

Welcoming Remarks for Great Lakes Regional P2 Roundtable Conference  
GSA Conference Center Room 331, Wed. March 5, 2003, 09:00 A.M.

(Short welcoming remarks 5 minutes)

I'm pleased to welcome the Great Lakes Regional Pollution Prevention Roundtable membership from the Great Lakes States and Tribes and Canada to Region 5 for your Winter Conference!

It's good to see the Regional P2 Roundtable continuing to provide this forum to engage state, local and tribal governments, P2 technical assistance organizations, industry, and non-governmental organizations in improving P2 technical resources and information exchange. I'm a big supporter of partnerships, P2, and performance. As we look for more innovative approaches in our environmental programs, P2 has a bigger role to play.

In looking at the agenda, I see that I am followed by Tom Ustanik of Lansing Cleaners which is a member of the National Environmental Performance Track one of the EPA's innovative partnership programs. Performance Track is designed to recognize facilities that consistently meet their legal requirements and have implemented high-quality environmental management systems. Voluntary partnership programs are key tools in engaging businesses and communities to improve environmental performance through P2. I'd like to mention a couple of more new partnership opportunities - SmartWay Transport and the Resource Conservation Challenge.

On January 10 in Chicago, U.S. EPA Administrator Christie Whitman announced a new voluntary effort to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from ground freight carriers such as trucks and locomotives called SmartWay Transport. SmartWay Transport partners have agreed to work with EPA to develop performance measures or goals to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save fuel, and protect public health. These companies are demonstrating that these efforts can also make good business sense by not only saving money but also helping the environment.

The Resource Conservation Challenge was initiated in September 2002 to find flexible, yet more protective, ways to conserve resources through

waste reduction and energy recovery. In addition to challenging Americans to make smarter purchasing and disposal decisions, it also supports innovative projects to test creative approaches to waste minimization, energy recovery, recycling and land revitalization. This new program shifts our current orientation away from projects that focus only on "end of life" issues, such as cleaning up wastes, toward a "beginning of life" perspective, using strategies to help shape a new marketplace, one that encourages product design stewardship and more sustainable business and consumer behavior.

Innovative voluntary programs are important in promoting pollution prevention. However, we also need to make our regulatory programs more innovative through P2 approaches. Region 5 recently entered into an Intergovernmental Cooperative Agreement in Illinois with the Waste Management and Research Center to involve our inspectors in the promotion of WMRC's P2 technical assistance services. We expect it to lead to better targeting of these services to improve environmental performance at facilities and we expect to get information back from WMRC of the waste reductions achieved through their assistance.

All of these programs look to setting goals and developing strategies to achieve and measure progress. We all need to better target our resources and measure the results of our efforts.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of Deb Jacobson, the rest of the WMRC staff and the Roundtable steering committee. I wish you success in this conference and hope it serves to energize and improve your efforts in using P2 as a key tool for improving environmental protection. Please let me know if there is any way I can assist in your efforts.