

Winter 2007

State budget saves Wisconsin Fund, hikes truck fees

By Ann Gryphan, Essie Kammer Group

After months of delays and behind-the-scenes negotiations, the state Assembly and state Senate voted in late October on a state budget compromise deal. It includes two provisions important to your industry:

- Continuation of the Private Sewage System Repair and Replacement Grant Program (Wisconsin Fund). The state Assembly had voted earlier this summer to eliminate this program that allocates \$3 million annually for replacing or repairing failing septic systems in the state for low-income residents. WPCA successfully fought to have this money restored, as we believe it benefits not only our industry but low-income homeowners, water quality and the public health in general. Thank you to everyone who called or wrote their legislators asking them to continue funding this valuable program.

- Increases the amounts in the vehicle registration fee schedule for heavy trucks (over 8,000 pounds) by 30%, effective on January 1, 2008. This would increase the estimated transportation fund revenue by \$7,674,800 in 2007-08 and \$49,184,500 in 2008-09.

We originally reported to you earlier this summer that the Senate voted for 10% heavy truck fees increases and the Assembly voted for 15%. When all was said and done, they came out with a compromise of an astounding 30% fee increase. This money—along with other vehicle fee increases such as driver’s license fees—would go into the

state’s transportation fund, to help with road projects. This fund was raided in past years for projects not related to transportation, and now state leaders were looking for ways to divert money back into the transportation fund. Another option being explored was a raise of the gas tax.

WPCA Executive Director Patrick Essie met with the governor’s staff in late October about industry’s concerns about these extreme fee hikes but was told Gov. Doyle would sign the budget bill as presented without a veto of these fee hikes.

The following table shows the existing fees and the fees under this item, by weight classification.

Weight up to:

(In Pounds)	Current Fee	New Fee
10,000	\$119.50	\$155.00
12,000	161.00	209.00
16,000	218.00	283.00
20,000	274.00	356.00
26,000	365.50	475.00
32,000	468.50	609.00
38,000	593.50	772.00
44,000	708.50	921.00
50,000	818.00	1,063.00
54,000	873.00	1,135.00
56,000	930.00	1,209.00
62,000	1,051.50	1,367.00
68,000	1,187.00	1,543.00
73,000	1,350.00	1,755.00

Continued on Page 3

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WPCA awarded promotions grant

The Wisconsin Precast Concrete Association was informed in October that we have been awarded a \$12,000 grant by the Great Lakes Cement Promotions Association to be used for promoting precast concrete products in Wisconsin.

The WPCA promotions committee has been working all year to develop a promotions plan and budget, in order to seek grant money from the Great Lakes Cement Promotions Association. The WPCA promotions committee members are: Rob Ausen of Dalmaray Concrete Products, Elizabeth Olson of Huffcutt Concrete, Darryl Cloud of Concrete Sealants and Tom Donahoe of BEST Technology.

The promotions plan calls for developing a WPCA website, participating in target market trade shows, doing presentations on the proper installation of concrete tanks for target markets such as plumber educational events, creating and distributing print publications, print advertisements in target market magazines such as the WOWRA News or Onsite Installer magazine, etc.

We will be needing WPCA manufacturer members to assist with trade shows and other promotional efforts in 2008. We will have a list of trade show opportunities at the January convention and will discuss our volunteer needs in further detail then.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan. 7 & 8, 2008

WPCA Winter Conference
Holiday Inn & Suites
Madison, Wisconsin

Bill would prohibit sales by county regulators

Legislation was introduced in the state Senate and state Assembly this fall that would prohibit governmental unit employees such as county regulators with duties related to septic systems from doing the following work: soil testing, septic system design, installation, repair and sales.

Current law makes certain local governmental units, generally counties, responsible for the regulation of septic systems and other private sewage systems. For example, the law requires the local governmental units to review soil test reports and to inspect private sewage systems after construction but before backfilling.

Senate Bill 274 and Assembly Bill 532 would prohibit a local governmental unit employee who has responsibilities related to the regulation of private sewage systems from doing any of the following:

1. Performing soil testing.
2. Installing, maintaining, or repairing private sewage systems.
3. Selling private sewage systems or components.
4. Designing private sewage systems.

The bill authorizes the Department of Commerce to

directly assess a forfeiture of no more than \$2,000 against a person who violates the prohibitions created in the bill.

The intent behind this bill is to eliminate the practice of county regulators from having a "side business" directly competing against those people they regulate in the onsite industry. In many counties, this practice is allowed and has led to conflicts between the regulators and private businesses.

Currently according to Comm. 5 administrative code, county regulators with duties related to POWTS cannot do soil testing within the county they are employed. However, there are no prohibitions from them doing other sorts of related work. This bill remedies that.

A public hearing was held before the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee in October; the committee passed the bill 5-0. The Assembly Natural Resources Committee is expected to vote on Assembly Bill 532 on Dec. 19.

If you would like more information about this legislation, call the WPCA office at (608) 256-7701.

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State budget impacts industry

From Page 1

Weight up to:

(In Pounds)	Current Fee	New Fee
76,000	1,600.50	2,081.00
80,000	1,969.50	2,560.00

In the end, the state budget is a good news/bad news scenario for our industry.

Stormwater runoff challenge looms for cities

- By Annie Dean, from the Nov. 2, 2007, issue of the *Madison Isthmus newspaper*. Reprinted with permission.

Greg Fries feels like he's gotten stuck cleaning up somebody else's mess. Much of the work he's doing to improve stormwater quality in Madison owes to infrastructure put in place decades ago with little consideration to water quality.

"We're figuring out how to fix a problem from the 1800s, when we were dumping sewage in the lakes," says Fries, a principal engineer with the city's engineering division who works extensively with stormwater issues. "The topic of stormwater treatment didn't come until the early 1970s. Up until then, the only thing we worried about stormwater was getting it off the property as quickly as possible."

Under regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resources, cities must reduce their stormwater pollution by 20% of total volume by Oct. 1, 2008, and 40% by 2013.

"Everything washed off from agricultural and urban surfaces [is] going straight into our waterways, and we would like to reverse that trend by any means that is effective," says Roger Bannerman, a DNR water resources management specialist. "[Treating] stormwater is definitely going to improve the situation. There are so many sources of pollutants, if we keep controlling them the lakes have to get better." Driven by these deadlines, the city of Madison has enacted as many controlling measures as possible. Already, it has surpassed the 2008 threshold, but additional measures will be needed to meet the standards for 2013.

One main strategy employed by the city is the use of standard catch basins and commercial units that swirl water out while allowing sediments to settle to the bottom. According to Fries, roughly 30% of the total stormwater output currently flows through these devices.

The city of Madison has installed more than half a

dozen of the larger devices in the last few years and has plans to add more. But while the devices certainly make for cleaner stormwater, the per-unit price ranges from \$25,000 to \$100,000, not including installation costs that usually total about \$10,000. Because of changing technology, it is difficult to say how many more must be installed by 2013.

Moreover, the devices compete for the underground space taken up by water main, sanitary sewers, gas and electric, transmission lines, and downtown steam tunnels that run from power plants to the university and government buildings.

"Storm sewers are not the only devices underground," Fries says. "[Catch basins] are typically eight feet in diameter, and the smaller, narrower downtown streets are 28 feet curb to curb.... Trying to fit an eight-foot structure in the ground can be really difficult."

What most people consider pollution in lakes — cigarette butts, aluminum cans and other assorted debris — is not even regulated by the DNR. The regulatory standards refer to sediment that is less than 1/100th of an inch in diameter.

These particles, known as total suspended solids, are so small that it is difficult to remove them from urban stormwater discharges. Water flows quickly after rainstorms, and the abundance of concrete does not allow sediments to settle out before washing into lakes.

In Madison, an estimated 7.9 million pounds of total suspended solids are generated each year, of which 5.6 million pounds end up in the water supply. That means the city is now effectively removing about 30% of the total.

Pollution sources include construction-site erosion, runoff from streets and parking lots, and discharge from industrial and sewage treatment plants.

Washed along with these urban pollutants is runoff from agricultural areas and suburban neighbor-

Continued on Page 5

Stormwater runoff challenge looms for cities

From Page 4

hoods. These often contain fertilizers that promote the excessive algae growth in lakes that Madison has been battling for decades.

Like other cities, Madison is adopting an integrated approach. Some practices seek to control pollutants in water; some help reduce the volume of water that runs off; and some slow the rate at which stormwater flows back into waterways after large storms. One of the most effective strategies is installing rain gardens, which can be done by ordinary citizens. Rain gardens use certain kinds of plantings to increase the amount of rainwater that gets absorbed into the ground. This keeps runoff and attendant pollutants from entering the stormwater system.

"Prevention is the way to go, in my opinion," says Bannerman. "But if we can't use prevention, we have to put all these devices in place."

Besides catch basins, the city has since the 1970s used retention ponds and detention basins on new developments. They serve as a type of dry bathtub that fills up during a storm event, to decrease flooding. The technology was improved in the '80s, when retention-based permanent ponds became more efficient at settling out smaller particles.

Fries says about 70% of all stormwater in Madison receives some level of treatment. But current technology can only remove a fraction of total suspended solids. That will make it difficult for the city to meet the mandatory reduction thresholds.

"Statewide, there are lots of cities with core downtown areas that will have a problem meeting 40% reduction [by 2013]," says Fries. "It is a problem for any areas built before the 1940s."

Fries suspects meeting the 2013 goal will require "a new program of some type; to be honest we are not sure what this program would be. It's unclear how many municipi-

palities will be able to meet that goal statewide."

Originally, the city of Madison hoped it could achieve much of the required reductions by stepping up its regimen of street sweeping. But a study released this March conducted by the city, DNR and U.S. Geological Survey proved otherwise.

According to Fries, the study found that only 1% to 6% of total suspended solids were being removed with this method, far less than the hoped-for 10% to 15%. This leaves the city of Madison with an additional burden to reach the 40% requirement.

"From a municipality standpoint," says Fries, "street sweeping is expensive, and we don't get significant credit for it from the DNR; but we still have to do it." Now the city realizes it must add other approaches and explore new technologies. And it must do so at possibly considerable expense, with only five budget cycles to go before 2013.

"It's going to be a long process to get them all implemented," says R.J. Waschbusch of the U.S. Geological Survey, who has conducted numerous studies in Madison. "At this point there is no magic bullet. At this point you can only build on things and chip away at it."

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Don't forget to register for winter convention

The WPCA Winter Convention will be held Jan. 7-8 at the Holiday Inn & Suites in Madison, Wis. There is still time to register!

The hotel room block will be released to the public on Dec. 24, so call now for your hotel reservations. After Dec. 24, you cannot be guaranteed a hotel room at the Holiday Inn! The number for reservations is: (608) 826-0500.

Guest speakers are from Barger & Sons Precast of Tennessee, ALAR Engineering and WI Department of Commerce. Mike Beckwith of the WI Department of Commerce will be retiring in January, so come to wish him farewell and best wishes.

We hope to see you in January!


2nd warning label not part of code rewrites

A proposal to require a second warning label on septic tank covers was not part of the final Wisconsin Department of Commerce Comm 81-87 code rewrites that went to public hearing this fall.

A DCOMM advisory committee this spring recommended that a second warning label be required on septic tank covers, warning homeowners that septic tank covers must be locked and secured at all times and it is ultimately the owner's responsibility to make sure the cover is securely locked. This came after an incident this spring in which a boy was injured after falling into a septic tank.

The WPCA sent a letter to the department expressing our concern about the effectiveness of this proposed requirement. The proposal therefore was not included in the code changes.

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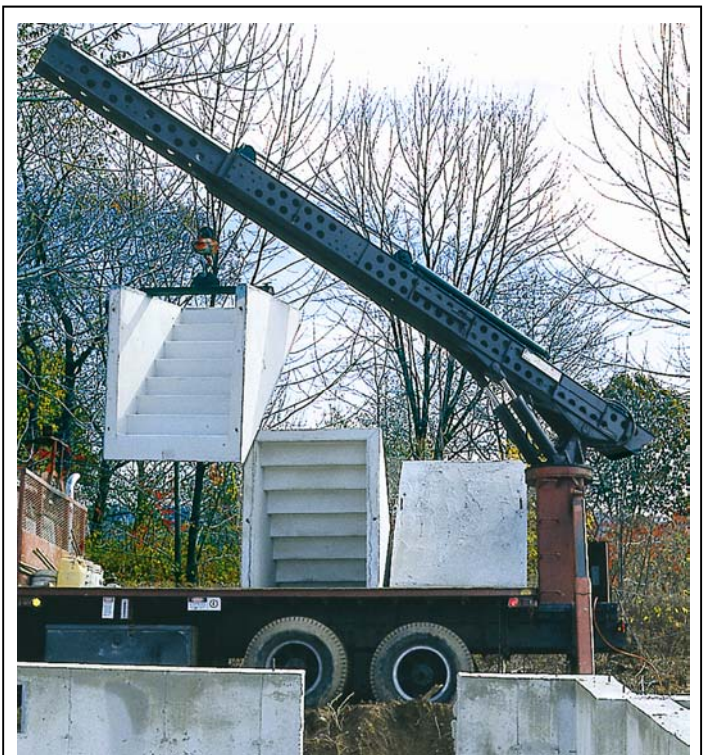
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Thank you, scholarship fund contributors

Thank you to those companies that have donated to the WPCA scholarship funds so far. Donations for the 2008 scholarship fund were collected through Oct. 1, 2007. Donations for the 2009 scholarship will be collected through Oct. 1, 2008.

The 2008 scholarship recipient will be announced at our convention in January.

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Andry Rasmussen & Sons Inc.
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Henry Huffcutt Co. Inc.
Lake Shore Burial Vault
Marshfield Wilbert Vault
Meade Construction Co. Inc.
Wieser Concrete Products Inc.

Welcome, Specco & Voeller

Two companies have joined the WPCA as associate members this fall. They are:

- **Specco Industries Inc. Contact person is Jeff Bencsik, 13087 Main St., Lemont IL 60439, phone 630-257-5060, www.specco.com.** Specco Industries Inc. is a Chicago-based independently owned and operated manufacturer of a complete line of specification compounds designed for concrete and masonry production, maintenance and repair. They directly supply their products to precast concrete producers.
- **Voeller Mixers Inc. Contact person is Michael Haggengos, 455 N. Moore Road, P.O. Box 325, Port Washington WI 53074-0325, phone 262-284-3114, www.voellermixers.com.** Over the past 40 years, Voeller has manufactured mixing equipment for the concrete, glass, fiberglass, flyash and refractory industries. For their precast concrete producers, they will tailor the precise batch plant to handle production needs.

Welcome, Specco Industries and Voeller Mixers. We hope to see you in January!

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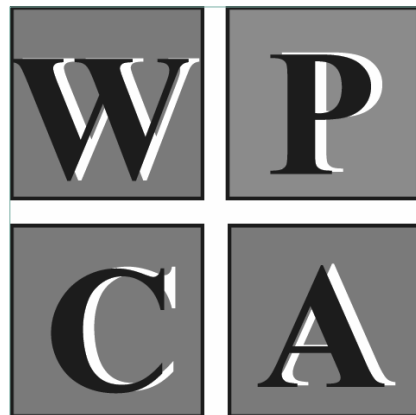
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