

Background

Small business owners in Summit and Cuyahoga Counties have been faced with an untenable choice when disposing of oil and latex paint, florescent bulbs, varnish, pesticides, and many other common hazardous wastes. Private industry hazardous waste removal fees range from \$300-\$500 per visit: a prohibitive sum for many small businesses. As a result, too often small business hazardous waste is poured down a drain or on the ground, placed in a dumpster for landfill disposal, or stockpiled. The Ohio EPA estimates that approximately 80% of all small businesses improperly manage their chemical and hazardous waste. The Lake Erie watershed suffers the long-term consequences of these improper and illegal methods of hazardous waste disposal, and its businesses suffer the cost of cleaning up the resulting brownfields and other environmental problems.

The Summit/Akron Solid Waste Management Authority became aware of the problems involved in small business hazardous waste disposal in 1996 when it opened the Household Hazardous Waste Recycling Center (HHWRC), the first such permanent facility in Ohio. The HHWRC has proved a tremendous success, both in collecting household hazardous waste for proper disposal and in educating the public about the dangers of improper hazardous waste disposal. Although the HHWRC, by law (HB 592), cannot accept business hazardous waste, it received numerous unsolicited requests from small businesses eager to dispose properly of hazardous waste. The Authority and the Akron Regional Development Board surveyed the businesses making these requests, determining that they were small businesses generating less than 220 pounds of hazardous waste per month. Under Ohio law, these small businesses are classified as Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators, and they:

- Generate between 60% and 80 % of our community's business hazardous waste
- Comprise approximately 20% of all small businesses in Summit and Cuyahoga Counties
- Are required to send their hazardous waste to a permitted treatment, storage and disposal facility, but are exempt from most other hazardous waste regulations
- Are underserved by existing commercial hazardous waste disposal alternatives.

Through a grant from the Ohio Water Development Authority, the Summit/Akron Solid Waste Management Authority created a business plan for a Business Hazardous Waste Recycling Center demonstration project. The Task Force also created a 501(c) 3, the Ohio Organization for Recycling and Reuse, to raise startup funds for the Center and to oversee its operations.

After years of work with local communities, business and industry leaders, health departments and waste management corporations and the efforts of legal, financial, and communications professionals, the Ohio Organization for Recycling and Reuse received the required exemptions from Ohio EPA and completed renovations of a site in Akron.

BizMat, a two-year demonstration project business hazardous waste recycling center, opened for business on October 25, 2005.

Project Goals

The Business Hazardous Waste Recycling Center will:

- Reduce unsafe and illegal disposal of business hazardous waste

Progress toward meeting goal: By providing an affordable, fee-for-service recycling point for small business hazardous waste, the Business Hazardous Waste Recycling Center will enable more small businesses to dispose properly of hazardous waste. We are working to measure the effect of recycling business hazardous waste by working with the Akron Public Utilities Bureau, which has established a benchmark for hazardous waste discharge and will test to determine if BizMat is instrumental in reducing overall hazardous waste discharge. Although we hope to achieve significant measurable reductions, we are aware that Akron's combined sewer overflow system may affect our results.

- Provide a comprehensive, convenient, affordable and environmentally correct recycling/disposal option to small businesses.

Progress toward meeting goal: Small businesses make their decisions about hazardous waste disposal primarily based on financial factors, according to the Business Hazardous Waste Task Force's qualitative research. The low, \$95 per visit fee of the Recycling Center provides an incentive to small businesses to dispose of waste properly in order to limit workplace hazards and liability. The \$95 fee covers any delivery of waste up to the regulated 200 pounds of material; more than 200 pounds is \$1/pound. Our ability to accept more than the regulated 200 pounds will allow us to help small businesses dispose of their stockpiles of hazardous waste.

- Educate the business community about business hazardous waste and proper management practices

Progress toward meeting goal: The Ohio Organization for Recycling and Reuse has established a speakers' bureau to educate regulatory groups, building managers' associations, elected and appointed officials, boards of trade, realtors and others concerned with hazardous waste. During these educational presentations, speakers distribute the BizMat brochure and review safe storage and transportation of hazardous waste. We are also pursuing earned media and education through our many business and industry partners, including COSE, the small business division of the Greater Cleveland Partnership.

BizMat also offers individual consultation with businesses on both safe storage and transportation of hazardous waste as well as acceptable alternative products that can be substituted for products that result in hazardous waste. These

consultations are available either at business locations or when materials are delivered to BizMat. We are working with Ohio EPA to develop a print and web (www.bizmatcenter.org) list of hazardous waste alternatives and acceptable products, and also provide businesses with the opportunity to order through us approved hazardous waste storage and transportation materials from UltraTech.

- Recycle as much business hazardous waste as possible

Progress toward meeting goal: After one month of operation, BizMat's recycling rate is 85%. Examples of recycling include oil based paint and thinners that are blended into a fuel for cement kilns and motor oil and antifreeze that are cleaned for reuse. get blended into a fuel blend that fuels cement kilns.

- Create a sustainable program to fund brownfield abatement in the local community.

Progress toward meeting goal: During BizMat's two-year demonstration period, funds (approximately \$20 from each vehicle charge) will be set aside for use by in a brownfield abatement fund. If BizMat becomes a permanent project at the end of its two-year demonstration, the brownfield abatement fund will be established and overseen by a separate entity that will oversee, invest, and distribute grants to organizations with a legitimate business plan for a site with environmental challenges.

- Provide a model for replication by other communities in the Lake Erie watershed and throughout Ohio.

Progress toward meeting goal: The Ohio Organization for Recycling and Reuse is developing a handbook to chronicle its experiences in developing BizMat. This handbook, which will be available in April 2006, will cover the regulatory and site selection issues that we encountered, our process for contractor selection, and our building code, permitting, and fire prevention and safety procedures. We will distribute this handbook through Ohio solid Waste Districts, health departments, fire prevention organizations, local, county governments, mayors' associations, county commissioners' associations, fire chiefs' associations, and health commissions and commissioners.