

NWDA Health & Environment Committee (now Air Quality Committee)
Achievements 1994- 2012
5.16.12

Following are H & E Committee achievements in their long struggle to clean up the airshed in NW Portland:

- 1992 created a survey to ask neighbors if they had a problem with neighborhood industrial odors. The surveys said 'yes'. Committee began to search for source of odors.
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- 1996 Northwest Portland Air Pollution Action Guide: Published in NW Examiner, showed Title V polluters in NW Industrial Sanctuary. Map created for H & E Committee by NW Environmental Advocates on a \$10,000.00 grant from Metro's Central Station Enhancement Committee.
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- 1997 the Committee got an EPA grant for \$20,550.00 to use bucket monitors in the neighborhood to monitor for VOCs. Dr. Amundson built the buckets and ran the program, working with the neighbors and with DEQ - DEQ established air toxics site at Post Office - this site was used until DEQ ran out of money for monitoring. The monitors established that NW Portland was subjected to higher concentrations of metals than other sites in the Metropolitan Area. The neighborhood AQ monitoring showed high levels of particulates (PM 2.5) throughout the neighborhood.
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- 1998, April 9th H & E Held a press conference at the NW Service Center to release the results of the bucket monitoring project. Over 70 toxic compounds were found in neighborhood air, of particular note was high levels of benzene, a Class A carcinogen.
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- 1998, May 6th, H & E members testified at Title V permit hearing for Chevron Corp. ODEQ allowed Chevron to load barges on the Willamette without using the capture equipment required in California and Washington State. This allowed tons of VOCs, including benzene into the neighborhoods.
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- 1998, May 27th, H & E Committee testified at ESCO Corp. Title V permit Hearing. ESCO, a multinational foundry, located at 25th & Vaughn on the edge of the neighborhood has a second plant on NW Brewer St.
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- 1998, June 1st, NWDA passed a motion from H & E Committee, "In the interests of continued collaboration with ESCO to reduce hazardous air emissions, the NWDA Board would like to propose that ESCO contract with an independent consultant to carry out an independent audit of the plant. The audit would propose appropriate technology or other means to reduce HAPS (hazardous air pollution) emissions."
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- Plaza Cleaners, at NW Johnson & 21st, voluntarily decided to stop using solvents. They appeared in the documentary, **What's In Our Air?**
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- 1999, Sharon Genasci made a documentary about neighborhood air quality activism In Oregon, Washington & California, called **What's In Our Air?** It took a Gold at the Houston International Film Festival.
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- 2001, March, Faulkner Automotive Electric installed a new burn-out oven with an attached afterburner to destroy organic pollutants and odors: a pregnant neighbor across the street from Faulkner (28th & Thurman) took an air sample with one of H & E's bucket samplers. Analysis of the sample indicated high levels of styrene associated with the odor from Faulkner - a roof pipe at Faulkner was directed at her house. The Committee presented DEQ with the data. DEQ staffer, Kevin Masterson investigated. He saved the company money by suggesting they switch from styrene to the less toxic solvent, toluene. From the money saved Faulkner purchased a new afterburner. As a result of the changes, air emissions were reduced 95 per cent.
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- 2001, Sharon & Don Genasci sued Chevron for their air emissions during barge loading. Chevron settled and the settlement monies funded three years of monitoring the neighborhood air under Dr. Robert Amundson's direction. During the three years of monitoring dust on neighbors' porches, High levels of lead, cadmium, manganese and other heavy metals were identified running from Vaughn & 25th to Johnson Street. High levels of phenol and benzene were also found in other monitoring.
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- DEQ decided to write a rule that required capture equipment during barge loading, because of the Committee's activism and the lawsuit.
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- 2001, August, H & E held a neighborhood meeting at Friendly House, where Kevin Downing (DEQ) and Annette Liebe (DEQ) were given awards for their work on DEQ's rule to require capture equipment for barge loading. Another award was given to Steve Johnson at Plaza Cleaners for their decision to stop using solvents, and an award was given to Kevin Masterson (DEQ) for his work with Faulkner to install an afterburner.
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- 2001, Drew Paint, sited next to a proposed new condo development on NW 21st & Raleigh, was emitting toxic paint compounds. Neighbors complained. Bob Davies from H & E undertook the task of finding an Oregon technology produced in Tualatin (Forest Paints in Eugene used it) that would greatly reduce the pollution. He organized a meeting with the owner of Drew Paint, the condo developer and city staff to creatively address this issue. The owner of Drew Paint and the developer were asked to share the \$30,000.00 cost of installing the pollution control device. Both refused. The owner of Drew Paint had just installed \$300,000.00 in underground tanks to keep these compounds out of ground water (DEQ rule). DEQ allowed Drew Paint to continue emitting into the airshed and the city backed away from a role in helping reduce air toxics.
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- 2002, November, Dr. Amundson presented the fourth report to DEQ on air pollution monitoring data collected in the neighborhood. (currently available on-line at NWDA Office). Among other data, he found acrolein at 250 times above the EPA benchmark in the ESCO odor.
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- June 12th, 2003, H & E held a forum on air quality at Friendly House, where they introduced their
- new **What's In Our Air?** lawn signs. Dr. Amundson spoke about the results of the bucket monitoring project - over 70 toxic compounds in the air.
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- 2004, September 22nd, H & E held a Friendly House meeting to discuss the results of the monitoring surveys and health impacts of compounds

found. Dr. Amundson and Jan Semenza, a PSU Toxicologist spoke about compounds above the cancer benchmark.

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- 2005, H& E members turned out with other neighbors to testify at the ESCO five year permit hearing. At H & E's request, lead levels were reduced in the permit from half a ton to 80 lbs.
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- 2005, September 28, H & E Held a Friendly House meeting with neighbors to discuss diesel emissions with Kevin Downing from DEQ and Toxicologist, Jan Semenza from PSU. Diesel was at 789 times above the cancer benchmark.
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- June 2, 2005 -February 3, 2012: H & E created an new odor survey form and website www.portlandair.org, so neighbors could register odor complaints. The Committee received 1,050 complaints. The complaints were also sent to DEQ. Of these complaints, 775 (73%), submitted by approximately 120 people named ESCO as the odor source. Another major problem was fuel smells, probably coming from the overground oil tank farm.
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- 2007, February 12, Sharon Genasci, representing H & E participated in a Metro Workshop on diesel reductions with garbage haulers representing 663 diesel trucks in the Portland area, some as old as 25 years. Retrofit technology was discussed that would clean up the diesel in newer trucks by 90 per cent. Older retrofitted trucks would bring 40 per cent diesel reduction. Health impacts of diesel were discussed. Grants for retrofits discussed, were later not available.
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- 2007, March 7, H & E members met in Salem with Mitch Greenlick & Brad Avakian to talk about the odor complaints, the air monitoring results and support for the Governor's initiatives on global warming.
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- 2008, July 3rd, **What's In Our Air?** shown at the NW Screening Room on 19th Street. Discussion on neighborhood air pollution after screening.
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- 2009, May 11th, Chapman School neighborhood meeting, organized with NCA (Neighbors for Clean Air). Neighbors ask DEQ about air emissions, and were not satisfied with answers. Cooper Environmental

gave H & E the results of their monitoring project on ESCO fenceline for heavy metals, which showed spikes of lead, manganese and other metals. These results were consistent with the metals found in dust samples collected in 2001 and 2002.

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- 2009, September, H & E & NCA collected 1279 petitions to DEQ requesting that Best Available Technology to minimize air pollution be written into the ESCO permit. These were handed to DEQ at Chapman School meeting.
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- 2009, September 30th, Sharon Genasci testified at Senate Interim Committee on Health Care, where she made a case for an independent audit of ESCO Corp.
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- 2009, October 12th, H & E motion to NWDA Board (passed) for independent auditor at ESCO.
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- 2009, October 15, Bob Amundson & Sharon Genasci met with Head and Deputy Head of DEQ to talk about NW neighborhood air pollution and DEQ failure to protect the neighborhood from industrial pollution.
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- 2009, Paul Koberstein wrote a series of articles published in NW Examiner about ESCO emissions and public health.
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- 2010, May 5th, Sharon Genasci on behalf of H & E attended an EPA Region 10 Roundtable in Seattle.
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- 2010, May 10, Sujata Joshi, from Oregon Health Division spoke to H & E about work with Oregon Cancer Registry data.
- The Committee asked Sujata for cancer data on the NW Neighborhood.
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- 2010, May, Sharon Genasci & Monica Russell (DEQ) went to the oil tank farm, looking for the source of raw fuel odor complaints. They agreed that the odor they found at the tank farm matched the odor in the neighborhood. DEQ denied any source had been found. The Examiner newspaper was given the wrong information. Later, DEQ apologized for their mistake.
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- 2010, May 17, DEQ Oil Companies hearing. H & E testified on the need to earthquake proof the above ground oil tanks in the tank farm and to clean up the over 75 year old tanks there (After 75 years the tanks are known to leak). Bob Amundson submitted written testimony requesting wind, speed and direction monitors on each facility to better track down the source of raw fuel odors impacting the neighborhood. DEQ denied request.
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- 2010, May 18th, DEQ Public Benchmarks hearing for manganese, lead, ethyl benzene & mercury. H & E testified about spiking levels of manganese and lead found when monitoring NW airshed.
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- 2010, July 9 to 19th, ESCO baghouse failure. H & E received 13 odor complaints about odors and dust.
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- 2010, September 13, Jim Karas recruited by H & E to be candidate for DEQ independent auditor for ESCO. Initially,
- DEQ turned down his application on a technicality. NWDA Board, working with H & E passed a motion supporting a fairer process.
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- 2010, November 8th, DEQ fined ESCO \$5,000.00 for failing to stop production when the baghouses failed.
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- 2010, June 13th to 2011, Work on the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) with ESCO underway. Representatives from
- H & E, PEAC, NCA and NEDC began negotiations with the company.
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- 2011, August & September, Bob Amundson collected dust samples at 10 location in NW Portland. Analyses showed same location of metals hot spot downwind of ESCO facility on Vaughn.
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- 2011, September 8th, H & E Minority Report (on ESCO GNA) drafted by H & E. The problem with the GNA was: 1.) no monitoring plan was included to catch any post GNA emissions and 2.) no controls were required on Slinger Bay (the main source of fugitive emissions) for at least five years.
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- 2012, February, 13, H & E changed name to NWDA Air Quality Committee after NWDA Board vote.