



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
West Central Region
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SUBJECT: Northern Engraving Corporation and DNR sign cooperative environmental agreement

SPARTA, Wis. – Northern Engraving Corporation (NEC) here became the third Wisconsin company to sign a cooperative environmental agreement with the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) under a pilot program in which companies commit to achieve higher environmental standards than required by regulations.

DNR Secretary Darrell Bazzell and NEC president Philip Gelatt signed the agreement today during a brief ceremony held at NEC's Sparta facility.

NEC manufactures nameplates and other industrial decoratives. The voluntary, five-year agreement with the DNR under Wisconsin's Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program covers NEC's Holmen and Sparta facilities with options to include other NEC facilities in the future.

"The cooperative agreement is another step forward in Northern Engraving's continuous effort to develop progressive and innovative methods of environmental stewardship," Gelatt said. "For more than 30 years, we have been at the forefront of environmental advancements and constantly striving to establish a legacy in which our employees, families, customers and communities can be proud.

"Now with the full involvement of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and through our extensive environmental management system, the corporation will be able to concentrate more energy on reducing pollution and increasing efficiencies."

Under its agreement with the DNR, NEC has agreed to cap emissions of volatile organic compounds and hazardous air pollutants at levels lower than regulations allow. The company also has agreed to implement a comprehensive Environmental Management System (EMS) in which environmental improvement and protection are incorporated into the operations and procedures of the facilities covered by the agreement. The Sparta facility was one of the first twelve organizations in Wisconsin to have an EMS registered under the international standard for environmental systems ISO

The following counties are located in DNR West Central Region: Adams, Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Marathon, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Portage, St. Croix, Trempealeau, Vernon, Wood. The public affairs manager for DNR's West Central Region is: Dave Weitz (715) 839-3715).

14001 (ISO 14001 is an international standard recognized by major trading nations and the World Trade Organization).

The agreement also introduces flexibility into NEC's air pollution control permits, recognizes NEC's past environmental protection accomplishments and sets a goal to reduce excessive administrative workloads and reporting for both the state and the company.

"NEC has agreed to operating conditions that we would like other companies to follow," said n DNR Secretary Bazzell. "The signing of this agreement with NEC not only constitutes Wisconsin's recognition of NEC's efforts, but also indicates the state's strong interest in finding productive ways to work with companies that incorporate environmental excellence as part of their daily operations."

The state Legislature authorized the Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program in the 1997-1999 biennial budget. The program allows the DNR to enter into up to 10 cooperative environmental agreements. Program goals are reduced operating and administrative expenses while ensuring environmental protection and economic stability.

The two other Wisconsin companies that have similar agreements with the DNR are Wisconsin Electric Power Company and Cook Composites and Polymers Company.

More information about the Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program is available on the DNR Web site at www.dnr.state.wi.us – go to Bureau of Cooperative Environmental Assistance on the drop-down menu, then select "Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program."