibility; there are also logistical

challenges in bringing the multinational corporations to heel.

It should be made clear, however, that levy changes are the ultimate responsibility of government, as are other requests, which have fallen upon deaf ears, for the Board itself to represent more adequately the consumers responsible for paying the levy. Despite minor changes to its make-up, some MPSB members still represent 'stewards' who have steadfastly ignored responsibility for their products.

"While everyone agrees that recycling services should be run as efficiently as possible, those considerations can't camouflage the fact that free riders abound in the MPSC. "

What exactly is the scope of this proposed business plan then? Program developments like the expansion to schools and universities, further research, and improved promotion and education are all areas where MPSC has so far been solid.

NEW AREA OF CONCERN

The new area of concern, however, is that they are doling out their accrued revenues of about \$6 million dollars (banked when levies were first applied but before many recycling programs qualified for funding) and will be rifling cupboard shelves looking for new dollars by the time this next cycle is complete in 2004.

These disappearing funds are due to the slow but steady increase in pay outs; the expense of adding the last few municipalities to the program; the possibility of funding a multi-family recycling program in the Winnipeg (where over 60% of the province's population resides); and the fact that the levy amount was arbitrarily set in the first place.

High commodity prices for recyclables have given efficiently run

programs a revenue boost. Under the current pricing structure, even the most poorly managed program has paid less in the balance than it had to in leaner times.

This leads to speculation about where new dollars for the MPSC can be found.

Either the levy could be re-distributed to a wider range of products (magazines, newspapers, pre-packaged goods, etc.) as designated in the legislation, with an accompanying fine-tuning of the amount or else the system must be 'mined' for efficiencies.

As the former is out of the scope of this business plan, the latter seems most likely. Does putting the squeeze on municipalities to be more effective in the programs they deliver by re-negotiating their support payments apply pressure where it rightly belongs?

It's doubtful that municipalities should be banking profits from the program. While everyone agrees that recycling services should be run as efficiently as possible, those considerations can't camouflage the fact that free riders abound in the MPSC. To date, there has been no indication that an NDP government is keen to review the regulation to establish the level playing field that would likely draw fresh revenue to the program.

It would be nice to be surprised.

Jan Westlund, is coordinator of the Manitoba Eco-Network, and past chair of Resource Conservation Manitoba.

PPS
Review
January
2001

Page 4/6

Ontario's WDO: Newman says he'll consult, but no word on who with

Ontario's environment minister Dan Newman said late last year he intends to begin "focused negotiations in the new year" on the proposals for the Waste Diversion Organization (WDO). As of press time, however, more than a month since the December 21 news release, there has been no official word on with whom exactly he will be consulting and when the consultation will take place.

In that news release, Newman said he will be "moving forward with proposals based on many of the principles contained in the WDO's recommendations."

Newman said he intends to introduce legislation in the next session which will cover the creation of a permanent waste diversion organization, a 50/50 cost-sharing agreement between municipalities and industry to pay for Blue Box programs, and "a mechanism to ensure that all affected industries pay their fair share."

"Industries and municipalities have asked for fairness. The legislation I intend to introduce will eliminate 'free riders' who take advantage of the system without contributing to it."

The consultations will focus on hearing the views of those who have not been part of the WDO, said the minister.

Among the issues to be discussed will be the types of packaging to be covered by the new legislation, the minimum thresholds for industry participation (small-quantity exemptions), household hazardous wastes (HHW), organics diversion, and the governance of a permanent waste diversion organization.

The ministry's December news release was the first formal statement from the Province since the WDO report was submitted on September 1, 2000.

BREWERS SUBMIT THEIR MODEL

In December, the Brewers of Ontario submitted to the Ontario Environment Minister a model for a Producer Responsibility Organization for the province.

It takes a product-by-product, material-by-material approach, as opposed to the basket of goods approach which is proposed for the WDO.

More information can be found at:

<www.productstewardship.org>

WDO PROJECTS APPROVED

The third and final round of WDO-sponsored projects was approved in November. In all, more than \$700,000 was approved: \$220,000 for recycling optimization, \$47,550 for household hazardous waste (HHW) projects and \$448,447 for organics diversion.

Approved projects included \$32,000 to test apartment chute systems and a further \$32,000 to "maximize convenience and provide new opportunities" to increase diversion in multi-residential settings, \$24,000 for communications research in HHW use-it-up programs, \$50,000 for technologies for



COMING EVENTS

February 8-10

Federation of Canadian Municipalities Sustainable Communities Conference, Ottawa, ON
Call (613) 241-5221 ext. 365

February 25-28

Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA)/ Ontario Good Roads Association joint conference, Toronto, ON.
Call (905) 795-2555

March 20-21

Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators (AMRC) Contracts Workshop, Oakville, ON.
Call (519) 823-1990

March 28-30

Pan-American Environmental Technology Trade Show/Conference, Montreal, PQ.
Call (514) 270-7110

April 3-5

Waste Expo 2001, Chicago, ILL.
Call (203) 358-9900

April 18

RCO Ontario Waste Minimization Awards, Guelph, ON.
Call (416) 960-1025

April 19

Ontario Waste Diversion Organization workshop on recent projects, Toronto, ON
Call (416) 594-3456 ext.240.

April 20

CSR: Corporations Supporting Recycling annual general meeting, Toronto, ON.
Call (416) 594-3456, ext 231.

processing mixed waste and \$35,00 for "an implementation schedule and roll-out strategy" for anaerobic digestion.

Official information on the WDO is available at:
www.wdo.on.ca

**PPS
Review
January
2001**

Page 5/6

Opinion Piece

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of PPSReview

A MEDIEVAL STORY

O Canute! – A Winter's Tale

by Jay Arthur

Once upon a tyme, in days gone bye, there was a king called Canute.

King Canute looked across from his kingdom, which was called Ontayre, and smiled at how successful he was in keeping the peasants in their place. Working with the noblemen who ran the manufactories of goodes and vittals, Canute had introduced a scheme by which the tithes paid by the common people to the local burgesses were used to cover all the costs of managing the spent boxes, broadsheets and the drinking flasks used for the sugared liquors, which were called poppe.

"Why," he wondered to himself, "Does not the rest of this land do things in the same way?" In other kingdoms, such as Bretagne Columbie, everyone, nobleman or serf, paid a deposit on the flasks, and in this way, vast numbers of these flasks were returned and did not end up in the large dumps which were appearing outside the city gates. Indeed, other than the Kingdom of Manitohe, all the other kingdoms, which were called provinces and territories, were using the same system.

The king was a diligent fellow though, and had set up a guild of companies, which was called CSR:

Canute Supporting Recycling. He sent his emissaries across the land to the courts of the other provinces and there they preached the *CSR Gospele*.

one Sainte Helene of Spec, to place in the new flasks some of recovered materials from flasks which had already been through the market place one time. CSR and its

Gallic tribes of Quebeque had been receiving the emissaries of King Canute for some tyme, and had founded their own guild, which was called Collicky Selektive. T'was aptly named as some of the emissaries had lately been much troubled by the recent actions of the Quebeque burgesses and they were not sure on which side of the table they should be sitting.

While all this attention was being paid to the large kingdoms, the maritime kingdom of New Scotie quietly attained its holy grail (known as the Bigge Fiftye) and had every right to feel smug—as indeed they did.

In the meantyme, King Canute sat steadfastly in his throne on the shores of the Seas of Sensibility, and commanded the returning flasks to get back.

They didn't.

"Look at the progress we have made in Ontayre," they cried, upon which there was much snickering in the land.

(People across the land liked to snicker at the Kingdom of Ontayre because they thought their kingdom was the centre of this flat world.)

"Look at the progress we have made in Ontayre," they cried, upon which there was much snickering in the land. (People across the land liked to snicker at the Kingdom of Ontayre because they thought their kingdom was the centre of this flat world.)

In Bretagne Columbie, CSR and its emissaries, Canute's Council of Goodes (and Vittals) Dispensers (CCGD) and the Eastern Prynces in Cahoots (EPIC) had joined a local guild of goodes handlers. Scribes working for this guild, which held court to all orders of commerce, the burgesses and the common folk, found the deposit system was the best way to recover the used flasks. Also, there were calls from the common folk, led by

emissaries, CCGD and EPIC, were not in a goode humour after this happening and did remove their chairs from the table, only to return to BC with a new guild, which was called Prynces of the Regale Order (PRO) BC. It was a fine name, and much like a guild from across the seas, which was called PRO Europa. It was reported by heralds that it was the PRO Europa which was sending to Canute the legendary (even then, forsoothe!) Greene Dotte.

In the meantyme, CSR and its emissaries paid visits to the smaller castles in the kingdom of BC and urged them to accept the *CSR Gospele* and to renounce their dark deposit ways.

Next to the Kingdom of Ontayre, the mainly

PPS
Review
January
2001

Page 6/6