

# EXTRACTIONS



a newsletter from **O'CONNOR ASSOCIATES**

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## **SASKATCHEWAN "ORPHANS" HELPED**

An agreement signed in November between the federal and Saskatchewan governments provides \$3.8 million in federal funds to cleanup "orphan", high-risk contaminated sites and \$980,000 to develop and demonstrate innovative cleanup technologies. The bilateral agreement is under the federal-provincial five-year \$250-million National Contaminated Sites Remediation Program.

The first demonstration project will be at the Saskatchewan Forest Products site near Prince Albert. The soil at this site is contaminated with creosote, hydrocarbons, and pentachlorophenols (PCPs). A leachate treatment and recycling system will be developed to accompany the bioremediation process. The total cost of the technology development project will be about \$1.6 million.

Prince Albert will also benefit from an Environmental Performance Enhancement Program at Prince Albert Pulp and Paper. In co-operation with ministries of Economic Development and Environment and Resource Management, Weyerhaeuser will spend \$128 million over the next eight years to upgrade the mill to meet new standards for industrial air emissions and to develop a new on-site landfill.

[from Saskatchewan Govt. news releases]

## **BC LOOKS SOUTH**

British Columbia's Environment, Lands and Parks Minister Moe Sihota has called on Washington and Oregon states to join BC to move toward regional automobile emission and fuel standards similar to those in California. "What BC is doing in the area of pulp mill effluent, California has done with automobile emissions," he said. "By legislating future requirements such as these, we encourage the development of innovative technology that might not otherwise be explored. And the more widespread the demand for that technology, the more industry will strive to achieve it." Sihota was speaking to the Air and Waste Management Association annual conference last November.

[from BC Govt. news releases]

## **DRINK IT OR DRIVE IT**

Labatt Breweries of Canada has begun to recycle unsaleable beer (such as bottled beer returned by retail outlets for quality assurance reasons). The London branch sends waste beer by tanker to Hiram Walker Distilleries, which recovers and reuses the alcohol and turns the solids into cattle feed. The Winnipeg branch recovers waste beer for potential sale to Mohawk Industries, which can distill the alcohol for use as a gasoline additive.

[from *At Labatt*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, 1993, p. 4-6]

## **FAUX SAND**

Tourists may soon stroll down the glass on Moonlight Beach in Encinitas, California. The city is looking at a proposal to replenish the sand that is being eroded from its beach. Instead of using sand, the plan is to truck in 1200-1500 tons of finely crushed and tumbled recycled glass to refill a stretch of beach 500 ft. long, 100 ft. wide and 2 ft. deep.

The pilot project will evaluate how wildlife and the public adapt to the faux sand as well as relative beach-rebuilding costs. Woodward-Clyde Consultants' Dave Schug, who prepared the proposal, is concerned that although the idea is very "green," there may not be enough recycled glass for widespread sand replacement.

[from *Civil Engineering*, October 1993, p. 16]

## **MAKING IT STICK**

In the past, ordinary polyolefins such as polyethylene could not be strengthened with carbon- or glass-fiber reinforcements because they did not adhere to the fibers. But then T.C. "Mike" Chung, professor of polymer science at Pennsylvania State University, began adding the element boron to these "boring," low-cost polymers. He's been working since 1989 to show that boron helps these polymers cling to reinforcing fiber to make a material that rivals engineering plastics such as polycarbonate.

[from *Business Week*, November 29, 1993, p. 99]

## **MINISTER ATTENDS SIGNING CEREMONY FOR O'CONNOR ASSOCIATES' JOINT VENTURE IN MALAYSIA**



Lim Say Chong, Managing Director of ICI Malaysia, exchanges documents with Dr. Mike O'Connor during the recent signing of the joint venture agreement between ICI and O'Connor Associates in Southeast Asia. Also witnessing the ceremony were Canadian High Commissioner John Bell (right) and Datuk Law Hieng Ding, the Minister of Science, Technology and Environment for Malaysia (left). The new company, known as Envirochem Consultants Sdn Bhd, is being managed by Jamie Carss in Kuala Lumpur. In addition to its traditional expertise in groundwater and soil contamination problems, the joint venture offers specialized services in plant site construction, waste management, hazop studies, and risk management.

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### **INSURERS BACKPEDAL**

As early as 1991, members of the Association of British Insurers (ABI) began issuing public liability policies that did not cover gradual pollution. The Financial Times (12/3/93) reports that, due to a recent court case, insurers are now considering excluding sudden and accidental pollution as well. In this case, the defendant was found not negligent, but still liable in nuisance for a spill, and the insurers may have to pay. An ABI spokesperson said pollution coverage will probably be excluded from all public liability policies "within three years regardless of what happens," but an unfavourable outcome in court could hasten the decision.

[from *Groundwater Newsletter*, December 31, 1993]

### **IN FROM THE COLD**

To meet ever more stringent emission standards, auto makers are looking for ways to reduce emissions. One way is to cut the release of hydrocarbons during the first two minutes after an engine starts. That's when most engine pollution occurs because the catalytic converter is too cool to do its job of breaking pollutants into carbon dioxide and water.

Engelhard Corp. in Iselin, NJ, has a new system that uses a metal oxide crystal to trap the pollutants until the converter heats up to 200°C, and then release them to flow through the active catalytic converter. Engelhard expects to finish testing within 18 months.

[from *Business Week*, November 29, 1993, p. 99]

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