



Fall 2009

WPCA responds to deteriorating tank issues

By Ann Gryphan, Essie Kammer Group

The WPCA continues to speak with regulators and industry about the issue of deteriorating precast concrete septic tanks found in some areas of the state. An article appeared in a Door County newspaper this summer that quoted a Door County sanitarian as saying that concrete tanks are prone to deterioration and they are considering asking the state to require additives.

In response, the WPCA sent out letters to Door County officials, the Department of Commerce and the Door County newspaper, addressing the comments in the news article. Below is a copy of the letter we sent to the Department of Commerce:

August 17, 2009

Roman Kaminski
WI Dept. of Commerce
2715 Post Road
Stevens Point WI 54481

Dear Roman,

As you might be aware, Door County recently has been experiencing problems with deteriorating septic tanks. Due to the high-profile nature of the water pollution problems in Door County, the Wisconsin Precast Concrete Association this spring sent a sample of a failed concrete tank in question to a third party for testing, to determine if the problem is isolated to a certain manufacturer, uncom-

monly high sulfur concentrations in the area's source water or other causes. The study found the tank likely was not in compliance with the cement/water ratio as required by the state code and was a factor in the failure, indicating the problem may lie with that particular manufacturer.

One Door County official has indicated that he is interested in having the state require that all manufacturers put an additive in the concrete to prevent tank deterioration. Although this could help in some cases, this would increase the cost to homeowners throughout the state and would be no guarantee – as there is no one single, simple solution. We believe the Department of Commerce should enforce its state code pertaining to cement/water ratios and should investigate rescinding product approvals for manufacturers who fail to meet the code.

Precast concrete septic tanks, when manufactured according to state requirements, can last for decades and are known to be watertight and durable. There are tens of thousands of precast concrete septic tanks in the ground throughout the state of Wisconsin, and there have only been a few isolated cases of concrete tank deterioration in recent years, occurring primarily in the eastern part of the state.

We are sharing with you a copy of the study on the deteriorated septic tank, for your information.

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ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

Executive Director/Lobbyist
Patrick Essie
Email: pessie@ekgmail.com

Association Manager
Ann Gryphan
Email: agryphan@ekgmail.com

WPCA Office
16 North Carroll Street, Suite 900
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 256-7701 FAX: (608) 251-8192

WPCA denied promotions grant

The WPCA was denied funding by the Portland Cement Association for our promotional efforts in 2010. The WPCA received funding in the amount of \$12,000 in 2008 and \$10,000 in 2009 for promotional efforts that have included the creation of a website, print ads in industry publications such as Badger Builder magazine, exhibitor booths at the WOWRA and NOWRA convention, promotional mailings to installers and county officials and more. Unfortunately, due to a downturn in the cement industry, funding for the grant program is being cut substantially in 2010 and the WPCA was informed this summer that we would not be receiving funding. We hope to be able to reapply for funding in future years as the market rebounds.

Welcome, eblake & associates

We'd like to welcome our newest Associate Member to WPCA: Ed Blake of eblake & associates, Manitowoc, Wis. He can be reached at 920-775-3829, ed@eblakewi.com

DCOMM announces layoffs

The Dept of Commerce is laying off 9 people in its Safety and Buildings Division. The layoffs include 4 in the POWTS/wastewater program and 5 in the commercial building program. The layoffs will take effect in mid-October and are due to the downturn in construction.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 11-12, 2010
WPCA Winter Conference
Holiday Inn & Suites
Madison, Wisconsin

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From Page 1

Members of the Wisconsin Precast Concrete Association are dedicated to producing durable, watertight septic tanks and are eager to work with state and local regulators to see a resolution to the tank deterioration problems occurring in certain pockets of the state.

Ann Gryphan
WPCA Association Manager

CC: Jean McCubbin

As a result of this letter, the Department of Commerce asked its field staff to contact their counties and ask if they are aware of deterioration of concrete tanks. The responses tend to confirm that the problem is primarily located in the NE portion of the state. Brown, Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Oconto, Outagamie, and Shawano counties all report deterioration problems. Interestingly, most identify one particular tank manufacturer but also state that other manufacturers have also faced similar problems - although not as high in numbers.

A couple of counties also attempted to estimate the age of the tanks that are exhibiting problems and it seems tanks produced in the 1980s through late 1990s seem to be affected the most, although the reason is unclear. Counties also report that some manufacturers now either routinely or by request use various add mixtures that seem to have the ability to reduce or at least minimize the deterioration. Of course, these are newer tanks so it remains to be seen how successful this is over time.

The WPCA staff and the Department of Commerce plan to meet likely in October to discuss this issue more in depth and how it can be addressed. The state likely will not advocate for sweeping code changes, since it appears to be a regional problem for the most part.

The WPCA held a few teleconferences this year among our members to discuss how we would like to address this issue. If anyone would like to comment further prior to our meeting with the Department of Commerce, please let us know. Otherwise, we will report back to members ideas or suggestions generated from the meeting in October.

We also are expecting the issue of deteriorating tanks to be the subject of a panel discussion at the Wisconsin Onsite Water Recycling Association/ Wisconsin Liquid Waste Carriers Association Winter Convention in January in Stevens Point. At least one WPCA manufacturer member— Aaron Ausen of Dalmaray Concrete Products— will be represented on that panel discussion. Your comments can be shared with Ausen prior to the event on Jan. 29, 2010.

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Holcim opens nation's largest cement plant

- *From Concrete Today*

The largest cement plant in the nation has opened in Missouri, about 50 miles south of St. Louis in Ste. Genevieve County, along the Mississippi River. Production began in early August. Built by Holcim, the \$1 billion plant resulted in more than 2,500 construction jobs and currently employs 250 people.

The plant is among the world's largest with the ability to produce more than 12,000 metric tons of clinker per day and 4 million metric tons of cement each year.

The site includes a harbor and fleeting facility on

the Mississippi River, with some of the largest silos ever built.

Holcim U.S., led by President and Chief Executive Bernard Terver, said it would maintain most of the plant site's 3,900 acres as a buffer area, while 1,700 acres will be devoted to quarry and plant operations.

Demand for cement has dropped due to the recession, prompting Holcim to close plants in Clarksville, Mo., and Michigan, as well as idle production at plants in Iowa and Mississippi.

Waltham, Mass.-based Holcim (US) Inc. is a subsidiary of Holcim Ltd. of Switzerland, the world's

Watch mail for dues renewals, scholarship applications

Watch your mail in early October for membership dues renewals for 2010. Dues amounts are not changed from 2009. They are:

<i>Manufacture 1-100 Tanks/Year:</i>	<i>\$405</i>
<i>Manufacture 101-500 Tanks/Year:</i>	<i>\$705</i>
<i>Manufacture 501-1,000 Tanks/Year:</i>	<i>\$1,145</i>
<i>Manufacture 1,001-2,000 Tanks/Year:</i>	<i>\$1,445</i>
<i>Manufacture 2,001-3,000 Tanks/Year:</i>	<i>\$1,745</i>
<i>Manufacture 3,001+ Tanks/Year:</i>	<i>\$2,045</i>

One change from previous years is that the membership agreed at our winter meeting in January to discontinue free warning labels with memberships, as a cost-saving measure.

2010 scholarship applications also will be emailed and mailed out to all WPCA member companies in early October. Scholarship applications are due back to the WPCA office by December 1, 2009.

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Scenes from our Summer Convention

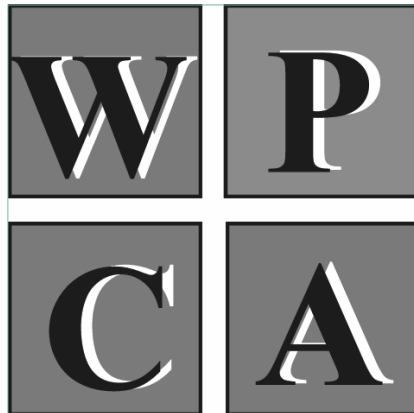


Golfers enjoy the course at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wis., on July 11, 2009.

*Photos by
Darryl Cloud/
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Wisconsin Precast Concrete Association
16 N. Carroll St., Suite 900
Madison WI 53703
(608) 256-7701
Fax (608) 251-8192



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