

Golden Triangle Small Business Advisory Committee

Small Business and Local Government Assistance Section
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Tuesday, March 17, 2009 - 2:00pm-3:30pm
Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission, Swan Room
www.sblga.info

Draft Minutes

Attendees

Kent Batman	Sarah Kirksey	Will Wyman
Candace Broucher	Lori Palmer	
Conrad Cooper	Mary Ann Reid	
Andrew Gardner	Jeff Rogers	

Sarah Kirksey, Environmental Investigator

Ms. Kirksey presented information on what to expect during an investigation. She covered reasons why a site may be investigated, when advance notice would and would not be given, how to prepare, what to expect during an investigation, and how to wrap things up afterward. She noted that most of the regulated community is made up of small businesses. If you are notified ahead of time about an investigation, you can request a checklist from the investigator so you will know what items are being investigated. It was noted that if you receive a Notice of Violation (NOV), it is very important to get the corrective actions done within the time frames allowed to avoid going to enforcement and paying fines. A Small Business and Local Government Assistance compliance assistance specialist can assist with corrective actions needed to satisfy the requirements of the NOV. Members of the committee talked about how intimidating it is to have investigators come to their sites. Ms. Broucher noted that she has been treated respectfully when her business has been investigated.

Andrew Gardner, Small Business and Local Government Assistance Section Manager

Mr. Gardner provided an update on several bills that are being proposed in the Texas Legislature during the 81st session:

- Senate Bill 16 is an air bill that would modify the TERP program and provide incentives for new air quality technologies, and establish appliance standards and energy efficient building codes. SB16 would also call for a mandatory reduction in greenhouse gases.
- There are several bills that would affect auto salvage businesses. There is a proposal to move Texas vehicle registration out of the Texas Department of Transportation. There is also a proposal that would require proof of stormwater coverage for auto salvage businesses.
- There is a proposed increase to three water fees: the consolidated water quality fee, public health services fee, and the water use assessment fee. There is currently a legislative cap of \$75,000, so this rule would disproportionately affect small systems. The comment period is underway right now. Complete information on these proposals, including information on how to comment, is available at www.sblga.info or <http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/agency/waterfees.html>.
- There is a bill that proposes to assess the economic benefit of a violation to the alleged violator in determining the amount of an administrative penalty imposed by the TCEQ.

Mr. Gardner also discussed the new ozone standard that was set to 0.075 ppb in May 2008. The plans to meet this new standard are due by 2013. All of the larger sources, “the low-hanging fruit”, are already being regulated, so the smaller area sources will possibly be drawn into new plans.

Lori Palmer, GTSBAC Coordinator

There will be a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event on Saturday, April 18th from 8:00 am to 1:00pm at the Cardinal Stadium Parking Lot of Lamar University in Beaumont. Scrap tires will also be collected at this event; there is no charge for the first 8 tires, and a charge of \$1.00 for each additional tire.

The Environmental Trade Fair and Conference will be held May 12-14 at the Austin Convention Center.

The next Small Business Advisory Committee Meeting will be held June 16, 2009 from 11:30am-1:00pm. Andy Gardner will discuss his philosophy on SBACs, and wants feedback from SBAC members.