

# Wisconsin

## Small Business Environmental Assistance Program

JENNIFER COLLINS MAY 28, 2021 04:28PM

### Big Wins

JENNIFER COLLINS JUN 04, 2021 07:57PM

1. CAP articles - In 2020, the Wisconsin CAP (Council) continued in their efforts to advance the services of the SBEAP to external organizations who also support small businesses. Two articles about the Council and the SBEAP were published after Jody Jansen, VP of Business Banking at BankFirst in Waupaca, reached out to Wisconsin Banking Association and The Business News—Northeast. As a result of the articles, contacts from BizStarts and American Risk Management Resources Network reached out to learn more about how they might partner with the Council to get information on environmental requirements out to their customers.

2. 2020 economic development outreach

- New marketing brochures sent to 1,200 economic development organizations and local government staff, including Chambers of Commerce
- Bi-monthly emails featuring our programs sent to 1,300 local, regional, and statewide economic development professionals
- Offered seven template newsletter articles
- Over 50 one-on-one contacts with economic development organizations
- By May 2021 our outreach has organically grown to over 2,000 subscribers

3. Building relationships with SBDCs

- Most SBDC staff were unaware of SBEAP and had little knowledge of environmental requirements but were excited to learn about the program.
- Improving connections:
  - Invited to present SBEAP info on state-wide SBDC call to get message out to assistance providers across state.
  - Helped connect us with other economic development professionals they work with outside SBDCs.
  - Request to have SBEAP speak to other groups in region that SBDCs work with.
- Helping get our message out:
  - Offer to promote our webinars, events, etc. to their business clients.

- Will have SBEAP brochures at entrepreneurship classes and let us know what types of businesses take them as well as any environmental questions that come up.
- Interest in having SBEAP guest speaker at their training workshops

4. Building internal capacity – Over the last year, we have reached over 500 DNR employees with information about our Sustainability and Business Support programs thanks to the efforts of our liaisons and support teams.

- Liaisons – each of our Sustainability and Business Support staff is dedicated to building a relationship with one or more regulatory programs, helping programs learn about our business resources (including SBEAP) so they can provide referrals, helping our team keep on top of regulatory programs' priorities and needs so we can help meet them, and identifying opportunities to collaborate. As relationships continue to grow, we are getting help staying on top of regulatory changes, helping programs reach out about those changes, and are increasingly asked to introduce our non-regulatory programs at staff meetings around the agency.

- Environmental Performance Area Support Teams – to broaden the department's ability to assist customers in reaching their environmental goals, the DNR's leadership team established five regional teams to ensure that customers statewide know about the department's non-regulatory programs. The regional teams, like the programs that they are promoting, are structured to address environmental issues much the same way our customers do – not one environmental topic or media at a time, but rather air, waste, water, etc. all at the same time. Over the last year, they have hosted training programs for supervisors and a wide range of program staff, who are in turn better able to connect customers with our non-regulatory Sustainability and Business Support Resources.

5. Award - In May 2020, DNR's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program was awarded the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Administrator's Award for Outstanding Accomplishments by a Small Business Trade Association or State Small Business Environmental Assistance Provider in Providing Technical Assistance to the Small Business Community.

*I think many SBEAPs could benefit from all you learned in expanding your outreach. Would you consider an Education Subcommittee presentation?* – ANONYMOUS

## Challenges

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1. Website redesign has made finding us more difficult - Through input from external events with our CAP members, we worked to gain a spot on drop down menus from our agency home page. However, with the web redesign in 2020, all main menu options on the home page were changed and more focus placed on the recreational options of hunting/fishing/parks than the environmental protection half of the agency. It now takes 3-4 clicks to get to a link to our small business assistance page, assuming you know the path of those selection options.
2. CAP appointments - An ongoing challenge for our CAP has been to gain appointments from certain legislative officials and the governor has not filled his vacant appointment. We have only enough active members to make quorum at meetings, and often have to postpone meetings if one has a conflict last minute.

## 2021 / 2022 Excitement & Priorities

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**JENNIFER COLLINS** JUN 04, 2021 07:59PM

1. Our new agency priorities are:
  - Clean drinking water for all
  - Mitigating the impacts of climate change
  - Promoting outdoor recreation and enhancing rural prosperity
  - Protecting public health and safety
  - Providing service excellence
2. Climate Change Charter - SBEAP staff are working with DNR's beyond compliance program to convene a group of businesses, NGOs and other entities interested in working together to reduce climate impacts. A key commitment for participation is working on a collaboration project such as a larger, more experienced businesses mentoring smaller businesses interested in taking climate action.
3. Solar farm resources - Our section, Sustainability and Business Support, was asked to compile resources for solar farm projects that are likely to proliferate with the federal funds available. We are looking to identify the preferred characteristics of large scale solar projects, but also summarize the permitting needs and timing to help the permit staff direct interested parties to educate themselves before submitting a proposal. We will build a web page specific to the industry requirements.

4. Continuing economic development outreach - After a year of reaching out to local economic development organizations throughout Wisconsin via a GovDelivery newsletter, we are now planning a webinar series to provide them with community specific environmental overviews. Is the community largely rural, with forestry and agriculture and maybe recreational business dominating? Or is it an urban area where the economic development organizations are growing business parks with an industrial focus? Is it a small town with more commercial businesses like autobody refinishing, small commercial print shops, gas stations, and otherwise retail that has limited environmental requirements. The webinar series will run through environmental permits the different business categories might trigger, with only enough detail to help the economic development organization recognize business aspects that should drive them to contact us for help.
5. Developing resources for local governments - Recognizing that DNR engages local governments at many levels, both from a regulatory framework and a resource-sharing framework, we are working on creating a local government portal of sorts: a one-stop site for municipal and county governments to find all the DNR programs that might relate to their operations, whether it is applying for a permit, reporting drinking water data, learning about clean sweep programs, or finding out about grant opportunities.

## Help Wanted

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1. Technical assistance for renewable and alternative energy practices, including end-of-life BMPs for things like electric vehicle batteries, wind turbines, etc.
2. Having found the great documents created by MI EGLE to improve public input and community engagement in their permit process, we would like to see other similar guides/resources as we work to build our own.

*Thanks for the shoutout! I Love your new flyers! So nice.* – ANONYMOUS

*I have some items and articles relating to solar panel recycling from a question asked on the SBEAP main in 2020. Also, I have been working with some pyrolysis recycling companies with a specific target towards wind turbine blades. Contact me for the info.* – DONOVANGRIMWOOD

# Structure and Stats (Where are you housed? and How many Full Time Equivalent (FTEs)?)

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WI SBEAP is housed in the environmental agency, WI DNR. We have 3 FTE, 1 located in our Air Program and 2 located in Sustainability and Business Support Section. We have an active CAP, but only 4 of 7 external appointments along with the agency representative.

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