Pollution Prevention Week in Washington State

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : September 17, 2012 at 9:14 am

OLYMPIA, Wash. - When businesses, citizens, environmental groups and government join forces to prevent pollution the result brings wide-ranging environmental – and economic -- benefits. Gov. Chris Gregoire will spotlight these benefits by proclaiming September 17-23 Pollution Prevention Week in Washington state.The state’s observation coincides with National Pollution Prevention (P2) Week to highlight successes to save money and protect the environment through the reduction or elimination of pollution at the source.Some of the largest businesses in Washington state have reported saving $45 million from Washington Department of Ecology’s (Ecology) Pollution Prevention Planning program since 2005.A Washington state pollution prevention success story will be showcased in a Washington D.C. award presentation ceremony featuring Accra-Fab, Inc., a metal fabrication company from Liberty Lake. The company and several partners will be recognized for a recent video in the “Best Multimedia Award” category by the National Pollution Prevention Roundtable on Sept. 19.

The video is a testimonial to the results of focusing on environmental outcomes and improving Lean practices. Ecology partners with Impact Washington, a non-profit that offers Lean manufacturing services, as well as Washington State University Extension Energy Program to facilitate the Lean and Green Project – another pollution prevention service to state businesses.“This was a successful project with tremendous waste and cost savings due to this partnership,” said Greg Konkol, Accra-Fab plant manager. “We view this as a win-win project because what was good for the environment also was very good for our bottom line.”The economic benefits of preventing pollution include greater business efficiency, increased competitiveness, less exposure to risks, and reduced costs for regulatory monitoring, fees and paperwork.Managing toxic pollution and waste benefits industry by lowering a company's operational and environmental compliance costs. Companies that safely handle the chemicals they use keep money in their pockets in the future by avoiding long-term liabilities and clean-up costs.Pollution prevention also delivers public health and environmental benefits. They include cleaner air and water, fewer greenhouse gas emissions, less toxic waste to manage, greater workplace safety, and better stewardship of natural resources.K Seiler, Ecology’s Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program manager said: “Ultimately, the smartest, cheapest and healthiest approach is to reduce the use of toxic chemicals in our products and keep toxic chemicals from being released to the environment.” Washington state continues to be a national leader in building capacity for pollution prevention and environmental sustainability. Further efforts are underway to help businesses use safer chemical alternatives to improve products and processes. For instance, green chemistry is an emerging aspect of industry that grows green jobs in our state and offer consumers more choices.