



# 2020 BIENNIAL REPORT

Dear Wisconsin Legislators and Green Tier supporters,

It is my pleasure to share with you this report highlighting the outcomes of our direct assistance to Wisconsin's business community, as told through the words of some of our customers. At the Department of Natural Resources, we understand our role to support our state's economic engine while ensuring a healthy and robust environment. I'm proud of how our staff has continued to embrace our commitment to service excellence while managing the changes of COVID-19.

Our dedicated Sustainability and Business Support team is committed to meeting our customers wherever they are on their environmental path with our non-regulatory support services. Our Small Business Environmental Assistance staff are at businesses' sides when they are starting up or expanding to provide clarity regarding environmental requirements. For those customers that want to evaluate their operations proactively, we help them take advantage of Enviro-Check and limit their liability. In addition, we support our environmental leaders, welcoming them into the state's flagship beyond compliance program – Green Tier.

As we empower Wisconsin's business community to become more sustainable, we are pleased to share their experiences. I encourage you to read on to understand what our business leaders are saying about their relationships with the DNR:

- ▶ Gain insights from a member of the Small Business Environmental Council.
- ▶ Learn about the value that a prominent construction firm sees in its commitment to going beyond compliance.
- ▶ Discover what it means to a foundry to take advantage of a newly developed tool made available to those that show a commitment to continual environmental improvement.

In this report, we also highlight our extensive outreach campaign to over 1,200 economic development professionals statewide. During this critical time, we want to put the knowledge of the DNR into the hands of the professionals who are a first stop for business. In addition to working one-on-one with businesses, our focus is to support others who are also helping businesses, large and small.

I am delighted to celebrate those businesses that continue to step forward and leverage our programs to do what is right for the environment and their bottom line.

With regards,

Preston D. Cole, Secretary  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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## SUSTAINABILITY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

DNR's Sustainability and Business Support team's suite of services helps businesses succeed by improving their environmental performance. Since all our programs are voluntary and non-regulatory, they are accessible to all!

Leading with a service heart, we help businesses whether they are inquiring which environmental regulations apply to them, striving to reduce their risk or are thriving and wanting to do more for their triple bottom line; we have resources to support them. We know each business is on their own path to sustainability, which is why our services include:

### SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SBEAP)

SBEAP is perfect for businesses that need to find answers about which rules apply to them or how to get a permit. Our skilled staff provide confidential assistance through our informative web page, dedicated business helpline or one-on-one coaching.

### ENVIRO-CHECK

Enviro-Check is for a business that wants to know whether it is in compliance with environmental regulations. Perhaps it has changed ownership, personnel or operations and has questions about environmental risk. A proactive, voluntary program, Enviro-Check allows participants to assess their operations while simultaneously limiting liability.

### GREEN TIER

Green Tier helps leading businesses and communities be even more efficient, innovative and sustainable. As the State's flagship beyond compliance program, Green Tier recognizes businesses that go above and beyond environmental regulations and use a systematic approach to set their own goals of incorporating environmentally responsible practices into their everyday business activities.

# SBEAP: HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

The DNR is committed to supporting the state's small business economic engine by doing our part in helping our customers understand potentially confusing environmental regulations. We've found that most small business owners are willing to do their part to protect the environment; however, without on-site technical expertise, they sometimes need help finding the right path to improve their environmental performance. We are meeting businesses wherever they are on their path to environmental compliance by providing free, confidential assistance through our Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP).

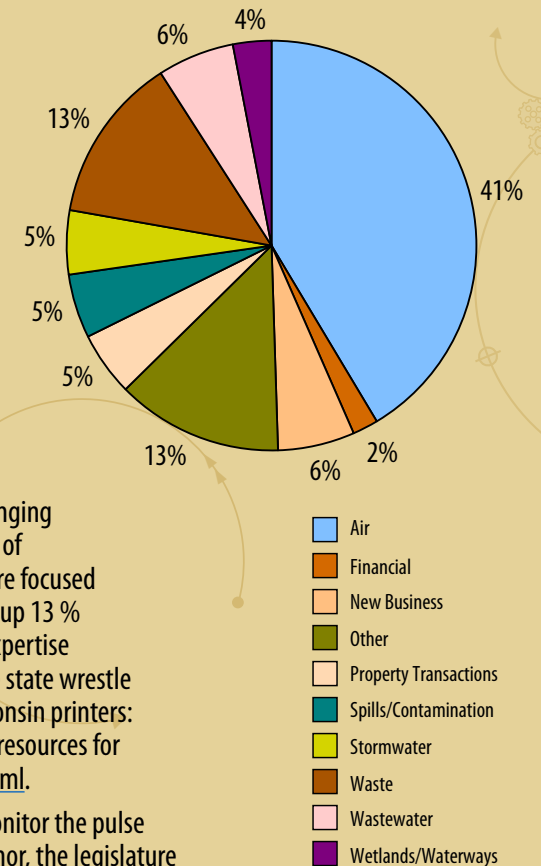
What can a small business expect when they reach out to SBEAP? They can expect tailored service from knowledgeable, caring public servants who understand the challenges and pressures that small businesses face. Our staff respond to customer inquiries through one-on-one coaching, group trainings and online and print materials. We are dedicated to supporting Wisconsin's small businesses, reducing their liabilities and risks and helping them avoid violations that can cost them time and may cause a negative impact to their bottom line. Our goal is to allow small business owners the freedom to focus on innovation and growing their business while having clarity on how they can also protect Wisconsin's valuable natural resources.

Since the last report, SBEAP has continued to increase its contacts with small business. In 2019 and 2020, SBEAP provided one-on-one assistance to 2,397 businesses, provided training or resources to 981 workshop and conference attendees and had 77,160 views of web resources.

We capture data about which environmental topics small businesses find most challenging based on the volume of inquiries. Between January 2019 and September 2020, 41 % of the direct contacts to the program were about air pollution; most SBEAP materials are focused on air regulations. All water related inquiries were 10 % and waste questions made up 13 % of contacts. SBEAP continues to expand its services by developing more depth of expertise and resources to anticipate and address questions that small businesses across the state wrestle with most. Please check out our recent additions, including a new portal for Wisconsin printers: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/SmallBusiness/Resources/Printers.html> and additional resources for public water systems: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/SmallBusiness/DrinkingWater.html>.

DNR engages the Small Business Environmental Council (Council) to help us monitor the pulse of Wisconsin's 255,000 small businesses. Members are appointed by the governor, the legislature and the DNR secretary. The Council serves as the voice of Wisconsin's small business community to the DNR. Council members advise the department how existing rules affect small businesses, provide their perspective on proposed regulations and help make DNR documents easier to understand. They also help spread the word about SBEAP to their peers and encourage them to use this valuable resource.

Direct Small Business Contacts by Topic  
2019-2020



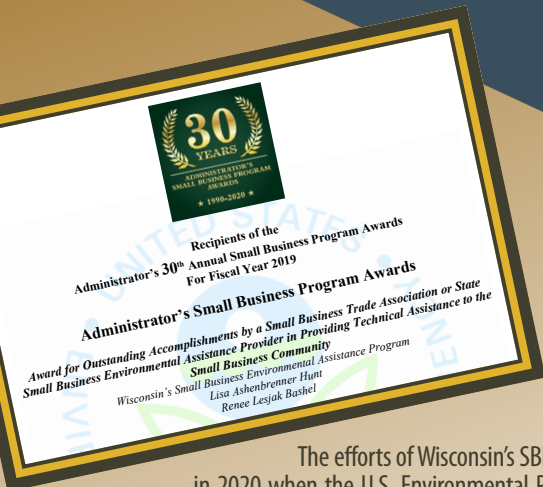
## A VOICE FOR SMALL BUSINESS AT THE DNR: WISCONSIN'S SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Environmental rules and regulations can be confusing and approaching a big regulatory agency like the DNR can feel daunting. That's why the team of dedicated business champions that make up the [Small Business Environmental Council](#) (Council) serves as the voice for small business at the DNR. The Council provides a sounding board for small businesses navigating environmental regulations, and in turn helps the DNR incorporate a small business perspective when developing rules and documents.

*"My experience has shown me that small business must have a voice and a partnership with all agencies of government, from local to state to federal," says Vince Ruffolo, president of Superior Industrial Coatings and a member of the Council since 2011. "Small businesses are best served when state agencies listen to their concerns and operate shoulder-to-shoulder with the small business community. This creates a win-win situation for the community at large."*

Working together, the Council and the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program help small businesses striving to make good choices, wherever they are on their path to sustainability.

Vince Ruffolo



The efforts of Wisconsin's SBEAP received national recognition in 2020 when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the program the **Administrator's Award for Outstanding Accomplishments by a Small Business Trade Association or State Small Business Environmental Assistance Provider in Providing Technical Assistance to the Small Business Community**. The Wisconsin SBEAP was nominated by Paula Hoag, EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman, to recognize the program's outstanding contributions to small business assistance during the 2019 fiscal year.



Attendees of the April 2019 Council Meeting: From left to right, top row: Senator Mark Miller; Jody Jansen, Vice President of BankFirst in Waupaca; Senator André Jacque; Dave Siebert, DNR External Services Division Administrator. Bottom row: Amy Litscher – Council Chair, President of Saga Environmental in Lake Mills; Vince Ruffolo, President of Superior Industrial Coatings.

Over the past biennium, the Council has reached out to small businesses across the state to learn about their experiences interacting with the department and how owners and staff prefer to receive information about environmental rules. The Council engaged with businesses, local economic development professionals, elected officials and municipal staff through meetings at UW Parkside, the Portage County Business Council headquarters, the City of Milwaukee Small Business Conference and a luncheon panel during the Wisconsin Economic Development Association's fall conference.

Responding to feedback from those events, SBEAP created a short training video to explain the services provided and created additional industry specific resources.

Together, the Council and SBEAP provide Wisconsin small businesses the environmental information and contacts they need to continue on their path toward better environmental performance, benefitting both the environment and the business' bottom line.

*"I felt relieved to have access to someone who could explain and answer important questions."*  
– satisfied small business customer

*"...if we have questions, we now have [SBEAP and their] connections within the DNR. I'll be sure to pass along the SBEAP contact information to other small businesses – what a great resource."*  
– satisfied small business customer

*"I appreciate having SBEAP to get answers for my clients. They are responsive to my questions and helped further define what my clients would need to know to be successful."*  
– Nancy Mistele, Nancy Mistele Consulting LLC



## NEW NAME, SAME GREAT ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

2019 was a big year for the program formerly known as the Compliance Audit Program. In an effort to boost participation, the department assessed the marketing and branding that had been used since the program was launched. Based on extensive feedback from a variety of stakeholders, the program was given a much-needed make-over. Out went the bureaucratic 'audit' name in exchange for "Enviro-Check." Enviro-Check is language that businesses (our target audience) relate to and better explains the value of the program to interested organizations. In addition to the name change, we launched the branding of the "Enviro-Check" graphic. With the new name and graphic, Sustainability and Business Support staff embarked on efforts to educate businesses on the benefits of the program through outreach, social media promotion and print materials. Great emphasis was also placed on ensuring DNR staff across the agency knew the benefits of the program for business customers. That focused education was to ensure that they could comfortably introduce the program to businesses that they work with all over Wisconsin.

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to business activities, outreach efforts have started to pay off. The program saw eight facilities complete an Enviro-Check audit, and one facility submitted a notice of intent but has yet to complete the audit. All participants were private entities and were located in six counties; Dunn, Jackson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine and Washington. Overall 44 violations were found and corrected resulting in improved environmental outcomes and reduced risk for business. Details on the breakdown of participants and violations can be found below.

### *Enviro-Check Audit Report*

#### **Number of potential violations reported by type:**

- ▶ Air violations disclosed: 27
- ▶ Water violations disclosed: 1
- ▶ Solid waste violations disclosed: 15
- ▶ Hazardous waste violations disclosed: 0
- ▶ Other violations disclosed: 1

#### **Number of violations involving each of the following:**

- ▶ Failure to have permit or approval: 3
- ▶ Failure to have required plan: 2
- ▶ Violation of condition of a permit: 20
- ▶ Release of substance to the environment: 1
- ▶ Failure to report: 4
- ▶ Other: 14

30 were completed within 90 days, 14 are still in-progress within their 90 day window



*Facilities conducting an environmental review should apply for coverage using Enviro-Check. Not only will you gain valuable information about your company's operations as they relate to environmental regulations, through Enviro-Check you may also be providing a level of protection from issues that arise.*

*– Amy Litscher, President/Principal Environmental Scientist, Saga Environmental and Engineering, Inc. and Chair of the Small Business Environmental Council*

*The Enviro-Check program has great benefits for Wisconsin businesses. This program allows a company to review its compliance with environmental laws and, upon discovery of any noncompliance, use a voluntary disclosure and correction process to avoid penalties that might otherwise apply to such matters. This innovative program is a valuable method to ensure environmental compliance without the expenditure of agency enforcement resources.*

*– Arthur Harrington, Attorney, Godfrey and Kahn*

*Regarding the Enviro-Check Program, from a commercial banker's perspective, the program provides peace of mind for borrowers and business owners by providing an option for those businesses to participate voluntarily to determine if there is an environmental issue with reduced liability. This is extremely helpful when a business is being sold or financed as it gives both the lender and prospective buyer confidence that issues are either not present, or if they are, there may be a proactive strategy to comply with any regulations affected by the issue.*

*– Jody Jansen, Vice President, Business Banking, Bank First and member of the Small Business Environmental Council*

*Losing sleep over your environmental compliance?*



### *Program change recommendations*

According to 299.85 Wis Stats. that authorizes the Environmental Compliance Audit Program (Enviro-Check), this Biennial Report to the Legislature, should include “any recommendations for changes in the program based on discussions with interested persons, including legislators and members of the public.”

The Small Business Environmental Council (SBEC), which advises DNR's Small Business Environmental Assistance Program, has had discussions about the Enviro-Check program, leading to the recent change to the name of the program and other marketing efforts. The Council has indicated they see a lot of value in the program and have identified some concerns that certain elements may deter its use. One area they have suggested as a change is to more closely align the program with EPA's audit policies. Legislation was put forward to remedy these concerns and propose the changes recommended by the SBEC. Bills were introduced in both the State Senate and Assembly in 2019 and received bipartisan support. The proposed legislation was passed by the Senate; however, the session ended prior to the language being brought to the Assembly floor for a vote.

Both the Senate and Assembly bills, as amended, proposed changes to eliminate the notification period, lengthen the corrective actions timeline, remove the public notice period for extended compliance schedules, and provide consideration to small businesses on enforcement actions.

Building off the past two years, DNR will continue outreach efforts to increase the use of the Enviro-Check program by businesses who want to proactively improve their bottom line, reduce risk and boost environmental protection in Wisconsin.



## EMPOWERING SUPERIOR ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMERS

Green Tier is DNR's program for business and community leaders who want to improve their environmental performance by being strategic and intentional. Choosing to use an environmental management system (EMS), Green Tier participants drive their business objectives while improving their performance. The Green Tier program provides credible recognition of each organization's efforts by requiring third party audits. These assessments ensure participants continue striving. In addition to their environmental prowess, many participants find they can improve business profitability by improving efficiencies and identifying new opportunities to reduce risks through the responsible management of environmental impacts.

A unique model in the country, Wisconsin's voluntary Green Tier program is [law](#). Complementing the department's regulatory programs, Green Tier supports organizations that are meeting environmental regulations and striving to do more. This partnership of business and DNR, helps both move in the same direction through a proactive approach.

### *What does it mean?*

Participating in Green Tier means making commitments. Committing to go beyond the requirements of environmental regulations and generating measurable improvements in the quality of air, land, water, natural resources and human health. Green Tier participants think holistically and take actions to realize environmental outcomes that they set for themselves and result in meaningful, tangible outcomes.

Green Tier law outlines commitments of a participant as nine achievable outcomes known as "superior environmental performance". [Superior environmental performance](#) is beyond compliance environmental performance that results in protection of, or measurable improvements to the environment. This can be achieved through one or more of the following outcomes:

1. *Limiting discharges or emissions of pollutants from your facility or operations.*
2. *Minimizing the negative environmental effects of products, services or raw materials.*
3. *Voluntarily restoring or preserving natural resources.*
4. *Helping other entities comply with requirements or accomplish the results from 1 or 2.*
5. *Organizing uncoordinated entities into a program that reduces environmental harm.*
6. *Reducing waste or reducing the use or production of hazardous substances in the lifecycle of your outputs.*
7. *Conserving energy or nonrenewable natural resources.*
8. *Reducing the use of renewable natural resources through increased efficiency.*
9. *Adopting methods that reduce long-term damage to or depletion of renewable resources.*

## Three different ways to participate

There are three ways an organization can participate in Green Tier:

**Tier 1** is the most commonly chosen participation option. Organizations commit to improving their environmental performance which can distinguish themselves from others. Tier 1 companies are considered environmental innovators with proactive management teams and must commit to having a functioning environmental management system (EMS) in place within one year of joining the program.

**Tier 2** involves more rigorous participation requirements than Tier 1, placing greater emphasis on superior environmental performance. These companies have a track record of environmental achievements and have a fully functioning environmental management system. Each Tier 2 facility negotiates a contract with DNR that lays out the details of flexibilities and incentives which are proportional to its environmental performance.

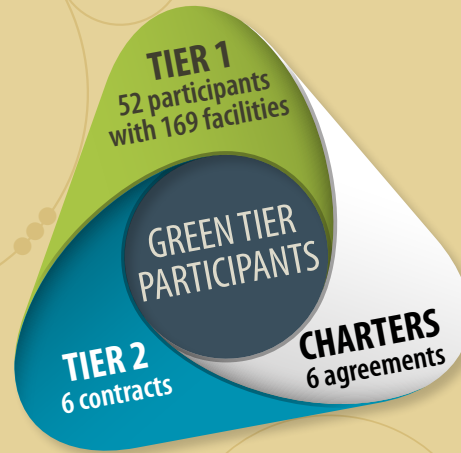
**Charters** provide a framework for organizations, supply chains, industry sectors or other groups to work collaboratively towards shared environmental interests. In a charter, the participating organizations develop goals, member responsibilities and methods to accomplish shared goals.

## What do Green Tier participants commit to?

In addition to being superior environmental performers, Green Tier participants are required to have audits of their environmental management systems and provide an annual report of their environmental results to the department.

Green Tier is very different from other "green" programs as the law requires regular auditing of participants EMSs, ensuring credible, verifiable performance and continual improvement. Not only do the audits verify results, they provide a periodic check of the system to ensure it is effective and yielding intended results while uncovering opportunities for improvement. Audits remove the worry of unverifiable claims.

Annual reporting is a cornerstone of Green Tier participation. The annual report offers participants an opportunity to tell the story of their environmental journey by providing a description of their continual environmental improvement and being transparent about their results. The annual reports also provide inspiration to businesses and communities across the state, seeding ideas for others to improve Wisconsin's environment.



## Benefits of participating in Green Tier

Green Tier provides many benefits to participants as they work to improve their environmental footprint. The benefits are intended to provide value to participants' brands, aid in reducing risk while saving time and money. Benefits include:

- ◆ A single point of contact or what we call a 'SPOC', who is the participant's liaison within the DNR;
- ◆ Improved agency relations;
- ◆ Use of the Green Tier logo, an exclusive for Green Tier participants;
- ◆ Deferred civil enforcement, providing limited liability for violations that are self-disclosed;
- ◆ Inspection frequency flexibility; and
- ◆ Use of their EMS and audit processes to provide the potential to learn new strategies that yield cost savings, reduce environmental impacts and build a healthier community.



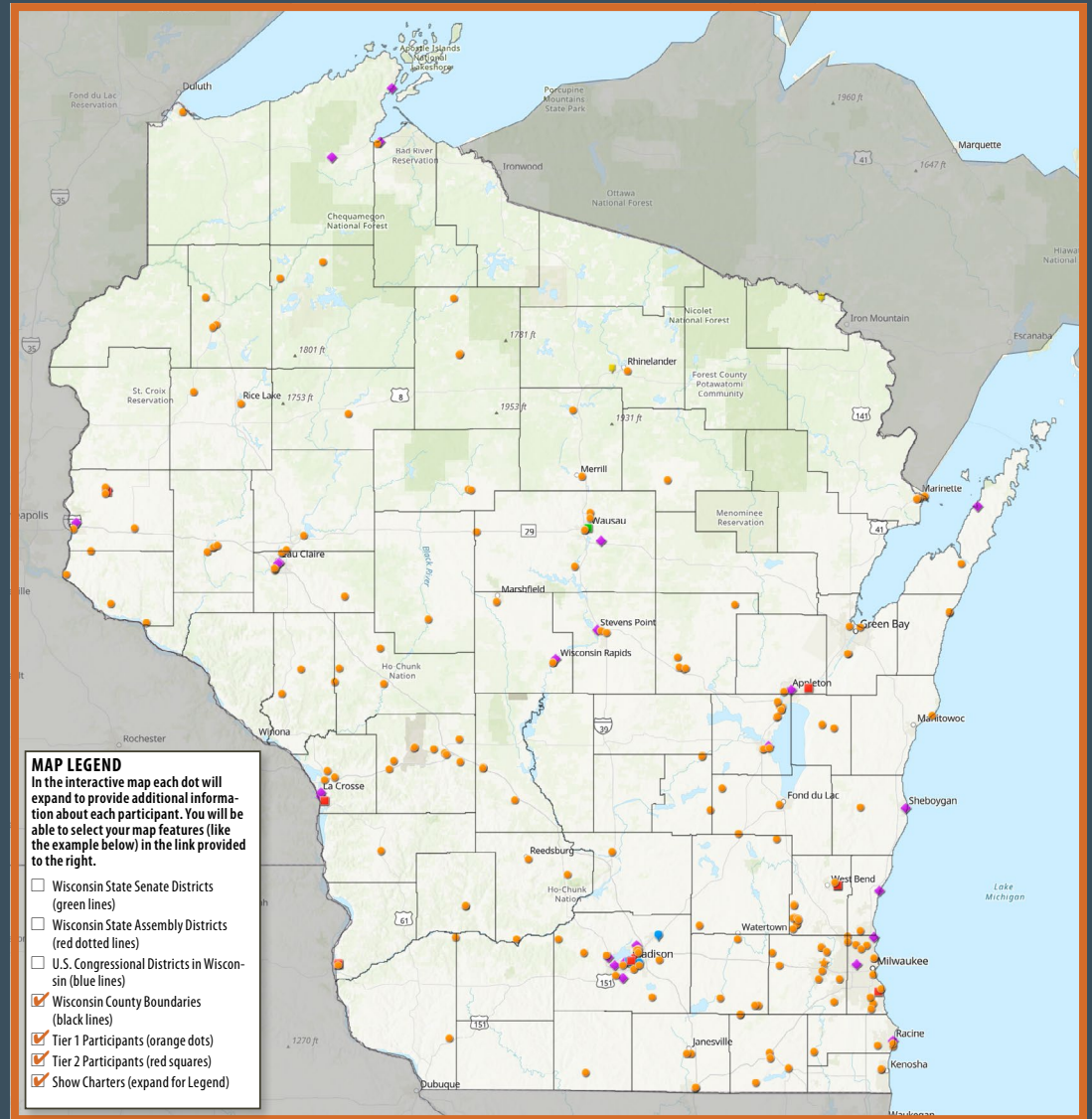




## Participants

Click on our interactive map to see locations of Green Tier participants and customization options that allow you to view participants by legislative district or county. You will see from the map that we have participants from a wide variety of industries and communities from all around the state.

Click [HERE](#) for a complete list of Green Tier participants or below for the interactive map.





COURTESY OF CW PURPERO, INC.

## CW PURPERO, INC. BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

A business has a fiduciary responsibility to quantify and analyze the cost and benefit implications involved with any operational change. This is exactly what our environmental management system (EMS) does by infusing environmental considerations into the larger operational systems allowing our company to be deliberate and comprehensive with the implementation of our environmental policy, plan and priorities.

Our EMS also keeps us thinking creatively of ways we can improve in the first place. By systematically reviewing the aspects of our business that impact the environment, nothing is 'out of sight, out of mind'. Quite the opposite, our system gets us thinking about better ways to do things whether it be small or big. For example, in performing a pre-job aspects and impacts analysis of a project, we were challenged with how best to keep up with the sweeping of adjacent roads during soil exporting activities. Then the idea came to reconfigure haul routes to make use of nearby temporary roads and avoid getting the truck's tires muddy in the first place. Our client easily saw this small cost increase as a net gain for the project as it allowed one additional hour of production each day and made dirty streets a nonissue.

Our EMS facilitates the design, development and implementation of our Objectives and Targets. We like to think of it as the 'Why', 'What', and 'How'. In practice, these steps form a reinforcing loop which includes the results; the results then lead us to reevaluate the why, what, and how.

**THE WHY:** At least annually, our company managers ponder the Why by reviewing how objectives (among other things) fit into our company's environmental policies and plans. This is a critical step as it steers everything downstream and really sets us up for success by assuring our objectives are consistent with who we are as a company and what we can get our team behind.

**THE WHAT:** With every task analysis cycle, whether it be each job or each construction season depending on what type of task, decisions are made to determine What our objectives are. This part of the process determines the feasibility/viability of an objective and what the targeted gain might be.

**THE HOW:** Once any particular environmental objective is identified and verified as feasible/viable, we identify How our current operational system can be adapted/leveraged to monitor and measure our performance against the target. So, our EMS is woven into our operational systems, which is How the EMS brings our environmental goals to the front lines for our projects and shop.

We understand when a customer obtains an environmental permit for a project it is effectively a compromise to limit the projects impact on the environment. Therefore, our EMS says that mere permit compliance is not necessarily good enough because it still leaves a scar, and the smaller the scar the better. Our customers appreciate it when we explain that our EMS aims to do more than simply comply with the conditions of the permit, especially when it is done in ways that cost little more and sometimes cost less. Going above and beyond gives our customers one less exposure to risk they need to worry about for their project.

"Our Green Tier journey continually moves us closer to a place where optimal business performance does not come at the expense of avoidable environmental impacts. This is who we are as a company and Green Tier helps make it a reality!" – states Phillip A. Purpero, CW Purpero, Inc., president.

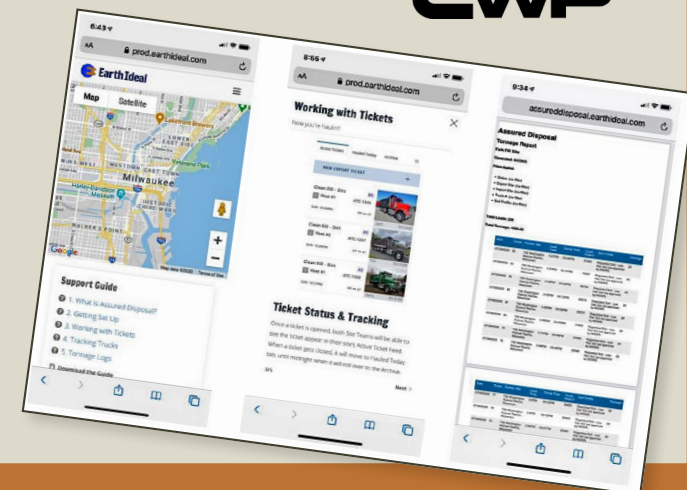
It was clear to us early on that our commitment as a Green Tier construction company would pose a unique challenge as we are seldom in total control of all that happens on a construction site. One reason is because one project typically has several companies working together, all with their own priorities and policies. A second reason is that more often than not, we are a subcontractor, not the prime contractor; therefore, we have even less control over how things are done.

Instead of focusing on this challenge as a negative we instead turned it into a positive and found ways to market environmental subsystems to other contractors by developing software as a service (SAAS) tool for them to use. The name of this effort being incubated by C.W. Purpero is called **Earth Ideal**, and our mission is to provide value-added sub-systems to the heavy construction industry, each

one centered on environmental objectives. As our SAAS customers use our products because of the value proposition they offer as a cost savings/value added tool, they will also be picking up an environmental gain at the same time. Consistent with the Green Tier tag line, our software applications on the **Earth Ideal** platform are "Advantage:Business, Advantage:Environment" and help us achieve the superior environmental performance measure of helping other organizations reduce their environmental impacts.

The following applications are at various stages of development.

- ◆ **Earth Ideal:** *This is the name of the platform where all the applications reside. It serves as the hub and central map system integrated with each application.*
- ◆ **Assured Disposal:** *An E-manifest system for real-time tracking site soil export hauling operations and confirmation at disposal sites.*
- ◆ **Haul Check:** *A project soil material imbalance sharing platform allowing users to connect with partner sites that might have an excess of what they are short.*
- ◆ **Earth Tight:** *An erosion control inspection system that allows immediate disclosure of inspection logs and corrective actions to all project stake holders.*
- ◆ **Crew Huddle:** *A safety and environmental management and communication tool for sitework contractors.*



# Green Tier charters provide an exciting opportunity for Wisconsin industry

Green Tier has a unique way of bringing groups together to organize and tackle important environmental issues. Different than Tier 1 and Tier 2, Charters are contractual agreements entered into by DNR and partners with the specific intent to reach shared environmental goals.

From urban wood utilization to the printing industry improving its environmental footprint, Green Tier charters serve as a platform for collaboration.



## Clear Waters Initiative

The Clear Waters Initiative is a partnership between Dane County's regulatory community including Dane County, the City of Madison, the City of Sun Prairie, the City of Fitchburg and DNR along with the building sector companies of Veridian Homes LLC and Homburg Contractors. The goal of the Charter is to reduce the overall sediment delivery to Dane County lakes and streams. Practitioners evaluate new and innovative best management practices for storm water and erosion control at construction sites and share results with DNR to inform technical standards.

## Wisconsin Consulting Foresters Environmental Results Charter

This Charter establishes voluntary methods for sound, sustainable forestry practices, reviews continual improvement alternatives for regulatory and non-regulatory management and provides training and mentoring opportunities for foresters, communities and private landowners.

## Wisconsin Master Logger (WML) Environmental Results Charter

This Charter is comprised of loggers across Wisconsin committed to improving forest management practices and protecting the state's natural resources. This Charter is focused on reinforcing the relationship between Master Loggers and DNR as well as helping ensure timber is harvested with high sustainability standards and that Wisconsin's working forests continue to regenerate for future generations.

## Wisconsin Printing Industry Superior Environmental Performance Charter

This Charter brings together printing industry trade groups (Printing United Alliance, Great Lakes Graphics Association, Flexographic Technical Association) with DNR, to provide Wisconsin printers resources to improve their environmental footprint while increasing regulatory efficiency for the printers. The Charter members committed to improve the industry through education with quarterly webinars focused on achieving environmental efficiency economically.

## Wisconsin Urban Wood Charter

This Charter is a contract between the Wisconsin Urban Wood network and DNR. It supports the reclamation of urban trees for their highest and best uses. The Charter promotes diverting urban wood from landfills or mulch piles and creating high value, local wood products. It also provides collaboration on initiatives to address emerging issues affecting urban wood utilization, including providing a network of arborists who follow and maintain the recommended sound business management practices of both DNR and Wisconsin Urban Wood.

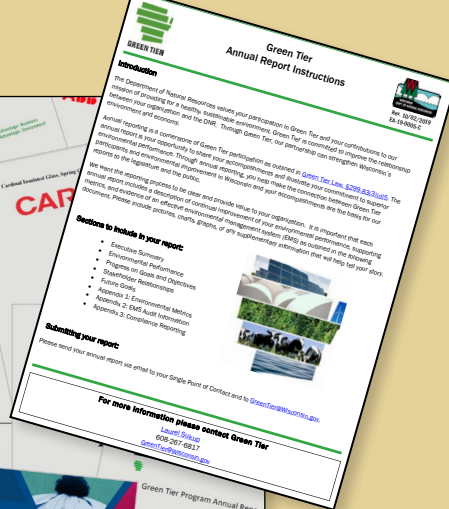
## Legacy Communities

The Green Tier Legacy Communities (GTL) Charter is a network focused on supporting local governments. 2020 marks the 10-year anniversary of the charter, which now includes 24 local municipalities, (cities, villages, towns) and five counties, impacting over one million Wisconsinites. Focused on building sustainable and resilient communities, those that participate benefit from the knowledge and experiences of fellow members. This shared, relevant information allows members to leap-frog technology or implement tried and true practices that stretch local resources.

ABOVE PHOTOS: LEFT TO RIGHT, COURTESY OF THE CLEAR WATERS INITIATIVE CHARTER, DNR FILE PHOTO, COURTESY OF WISCONSIN MASTER LOGGER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM, DNR FILE PHOTO, WILL ERIKSON

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM





## Role of a Green Tier Auditor

- **Critical to success of Green Tier participants**
  - Help fulfill EMS audit requirements
- **Provide coaching**
  - On continual improvement
  - Suggest strategies
  - Consider stretch goals



## Green Tier - Behind the scenes

While Green Tier participants are striving to improve their environmental performance, the Green Tier team is working in concert with participants to improve the performance of the program. The Green Tier team reviewed our procedures and documents with an eye on how our customers use and understand them. Over the last biennium, we used customer feedback to clarify guidelines and make improvements to annual reporting and to auditor training.

### What is new with annual reporting?

We made purposeful updates to the information that participants are asked to report on annually. The new reporting structure guides participants on how to document their environmental successes in the annual reports. The updates also clearly guide participants to provide the necessary details of their environmental performance by pointing to the path laid out in the Green Tier law. Participants offer concrete information on the status of their journey, including:

- ◆ *a description of continual improvement and superior environmental performance,*
- ◆ *progress on environmental goals,*
- ◆ *supporting environmental and business metrics,*
- ◆ *an effective plan for the future, and*
- ◆ *evidence of an effective environmental management system.*

Reports submitted after Jan. 1, 2020 follow the new instructions and help us aggregate the collective environmental impacts of participants.

## Training course for Green Tier auditors

To ensure those that conduct Green Tier audits understand the importance of their role in preserving the program's credibility, a new e-training course for Green Tier auditors was created and launched during the last biennium. Auditors verify that participants are maintaining an effective environmental management system. Because EMS audits are a key requirement of Green Tier law, the training explains how a Green Tier auditor plays a critical role in advancing a participant's environmental performance, verifying its results and ensuring its ongoing success in the program. With a focus on continual improvement and innovation, auditors bring a fresh perspective that yields better outcomes with results that go beyond DNR requirements.

The training course complements the expertise of an Environmental Management System (EMS) auditor by introducing them to the Green Tier program. All current Green Tier auditors and any wishing to conduct Green Tier audits are required to take the course as part of their eligibility to conduct Green Tier audits.

After completing the training, Green Tier auditors will have value-added skills about key components of the program that they can share with their clients. They will be able to clearly communicate superior environmental performance outcomes and the required reporting practices. They will understand the correlations as well as differences between ISO 14001 and Green Tier functionally equivalent EMSs.

We appreciate all who become Green Tier auditors and help increase the credibility of Green Tier. The current DNR approved auditors list is available on the Green Tier [webpage](#).



PHIL RYNISH  
DNR FILE PHOTO

# LEVERAGING DNR RESOURCES STATEWIDE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE SUPPORT TEAMS

To broaden the department’s ability to assist customers in reaching their environmental goals, the DNR’s leadership team established five regional teams to ensure that customers statewide know about the department’s non-regulatory programs. Headed by regional Secretary’s Directors, these teams heighten awareness and foster integration through the use of the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP), Enviro-Check and Green Tier to help customers reduce environmental risk, identify efficiencies and demonstrate their commitment to environmental stewardship.

The regional teams, like the programs that they are promoting, are structured to address environmental issues much the same way our customers do – not one environmental topic or media at a time, but rather air, waste, water, etc. all at the same time. The cross-program makeup of the teams is key to their success. Team members have representation from up to twelve DNR programs: Remediation and Redevelopment, Fisheries Management, Water Quality, Waste and Materials Management, Applied Forestry, Wildlife Management, Parks and Recreation, Environmental Analysis, Natural Heritage Conservation, Air Management, Drinking Water and Groundwater and Sustainability and Business Support.

Teams are making great inroads in raising awareness and utilization of DNR’s business services, particularly with internal DNR employees. By focusing on internal training, we are working to put the full power of DNR behind supporting Wisconsin’s business community. The regional teams have hosted training programs for supervisors and a wide range of program staff. These trained program staff are making connections between their customers to not only assist them with compliance topics, but beyond compliance opportunities as well. The regional teams also serve as a resource to Green Tier single points of contacts, providing training and networking opportunities. These teams are starting to bring the messages to the public as well, see the story below on one such outreach effort.

Looking forward, teams will continue their involvement in promoting the availability of the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program, Enviro-Check and Green Tier and working to move environmental performance forward in ways that are most successful in their locale.



Efforts like the Environmental Performance Regional Roundtable in May 2019, “connected the green dots” between businesses and local government. Over 50 attendees included municipalities, counties, businesses, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), non-governmental organizations, Green Tier participants, lenders, contractors and the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Commission. The discussion focused on utilizing the PACE program, which is a funding tool that promotes sustainable practices.

# OUR PERFORMANCE

## STREAMLINING REGULATIONS AND NEW PROGRAMS

During the last two years, there have been significant increases in benefits and opportunities for the department's customers. The Sustainability & Business Support team clarified air rules for printers, increased permit options for Green Tier participants and created an economic development initiative.

### *Fruits of a Green Tier charter benefit printers*

Staff in Sustainability and Business Support leveraged the Wisconsin Printing Industry Superior Environmental Performance Green Tier Charter's partnership between DNR and the printing industry to pull parties together to help clarify and simplify rules for lithographic printers.

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program staff recognized that some lithographic printers were required to meet two confusing and somewhat differing air rules. The Charter helped DNR find clear criteria for the new, streamlined rule. The Charter members helped let printers know which rule they need to follow, removing ambiguity. The revisions, which took effect July 1, 2019, clarify and simplify the Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT) rules which are required by the federal Clean Air Act and limit organic compound emissions.

In addition to fostering collaboration on regulatory streamlining initiatives, the charter has also provided a platform for education on compliance and new technologies that result in more efficient, sustainable printing operations. The charter hosts a webpage with information relative to printing operations, called the Printer Portal: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/SmallBusiness/Resources/Printers.html>.

### *Green Tier exclusive benefit - New air permit option*

Registration Permits, also known as 'ROPs', are a type of simplified air permit that are issued to cover air emissions up to certain levels at eligible facilities. ROPs are fast and flexible, enabling businesses to avoid additional permitting and quickly respond to changes in their business.

With the success of past registration operation permits, the department has thoughtfully developed a new pathway for customers who are committed to maintaining Tier 2 status in the Green Tier program. The new permit option, known as the ROP-G, offers the highest limits at 80 % of the threshold for the major air source and most flexibility of its kind. Unlike other ROPs, this permit allows for source specific conditions, which is a benefit for larger air pollution sources who would otherwise be ineligible for a ROP. The ROP-G is only available to facilities who lead the way with their Tier 2 status in Green Tier.

Through a collaborative effort with other programs in the department, this new permit provides a pathway for facilities to have a flexible permit that maximizes their productivity, while ensuring that the facility is on the right track with its commitments to superior environmental performance and responsible environmental management.

To date, one participant is in the process of moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 in order to be the first to secure the permit. Three other companies have expressed an interest in joining Green Tier at least in part to be able to utilize the new ROP-G permit.

We fully expect that as word travels about this opportunity, it will attract more applicants to the Tier 2 level of Green Tier. To learn more about ROP-G, go to the Registration Permit Options webpage: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/AirPermits/Registration.html>.



## THE C.A. LAWTON CO. BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



The C.A. Lawton Co. (Calco) began its Green Tier journey as a public demonstration of commitment to its 'Beyond Compliance' initiative in 2013. Since that time the company has embarked on various sustainability efforts and worked at minimizing corporate impact on the environment.

Green Tier, and the philosophy behind it, has guided Calco to make better choices by diverting waste streams from the landfill, raising environmental awareness through employee training and encouraging employee participation in community programs, like Adopt-A-Highway. We know our customers care about sustainability and the integrity of their suppliers. We are proud to demonstrate that our performance reinforces their environmental awareness ideals.

The Beyond Compliance initiative has since evolved into Calco's 'Planet, People and then Profits' (P3) model, which rolled out in early 2020. As Barry Adamski, president of The C.A. Lawton Co. puts it, "We believe in better choices, better business and a better environment. For example, every day we publish a report to all employees which contains safety, health and environmental impacts. Each supervisor reviews this with their employees at their daily kickoff meeting. We believe that we need to take care of our planet, our people and our profit. Without all three, there is a lesser chance of a better future for us and our children's children. By looking at the longer view and working to do the right things, we believe we can help make the world a better place."

P3 aligns beautifully with transitioning from Green Tier 1 to Green Tier 2. As a Green Tier 2 participant, the company elevates its commitment to superior environmental performance and closer evaluation of environmental aspects. The ISO 14001:2015 certified management system is the ideal tool to systematically and objectively guide Calco through this process and expose sustainability opportunities that benefit our communities and our customers.

Finally, Calco's management team recognizes that this is not an endeavor that effectively takes place in a vacuum. Successful sustainability efforts require incorporating Calco's integrated management system (ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 9001:2015 combined systems), partnering with critical vendor stakeholders,

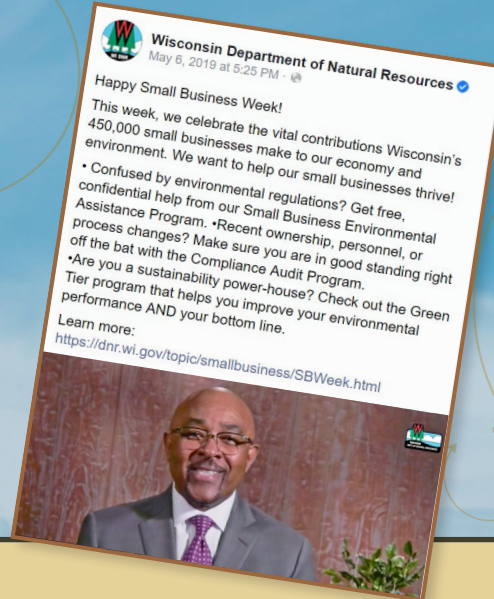
seeking direction from our interested parties group, involving our employees and petitioning support from regulatory bodies. Together, these resources will direct Calco to make the best choices available to maximize sustainability in production, allowing the company to produce gray and ductile iron castings that exceed customer expectations.

Calco is the first foundry and Green Tier business to take advantage of the new air Registration Permit (ROP) exclusively available to Green Tier 2 participants. Calco made the choice to move from Green Tier 1 status to Tier 2 because it offered Calco the opportunity to employ the controls of their integrated management system to self-regulate their environmental compliance in harmony with DNR regulations.

Alex Lawton, Calco CEO, cited, "In 2013, we joined Green Tier 1. It began as a demonstration of our pledge to take our business 'Beyond Compliance'. Now, as we embark on achieving Green Tier 2 status, we have the opportunity to amplify that commitment through the use of a robust, integrated management system credentialing our effort." Adding "The new Green Tier Registration Permit (ROP-G) facilitates our effort by rewarding businesses with a demonstrated commitment to sustainability with a streamlined and flexible air permit. Benefits of the ROP-G are numerous: The new permit allows Calco to partner with the department, authorizes compliance flexibility and gives the company agility to modify operations in response to changing customer needs".

In 2018, employees were asked how they would describe Calco culture and values. Answers were tallied and compiled based on the frequency words were used. High frequency words are largest. The logo below was the result of that survey.





## *EDGE: the new economic development program relies on Green Tier*

Wisconsin Act 70's economic development pilot program has progressed and taken form over the past two years. Now called EDGE (Economic Development and Green Environment), the focus is on encouraging sustainable economic development. EDGE supports and rewards manufacturing facilities to locate on brownfields, helping municipalities bring new life to vacant industrial sites and embodying the concept of environmental stewardship.

EDGE leverages tools found in three DNR programs: Sustainability and Business Support's Green Tier program, Remediation and Redevelopment's Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) program and Air Management's Registration Operation Permit (ROP) program.

Manufacturers who are eligible for a ROP, locate on a VPLE brownfield and who are also willing to manage their environmental performance by participating in Green Tier are offered a significant benefit to their air emission sources. Participants who meet all EDGE criteria earn a 10-year grace

period from making changes to air pollution controls in response to any new or revised state laws. If state laws change, EDGE participants have plenty of time to plan for the cost of implementing any new controls devices.

The cross-divisional EDGE team has been working with several potential sites to implement this innovative new program. The first site to incorporate EDGE concepts into its redevelopment is Brillion Works, LLC., who is actively working to improve the environmental, social and economic aspects of their 145-acre redevelopment site. We are excited for the potential of this development and look forward to learning more about implementation of this program with this site.

The EDGE pilot program's advisory group has been essential to establish a vision and help set the direction of this pilot program. The team has several subgroups focusing in on critical areas for communications, partnerships, tracking metrics and exploring additional benefits to reward environmental improvement on potential sites for the EDGE program.

Learn more about the EDGE program at: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/GreenTier/EDGE/>.

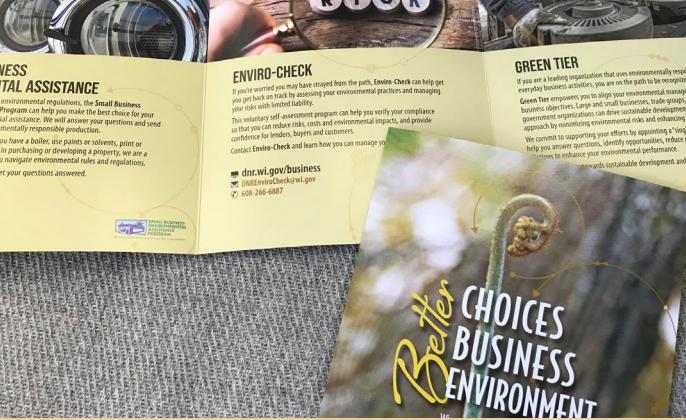
## *Support for Wisconsin's small businesses*

Sustainability and Business Support led DNR's efforts in joining with organizations nationwide to shine a spotlight on the vital contributions of entrepreneurs and small business owners during Small Business Week, May 5-11, 2019. We utilized the week to highlight some of DNR's business support services, including:

- ♦ Providing free, confidential help understanding environmental regulations provided by the **Small Business Environmental Assistance Program**.
- ♦ Making sure your business is in good standing after ownership, personnel or process changes with **Enviro-Check**.
- ♦ Helping you improve your environmental performance AND your bottom line with the **Green Tier** program.

SBS created talking points for department leaders, produced a news release supporting Wisconsin small businesses and provided a week's worth of social media posts that included a video from Secretary Cole. Bringing recognition and resources to small businesses helps them with their environmental needs.





## Better Choices. Better Business. Better Environment

In the last biennium, Sustainability and Business Support showcased our complimentary services, packaging them together with a common theme, look and feel. While each of our programs have individual marketing materials, we needed to be able to communicate how our bundled, non-regulatory services help businesses wherever they are on their path to sustainability. Our new theme, *“Better Choices, Better Business, Better Environment: Support for your business wherever you are on the path to sustainability,”* has been designed to communicate our commitment to working with businesses to empower them with choices to support their bottom-line and Wisconsin’s environment.

Armed with our new look, we set out to make sure businesses know where to find the environmental help that they need. We focused on economic development professionals because they are trusted messengers to the business customers we want to reach. To leverage those existing relationships, we systematically reached out to over 1,200 professionals in local, regional and state-wide economic development organizations. The approach was two-pronged – a physical mailing of the new brochure combined with periodic emails focusing on each of our programs and services. The series of email outreach connections followed the mailings and

continue to remind these contacts of DNR business services throughout 2020. We not only introduced the programs through email, we also provided pre-written articles for them to easily share with their members – thus enabling them to further share our information as well as enhance the services they provide their customers.

We had initially planned to round out our campaign by including in-person visits to our economic development contacts as we traveled around the state conducting our regular business. But along with everyone else, we had to adapt our plans to fit the context of a pandemic. We shifted gears and began reaching out to our audience by phone. While this new approach was not as personal as an office visit, we were able to make solid connections and build on the initial mailing and emails.

Each part of our campaign brought increased awareness and positive results with an uptick in program inquiries, requests for additional brochures and new connections made with the Small Business Environmental Council. Our email newsletters now reach over 1,800 individuals and over 300 people have been introduced to the resources on our webpages. We have personally reached out to more than 50 economic development professionals, reinforcing the messages they received via mail and email. We plan to continue outreach into 2021 with new newsletter features, webinars and continued personal contacts.

## Working differently – Providing the same great service

In March 2020 we encountered the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it presented to our customers’ business activities with positivity, resolve and resiliency. As we began teleworking, internal projects continued forward and customer needs remained, as always, at the forefront. We pivoted our planned outreach activities to support messaging on the health and safety of our customers’ employees and converting in-person events to webinars and video conferencing. Leveraging these communication options helped us continue providing our non-regulatory services and resources to support Wisconsin’s business community.

## PERFORMANCE WITH A PURPOSE

As you have read, the Sustainability & Business Support team has created strong programs to help both the businesses in Wisconsin and DNR succeed in improving the state’s environment. Businesses come to us with the purpose of doing better environmentally. Their initiative, combined with our support, creates efficiencies for their business. When using our services, our customers perform better, find increased efficiencies, reduce risks, have healthier employees and foster better environmental stewardship.

DNR’s Sustainability & Business Support – Support for Wisconsin businesses wherever they are on their path to sustainability.





Support for businesses wherever they are on their path to sustainability.

**SUSTAINABILITY AND BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources • Madison, WI • 2020

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