

Minutes

Quad City Air Quality Task Force

Friday, October 12, 2007, 11:00 A.M
Bi-State Regional Commission
1504 Third Avenue
Rock Island, Illinois

1. Introductions and Consideration of August 10, 2007 Meeting Minutes. Mr. Mook called the meeting to order and requested introductions of those in attendance. Mr. Mook asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes. The Task Force approved the minutes as written.
2. Update from Resource Agencies on Current Air Quality Issues. Mr. Matthew Johnson of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Mr. Jim Ross of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency attended the meeting by conference call. Mr. Ross reported that a state implementation plan is being revised for submittal. A copy of that will be placed on the website. In relation to PM 2.5, Chicago will be in attainment for 2010; however, the St. Louis area will not reach attainment and will be requesting an extension. Mr. Johnson stated that the Iowa DNR submitted comments in coordination with the Department of Health to the U.S. EPA regarding the proposed lower ozone standards. The IADNR supported lowering the primary standard as well as implementation of the secondary standard because of the agricultural basis of the state. The departments also encouraged utilizing an additional decimal point and the three year averaging method.
3. Mass Transit Updates and Ridership Promotion. Mr. Tavares Williams, from MetroLINK, and Ms. Becky Passman, the Iowa Quad City Transit Coordinator at Bi-State Regional Commission, provided an update on mass transit promotion in the Quad Cities. Ms. Passman reported that Bettendorf Transit, Davenport CitiBus, and Great River Transit have all annual ridership and have continually increased since 2004 and usage of bike racks on buses has increased by 54% from FY 2006 to FY2007. Bettendorf's monthly PassPort sales have also increased from FY 2006 to FY 2007 by 30.6%. Ms. Passman reported that the annual ridership figures for Davenport CitiBus have also increased each year since 2003. CitiBus undertook the process of restructuring the bus route system between March and July of 2007. The process involved 3 public forums, creating 2 informational videos, and gathering input via the website's "Action Center". In addition, the City of Davenport proclaimed July 9th as "Transit Rider Appreciation Day" with no fare to be collected on CitiBus fixed routes that day. CitiBus was joined in that effort by Bettendorf Transit and MetroLINK, resulting in a "Fare-free" cooperative effort. Ms. Passman also spoke of the annual increases in ridership for River Bend Transit. River Bend Transit launched a Quad City-Muscatine Employee Shuttle pilot program in 2006. The number of riders utilizing that service has doubled in the past year. Because of the need indicated by that program, a permanent service is scheduled to open in January of 2008, as Phase 1, and a reciprocal service for those living in Muscatine and commuting to the Quad Cities is planned to launch in January of 2009 as Phase 2 of the plan. The goal is to create a fully reciprocal, self-sustaining commuter service between the Quad Cities and Muscatine. Ms. Passman also discussed some collaborative efforts

underway to promote transit ridership. One such effort is Quad Cities Transportation Advocacy Group (QCTAG), which works to promote a balanced approach to transportation that encourages walking, biking, and public transportation. Additionally, the area's public transit providers have teamed up with other organizations to determine the feasibility of a shared, limited stop, riverfront route which would circulate from the I-74 Bridge to the Centennial Bridge.

Mr. Williams reported that MetroLINK has had a 15% increase in ridership every month so far this year, and the increase doesn't seem to be dependent on gas prices. It is projected that MetroLINK will have 2.5 million riders this year – 53% of those riders will be commuting to work or school. MetroLINK has added some features for tech savvy riders. Text messaging has been incorporated so that a rider can send a text code of their location to MetroLINK and receive a message back from an automated computer system telling the rider of the location and expected arrival time of the next bus. There is also a trip planning feature on the website, which is good place for first time users to get familiar with the bus system. Mr. Williams also reported that MetroLINK has added a new route across the West Rock River bridge to their bus system. In an effort to protect the environment, a portion of MetroLINK's fleet of buses use compressed natural gas, which reduces the emission of carbon and nitrogen oxide, and the other buses in the fleet use bio-diesel fuel.

4. Staff Report on Local Activities. Ms. McCullough reported that AASHTO supported lowering the primary standard, but did not support using the secondary standard. Locally, there has been resurgence on the issue of banning open burning, with more meetings being scheduled to continue the discussion. Mr. Tim Ridder from the City of Rock Island stated that Rock Island has been doubling their green efforts in the city by creating a "green team" and working on various environmental issues. He would like to discuss the possibility of a green cities coalition for the Quad Cities and the possible opportunity to set up a clean cities program locally.
5. Other Business. Mr. Pete Hamlin reported that Mid-American is concerned with the possibility of the QC area falling into non-attainment in regards to the possible lowering of the primary standards, and therefore, are looking into voluntary measures that could be implemented to reduce pollution. One such measure would be to implement a ban on truck idling, enforcing that trucks idle for no longer than 5 minutes before shutting off. The ability to plug in the truck engines to keep them warm would be desirable to in order to enforce a year round ban. At this time, there are no engine plug-ins in Iowa, but 4 or 5 are being planned.
6. Scheduling of Next Meeting. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Friday, April 11, 2008 at 11:00 a.m.
7. Adjournment. Mr. Mook motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 11:55 a.m.