

Michael F. Easley, Governor



William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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ENVIRONMENTAL COURSE ASSISTS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES STATEWIDE IN MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

RALEIGH – Nine government agencies in North Carolina today completed a yearlong course aimed at helping them implement an environmental management system (EMS). Early results of the hands-on course have shown the class was a success in assisting facilities to more effectively manage and lessen their potential environmental impacts.

The City of Shelby's Wastewater Treatment Division – a participant in the EMS Development Course for Government Agencies, coordinated by the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (DPPEA) – earlier this month was recommended for ISO 14001 certification and will be becoming the state's second public agency to implement an ISO 14001 certified EMS. North Carolina's first public agency to become ISO 14001 certified was the City of Gastonia's Wastewater Treatment Division, certified one year ago.

Next month, the Buncombe County Metropolitan Sewerage District – also a class participant – will undergo a certification audit. Following its certification, North Carolina will have the highest number of certified public agencies in the nation. Other course participants, such as the N.C. Zoological Park's horticulture department, have developed and implemented an EMS, while the remaining course participants are in the process of finalizing their EMSs.

An EMS is a tool that provides organizations with a method to systematically manage their environmental activities, provides structure, and helps them to achieve environmental obligations and performance goals. An EMS follows a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle and can be used by a wide range of organizations – from manufacturing facilities to service industries to agribusiness to government agencies.

“The adoption of EMSs by North Carolina organizations, public and private, furthers DENR's vision of a healthy environment and a vibrant economy by moving organizations beyond compliance and toward environmental sustainability,” said Bill Ross, secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. “Though business and industry more typically use an EMS as a model to achieve improved environmental performance, its use can also benefit government agencies, as documented by the hard work of these course participants.”

The following agencies will graduate from the course today:

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities
- City of Shelby Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Metropolitan Sewerage District of Buncombe County
- Naval Aviation Depot Cherry Point
- N.C. Zoological Park
- Roanoke Rapids Sanitary District
- Town of Cary Public Works and Utilities – North Cary Water Reclamation Facility
- University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill Department of Environment, Health & Safety
- N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance

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