

## Mayor's Column for April 21, 2010 Review

Thursday, April 22, is Earth Day 2010, the 40<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of the modern environmental movement. I was an Evansville High School senior in 1970 when Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson organized the first Earth Day event. Little did I know that years later I would become actively involved with environmental activities and energy issues in Evansville.

On Friday, April 23, the Evansville 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Earth Day Energy Fair will occur. The Fair has become better with each passing year and this one will be the best yet. Event exhibitors are increasingly focused on energy and the environment. Some of the exhibitors include Ozee Cars (neighborhood electric vehicles), Albright Electric & Solar, Aldo Leopold Nature Center, Alliant Energy, Focus on Energy, Evansville Water & Light, WPPI Energy, Formecology, H & H Solar Energy Services, Orion Energy Systems, Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, Seventh Generation Energy Systems, Tallgrass Restoration, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Tipi Produce, Welty Environmental Center, and Pleasant Prairie Greenhouse.

There will be lots of fun for our youth, including the return of Professor Gizmo and his great experiments, owl pellet dissection, kids' scavenger hunt, Robotics Show from Discovery World, Randyman's Animals of Wisconsin, live golden eagle from Hoo's Woods, student "recycled" fashion show, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade singers, middle school jazz band, student science fair, and the WPPI Energy Cycle.

There are tours to Larson Acres and the High School's Energy Efficient House Project. There are recycling opportunities; I already have a bag filled with old glasses, cell phones, parent hearing aids, and an incandescent light bulb. Eager Free Public Library will hold a book exchange at the Fair: bring a book you've read and exchange for a different read. The DNR will distribute free native trees.

It has been my honor to talk about our extraordinary energy fair over the past few years—it is truly something special. I gave an interview to an Iowa radio station following my participation in a presentation on local environmentalism at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association Energy Fair in Custer a couple of years ago. Last fall I gave a presentation about our Energy Fair in Colorado at the Customer Connections Conference of the American Public Power Association. An attendee at the conference requested my Power Point presentation; she was from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. The mayor of Bayfield and the city manager of Beloit attended our Energy Fair last year. We are expecting attendees from Whitewater, Janesville, and Columbus at this year's event.

The Evansville Energy Independence Team will have a display at the Energy Fair. There will be information on the 25 x 25 Energy Independence Plan developed to reduce our ecological footprint and increase our use of renewable energy sources. The 25 x 25 Plan includes a list of five priority projects to generate 25% of municipal energy and transportation fuel use from renewable sources by the year 2025. The list includes the waste water treatment plant upgrade and 100 kW wind turbine, upgrading well and lift

station pumps to high efficiency variable frequency drive models, public works building efficiency lighting and heating retrofits, energy efficiency features in new vehicles as future purchases are made, and street light upgrades to LED technology.

Governor Doyle recently announced the award of 82 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants totaling \$9.5 million in funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Evansville was awarded \$133,496 towards two of the projects on the priority list of our 25 x 25 Plan; there was no required local match. \$25,267 will be used to upgrade the lighting in the public works garage and \$108,229 will be used to upgrade about half of city street lights to LED technology. The EECBG funding requires project completion by the end of 2010. These efficiency improvements are estimated to save more than \$10,000 in electricity expense annually in the city operating budget. The lighting models that will be used in these projects will be on display at the Energy Fair. They are from Wisconsin companies, Orion Energy Systems in Manitowoc and Ruud Lighting in Racine.

The wastewater treatment plant upgrade is scheduled for completion later this year. The wind turbine installation will occur this summer. A planned heating upgrade to the public works garage later this year is expected to save \$7,000 in heating costs annually, with a project payback of less than two years. Later this spring, a building by building audit of municipal facilities will identify additional energy efficiency measures that can lower energy use and corresponding expense. The Evansville Energy Independence Team is working diligently to implement the 25 x 25 Plan.

If you haven't experienced Earth Day Evansville-style, you are missing a great event. Come out and enjoy the best energy and environmental education in the area. You'll be glad you did. And when you are finished, take a walk along Main Street. A special art event awaits you.

### Discover Wisconsin Update

Film crews have been in Evansville recently interviewing Ruth Ann Montgomery on Evansville history, Butch Beedle about the Energy Fair, and Matt Pederson about the High Mileage Vehicle Club. Final filming is expected this Friday at the Energy Fair. We are reviewing a final outline of the show and expect to see a script by the end of this month. Be sure and mark your calendar for Thursday night, June 10, for the premiere showing of the Discover Wisconsin Evansville episode to be held at Lake Leota.

### Environmental Tips

Water quality and water conservation are concerns coming into focus in Wisconsin. The American Water Works Association reports that in the typical single family residence, each person uses about 69 gallons of water daily. 26.7% of water use is for toilets and 21.7% is for clothes washing. New toilet models can cut water use by more than 50% when compared to old toilets. By installing more efficient water fixtures and appliances throughout homes, it is estimated that households can cut daily water use by up to 35%.

Trace amounts of pharmaceutical drugs have been found in water supplies in some areas of the U.S. as consumers dispose of old medications by flushing them down the drain. Medications discarded in the trash usually end up in landfills, a possible danger to children and pets. Evansville Hometown Pharmacy will now accept unused and expired consumer medications from any pharmacy for safe disposal. Simply take in drugs in their original stock containers for proper medication identification. If you have questions, please contact Evansville Hometown Pharmacy at 882-4550.

### Community Announcements

A kick-off ceremony for the historic restoration project at 1 East Main Street, the Century 21 office, will occur on Thursday, April 22, at 9:00 a.m. The public is invited to attend.

A Spring Art Crawl will occur this Friday, April 23, from 4:00-9:00 p.m. along Main Street. Talk with artists and view unique artwork, strolling through downtown on an enjoyable spring evening.

The Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commissions (WAHPC) is holding their spring conference on April 23-24 in Oregon. Overnight participants will stay at the Cobblestone Inn. On Friday evening the WAHPC Board and interested conference participants will enjoy a fish fry at the Evansville Golf Course Restaurant and attend the Spring Art Crawl. The Grove Society will host a walking tour of Historic Evansville on Friday morning for conference attendees, prior to the afternoon start of the conference.

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Evansville Energy Fair is scheduled for Friday, April 23, from 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Grove Campus Fieldhouse, 320 Fair Street. The family-friendly exhibits and activities are the best yet. Don't forget the many recycling opportunities. Old eyeglasses, hearing aids, cell phones, and small electronics will be collected. You can trade an incandescent light bulb for a coupon good for a variety of energy saving items. Eager Free Public Library will sponsor a book swap at the Fair. Bring a book—take a book. See you there!

### Evansville Thanks

Evansville thanks Julie Hermanson of AWARE, local day care providers, businesses, exhibitors, and citizen volunteers for the wonderful Week of the Young Child. Colorful art projects decorated our downtown and showed our little ones we are proud of their work. On Family Night, the smiles on the faces of our youngster who displayed finger casts, living necklaces, and temporary “tattoos” said it all.