

MDEQ Assumes Wayne County Air Quality Duties

On October 1, 2001, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality assumed the responsibility for regulating air quality in Wayne County, according to MDEQ Director Russell Harding.

The Wayne County Department of Environment Air Quality Management Division (Wayne County Air Division) was the primary government agency responsible for implementing federal, state and county air quality regulation in Wayne County for over 30 years. In recent years, the Wayne County Air Division has operated under contract with MDEQ to implement and enforce state air quality requirements. Wayne County reportedly decided to terminate the Wayne County Air Division due to the required financial commitment.

Transition work between the state and county has been ongoing for several months.

"We are committed to protecting the quality of Wayne County's air and the health of its residents," Harding said. "The fact that southeast Michigan is heavily populated and industrialized presents challenges. But combining the experience of former county staff with the state's expertise and resources will reinforce our effort. State and local cooperation already has resulted in the Detroit area's ability to meet national air standards. That's a significant achievement for a major metropolitan area, and we will continue building on that success."

About 37 positions are being added to the MDEQ air program due to the transition. Many of the positions will be based in Detroit though others will be in the MDEQ's Livonia and Lansing offices. Wayne County air program employees who applied for jobs with the MDEQ are receiving first consideration.

New Source Review permit applications from Wayne County will now be sent to the MDEQ Air Quality Division Permit Section in Lansing for processing. Information on the New Source Review program is available on the Internet at www.deq.state.mi.us/aqd/permits/permits.html. Lynn Fiedler, permitting section supervisor, can be reached at (517) 373-7087.

Other air issues such as Renewable Operating Permits, routine reports, and air quality questions or concerns can be addressed by contacting Lillian Woolley or Wihemina McLemore in the MDEQ Detroit Office, 300 River Place, Suite 3600, Detroit, MI 48207. The phone number is (313) 392-6480.

S. Lee Johnson