



# The LEAGUE LINE

A publication of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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## The Inside Line

The Anti-Nuclear Movement in the South	1
Director's Report	2
Taking Care of the Earth for Future Generations	6
Environmental Justice: Making Communities Whole	7
Stanback Intern Report	9
FibroWHAT?	10
Sewage Sludge: Coming to a Farm Near You	12
CHAPTER UPDATES	
Friends of Deep River	3
Citizens of Marlboro County	4
PC PRIDE	6
MCCCA	8
GASP	9
VAR	10
Be Safe, Not Sorry	11
FOGS	12
CCE	13
FACES	15
PACE	15

Changing the world  
one community at a time



## The Anti-Nuclear Movement in the South

By Louis Zeller

Nuclear & Clean Air Campaign Coordinator

A half century ago, when the United States Congress established the Atomic Energy Act, the science and technology of atomic energy were in their infancy. After just two decades of operation, the nuclear power industry was in decline. The disasters at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl provided virtual bookends to the nuclear age. Today, the so-called nuclear revival is no more than an industry-led, taxpayer-financed attempt to revive a nuclear dinosaur. The reasons to oppose nuclear are many. Here, follow a few.

### No solution to global warming

Today's commercial nuclear electric *systems* emit about one-third as much greenhouse gas as natural gas-fired power plants. Although the generation of electricity at a reactor does not create carbon dioxide, the problem centers on fuel production. Making uranium fuel requires large amounts of fossil-fueled energy, creating carbon dioxide and an energy debt equivalent to the power needed to make the fuel. Depending on the grade of the uranium ore, it can take over a decade for the nuclear plant to repay this energy debt. No other conventional electric power source—coal, natural gas, diesel—compares to nuclear in this regard.<sup>1</sup>

### Too expensive to matter

Nuclear power is expensive. Without federal subsidies, it would not survive. In 2005, Congress enacted federal risk insurance and loan guarantees for the nuclear industry. A delay caused by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is a "failure" for which the licensee may be compensated up to 500 million dollars. Legal actions brought by local governments or public interest groups are also considered delays. The Congressional Budget Office estimated the historical default rate on nuclear loans amounted to 30% to 50% of capital costs. Because Wall Street considers nukes a risky investment, the nuclear industry convinced Congress to approve loan guarantees. Today, federal subsidies range from 60% to 90% of generation costs of new nuclear power units.<sup>2</sup>

### The Public is Shut Out of the Process

Some of the most aggressive promoters of commercial nuclear power are located in the Southeast: Duke Energy, Southern Company, Dominion Virginia Power and the Tennessee Valley Authority. Over the years, these companies and the Nuclear Energy Institute have used their combined clout to make it easier to get licenses to construct and operate new nuclear plants.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the health, safety and well-being of our communities take second place to so-called regulatory efficiency.

(continued on page 4)



# *The* LEAGUE LINE

## **BREDL: Who and What we are**

In March 1984, fifty citizens of Ashe and Watauga Counties met in the Mission House of Holy Trinity Church in Glendale Springs, North Carolina. Teachers and farmers, home-makers and merchants listened to the report of the Episcopal Church Women on the US Department of Energy's siting search for a high-level nuclear waste dump in the rain-rich east.

Recognizing that the North Carolina mountains were a region at risk, the assembled group organized the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL) to protect their own backyard and those of other threatened communities.

Grassroots organizing was a cornerstone of our early all-volunteer organization. One of our first multi-county boards of directors adopted our credo, which embodies our mission statement:

### **BREDL Credo**

We believe in the practice of earth stewardship, not only by our league members, but by our government and the public as well. To foster stewardship, BREDL encourages government and citizen responsibility in conserving and protecting our natural resources. BREDL advocates grassroots involvement in order to empower whole communities in environmental issues. BREDL functions as a "watchdog" of the environment, monitoring issues and holding government officials accountable for their actions. BREDL networks with citizen groups and agencies, collecting and disseminating accurate, timely information. BREDL sets standards for environmental quality, and awards individuals and agencies who uphold these standards in practice.

### **Moving into the future**

Since then, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has grown to be a regional community-based, nonprofit environmental organization. Our founding principles - earth stewardship, environmental democracy, social justice and community empowerment - still guide our work for social change. Our staff and volunteers put into practice the ideals of love of community and love of neighbor, which help us to serve the movement for environmental protection and progressive social change in southwest Virginia, east Tennessee, north Georgia, the foothills of South Carolina, and all of North Carolina.

### **Grassroots Campaigns**

Nothing creates hopefulness out of helplessness like a successful grassroots campaign -and our chapters have a history of winning. For twenty-four years Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League chapters have protected their communities by stopping dangerous facilities and promoting safe alternatives.

In the 1980's and 1990's, BREDL stopped the ThermalKEM hazardous waste incinerator and the proposed southeastern nuclear waste dump. In 2007, our coordinated grassroots citizens' lobby won a legislative victory with the passage of the NC Solid Waste Act, effectively blocking at least four multi-state mega-dumps. This year our chapter won a victory when the Person County Board of Commissioners rejected attempts to expand the Republic Services landfill there. Our Cascade, Virginia, chapter shut down a huge hazardous waste incinerator. Other chapter victories over the years include the elimination of mercury emissions from the Stericycle incinerator, the shut down of a tire incinerator in Martinsville, the landmark environmental justice court decision in Greene County, and passage by local governments of eight polluting industries ordinances. Further, our chapters have protected air quality by blocking scores of asphalt plants, four medical waste incinerators, a PVC plant and a lead smelter.

Our work on nuclear power and coal plants laid the groundwork for our new Safe Energy Campaign. Victories over twenty-four mega-dumps have resulted in our affirmative Zero Waste Campaign. Our work on air and water quality has led to the creation of our newest campaign: the NC Healthy Communities Project. Guided by the principles of earth stewardship and environmental justice, we have learned that empowering whole communities with effective grassroots campaigns is an effective strategy for change.

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Sue Dayton



## Air Pollution Deregulation: A Giant Step Backward

By Janet Marsh  
Executive Director

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

We the people have a growing understanding of the dangers of deregulation—irresponsible, negligent deregulation. Now here comes the North Carolina Division of Air Quality (DAQ) with a proposal to deregulate more than 1,400 big air pollution sources. And they are using sleight-of-hand tricks to mask the harm.

On Tuesday, October 28, in Raleigh, the NC Environmental Management Commission will hear comments on this proposal to gut the health-based standards which have been in effect for decades. If adopted, the exemption would remove forever the requirement that industrial boilers limit air poisons at the property boundary. These boilers include coal-fired power plants, asphalt plants, paper mills and more. The poisons which these plants would never have to limit include arsenic, benzene, formaldehyde, hydrogen sulfide and more than a hundred others.

DAQ has added insult to potential injury by justifying the boiler exemption with a large human exposure study.

### PLEASE JOIN US!

NC Environmental Management Commission Public Hearing  
October 28, 2008 7:00 PM  
NC Division of Air Quality  
Parker-Lincoln Building, Room AQ-526  
2728 Capital Blvd.  
Raleigh, NC 27604

The NC DAQ is located at Exit 11 on I-440, the Raleigh Beltline.  
Complete directions are posted at:  
[http://daq.state.nc.us/motor/ms\\_grants/direct.shtml](http://daq.state.nc.us/motor/ms_grants/direct.shtml)

The fatal flaw in the study is the use of an EPA computer model which measures inhalation only. For nearly twenty years the hardworking Science Advisory Board (SAB) has conducted detailed analyses of air poisons to create the existing toxic air pollutant rules. The SAB sets specific limits for each toxin based on human exposure through every pollution pathway: water, soil and ingestion, as well as inhalation. Toxic compounds deposited on soil, plants and water may be metabolized by microorganisms and ingested by fish, other animals

and humans. Fat-soluble bio-accumulative substances concentrate in dairy products.

I repeat: the Human Exposure Model (HEM) estimates risk from inhalation only. It cannot capture the health risks posed by, for example, formaldehyde, which is water soluble. The HEM under-reports the health impacts of dioxin—the world's most dangerous poison. People living near smokestacks must be protected from the ingestion of dioxin.

The state's study tells only a piece of the truth, the effect of which is a lie. The lie is that these industrial boilers are safe.

The question is obvious: why would anyone propose this exemption at all? The answer is also obvious: coal plants, asphalt plants, paper mills and others cannot now meet the pollution limits. We say, if they can not meet these health-protective standards, the companies need to add pollution controls.

Moreover, the DAQ's cost-benefit analysis, which underlies the economic hardship loophole, fails to take into account the costs to families of emergency room visits, missed work and school, health insurance, medicines and equipment, and chronic conditions.

We community organizers know that the people must lead. League members and concerned North Carolinians are going to Raleigh on October 28 to stand up for health-protective pollution limits and to say No to this dangerous deregulation. ■

*Epilogue: If you are reading this message after October 28, 2008 please go to [www.BREDL.org](http://www.BREDL.org) and join us in our efforts to safeguard public health.*

*"One person speaking alone may not be heard. Many people speaking with one voice cannot be ignored."*

*Janet Marsh, May 4, 1984*

(continued from page 1)

The licensing process is an opaque, stilted process that has the trappings of a courtroom, but too often lacks the element of impartiality. NRC attorneys line up with industry lawyers, opposing all arguments proposed by concerned citizens. The public is muzzled. Public hearings are held to satisfy the National Environmental Policy Act and comments are processed, but it's a paper exercise. In exasperation, one judge characterized the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing process as a "shell game."<sup>4</sup>

### **When we see a need, we must act**

Working with League chapters and our members, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League has mounted a wide-ranging campaign to stop the nuclear revival.

The People's Alliance for Clean Energy in Virginia has organized to stop Dominion at North Anna. A two-pronged legal challenge is underway: 1) an intervention in the NRC license for a third reactor and 2) an appeal of the water discharge permit (NPDES) for the two existing reactors near Charlottesville. In the nuclear operating license case, we oppose Dominion's request for further exceptions to the rules: the site is located on a geologic fault, a fact which it covered up during its initial licensing. The water case centers on the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's permit, which granted Dominion a variance to discharge excessive amounts of hot water—as high as 104 degrees-F—into Lake Anna, in violation of the Clean Water Act.

The Bellefonte Efficiency and Sustainability Team, with members in three states, mounted a legal challenge to Tennessee Valley Authority's proposal for nukes near Scottsboro, Alabama. BEST has launched the "How Would You Spend \$14 Billion" contest to find cleaner, safer and cheaper ways to add 2,234 megawatts of electric capacity in the TVA service area. The contest is based on the price tag for TVA's nuclear reactors. The preferred alternatives include solar, wind, efficiency and conservation. There are cash prizes and the contest ends Earth Day 2009.<sup>5</sup>

Our members are working against Duke Energy's application for the W. S. Lee nuclear plant on the Broad River in South Carolina. We have organized an informal Carolina anti-nuclear roundtable to develop a unified, two-state strategy with Friends of the Earth, the South Carolina Sierra Club, NC WARN, Nuclear Information and Resource Service and other groups. Duke's nuclear plant near Gaffney, SC would evaporate 13 billion gallons of water a year. And the plant would be just a few miles downstream of the Cliffside coal-fired power plant in North Carolina, another big water user.

### **It's up to all of us**

The public funding and taxpayer dollars, directed to the overweening nuclear industry, undermine less costly, cleaner forms of electric power generation. In a world of computer crashes, product recalls, and financial failures, there can be no such thing as accident-free nuclear power. We want a clean, safe energy future. Join us. ■

<sup>1</sup> Jan Willem Storm van Leeuwen and Philip Smith, *Nuclear power - the energy balance*, August 2005

<sup>2</sup> Doug Kaplow, *Nuclear power in the US: Still Not Viable Without Subsidy*, Earth Track, November 2005

<sup>3</sup> Code of Federal Regulations, 10 C.F.R. Part 52

<sup>4</sup> Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, Docket No. 70-3098-MLA, Hearing Transcript, January 8, 2008

<sup>5</sup> For contest information, go to [www.BREDL.org](http://www.BREDL.org)

## **Friends of the Deep River recognized for protecting NC's waters**

In early June, the Friends of the Deep River helped clean up the Jamestown section of the river, extracting lots of containers, tires and junk that otherwise would have contaminated the water and downstream for years to come. The Friends used their heavy appetites to raise money at a Bar-b-que held at Camelback Bridge at Cumnock and helped raise money to re-paint the bridge. They helped plan a Clean Water Lobby Day along with NC Conservation Network's Watershed Alliance. They got down and dirty at the Muddy Water Watch classes held by the NC Riverkeepers, and later partnered with Haw River Assembly adding wetland plants to a retention pond in Pittsboro.

Tom Duckwall, the Friends Treasurer, was recently appointed to the Mayor of Greensboro's community sustainability council, which will be holding an important public meeting November 13 from 4:00-7:00 pm. Congratulations, Tom, and keep up the good work!

For more information contact Tom Duckwall at: [tomduckwall@cs.com](mailto:tomduckwall@cs.com)



Tennessee Valley Authority Nuclear Power Station in Hollywood, Alabama. This is the Bellefonte site where TVA began to construct a nuclear power plant in 1974; TVA abandoned the project in 2006. Bellefonte means 'beautiful spring.' TVA now proposes to re-start the project and BREDL and its BEST chapter have intervened in the license procedure. The stop sign says it all.  
(Photo by Peter Frogner)



Members of BEST who are participating in a legal challenge to Tennessee Valley Authority's proposal for nukes near Scottsboro, Alabama.

Members shown are (L to R): Garry Morgan, Sandy Kurtz, Bil Reynolds, Ross McCluney, Louise Gorenflo, Finne Bille, Sara Fitzgerald, and BREDL/BEST legal representative, Lou Zeller.  
(Photo by Peter Frogner)

## Chapters unite to halt state-line Mega- Dump

Citizens of Marlboro County, one of our newest BREDL chapters, is taking on MRR Southern and partner ZV Pate's proposal to build potentially the largest landfill in the U.S. If built, the landfill would have the capacity of taking up to 1.5 million tons of garbage per year.

"If this is allowed they'll bring in more garbage in three days than Marlboro County produces in a year," explained Belvin Sweatt, Chair of Citizens of Marlboro County. "Marlboro County averages only 10,500 tons of garbage." In fact, rumor has it that waste from New York City will be transported to the landfill by rail on CSX.

The proposed site encompasses 5,000 acres, 968-acres of which would be the actual landfill. "That leaves 4,032-acres for expansion," said Bob Davis, with Scotland County Of Tomorrow (SCOT). "We don't want it here because we don't want the traffic and accidents. All this garbage will get funneled right through our area."

The site for the landfill is in Marlboro County, SC, but a section of the landfill crosses the state border into Richmond County. "The entrance is actually located in Richmond County," says Barbara Brearly, Co-Chair of SOAR. "We're country people. We don't want it because of our water, our air, and our farming. The research that's been done on people who live near dumps shows a lot of diseases, cancers, and learning disabilities among children."

With their own mega-dump victory behind them, members of SCOT and SOAR have joined with Citizens of Marlboro County to make signs and buttons, print T-shirts, hold weekly meetings, and request permits for protests, including several marches at the Marlboro County Courthouse. "We've had ladies in their 90s walk with us every day, Monday through Friday," says Belvin. "One 90-year-old walked up to me one day and said, 'My name is Gloria. Got another one of those signs? I'll walk with you.'"

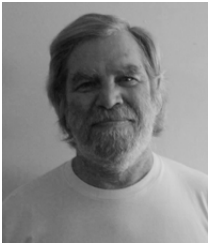
A recent non-binding referendum in Marlboro County showed that the majority of the 2,400 who voted, 2,372 opposed the landfill while 166 supported it. Belvin adds that MRR told citizens at a county commissioners' meeting that if people didn't want the landfill they'd leave.



"But since the referendum wasn't binding, and only 2,400 people voted, MRR says that number doesn't accurately represent the public's opinion about the landfill." Looks like MRR Southern and ZV Pate are in for a fight.

For more information contact Belvin Sweatt at: [bbtex@sc.metrocast.net](mailto:bbtex@sc.metrocast.net)

(Photo) Members of Citizens for Marlboro County, with members of SCOT and SOAR, rallying at the State Capital in Columbia, SC.



## Taking care of the earth for future generations

*A Message from BREDL Co-President Sam Tesh*

A Native North American proverb says, “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.” I would not hesitate to say that many of us got involved in a particular environmental cause because we felt a responsibility to our children.

This long-term view is what gives us the moral upper hand. Those who live for short-term profit and gain, those who see the earth as their personal possession cannot—must not—be allowed to use our children’s resources, or foul our children’s land, water, and air. No purpose is greater than this. No reason supercedes this for setting public policy or conducting personal business.

Between now and November, many politicians will employ rhetoric that plays to our interest. We will be reminded that children are our future; that the world must be made safe for the sake of the children. No matter what we are promised, it is important to look at the records of the candidates, whether it be a candidate for county commissioner, the legislature, or the presidency. We must ask the tough questions—the questions many of them would prefer not to answer: Why did you vote for (or against) such-and-such? What is your plan to support or help us fight our particular cause?

Many of you never thought you would be involved in an environmental battle, but something happened, something you knew would put your children in danger. Suddenly you were up to your earlobes in meetings and discussions and planning. You were attending zoning board hearings and calling your legislators. You found yourself re-evaluating what was important and what was a minor annoyance. You began to take a long-term view regarding a particular situation.

If there is one thing we must demand of those who will be elected to office this fall, it must be that they share our long-term view. We must have leaders who believe that the earth is not ours to use as we will—it belongs to the generations that will succeed us. If we fail them, we will have failed most miserably. ■

## Person County recycling project a double-header

As it stands right now, it looks like Person County is going to have a county-owned Materials Recycling Facility. It’s a first for the county, which has been working with members of BREDL chapter Person County People Rising In Defense of Ecology (PC PRIDE) on the project.

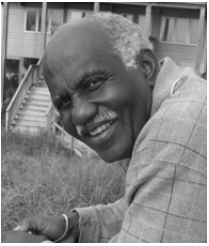
PC PRIDE has partnered with Wanda Rogers, who manages Person Industry, a job-training center for physically and mentally handicapped adults. Pat Hill, a member of PC PRIDE, is excited about the partnership. “Wanda went looking for employment opportunities for her clients, and this is what she came up with. We’ve been with her every step of the way on this because it will be great for everybody.”

The recycling facility will be housed in a facility owned by the county at a convenient location for “one stop drop offs.” Materials collected will include paper, plastic, aluminum, glass and cardboard. Even the Person County Commissioners are giving it a thumbs-up. Pat adds, “We’ll wait to see the county’s budget to see if it’s really going to happen.”

News of the facility comes on the heels of another project PC PRIDE is involved with: installing recycling bins in all the schools in Person County. The group raised the money for the bins at their “It’s A Magic Show” fundraiser in August. “We’ll start with the elementary schools first,” Pat explains, “but our goal is to have them in all the schools in the county.”

With PC PRIDE leading the way, Person County is an example of how recycling programs can provide jobs, educate children and protect the environment.

For more information contact Pat Hill at: 336-364-4452.



# Environmental Justice: Making Communities Whole

By Charles Utley

*Environmental Justice & Savannah River Site Coordinator*

*Communities of color and low-income areas historically have been targeted for a disproportionate number of mega-dumps and other polluting industries. This pattern of abuse is called environmental racism, and the remedy for this is called environmental justice. Communities on the receiving end of the waste stream are often referred to as “EJ Communities.” We talked with Charles Utley, who for the past five years has worked as a community organizer for BREDL in Augusta, Georgia, about his thoughts on environmental justice.*

## **Can you describe what environmental justice is?**

Environmental injustice happens when a particular community has received a disproportionate amount of pollution compared to the rest of the surrounding area. Then it becomes an environmental justice (EJ) issue. To look for the signs of an EJ community, look at where the community is located, be it near a dump, railroad, factory, water way, or railway. Railways are considered a major conduit for EJ issues because travel by rail allows toxic chemicals to be shipped to factories located in and near EJ communities. Residents living in these areas have been proven to have high rates of illnesses and diseases due to exposures to chemicals, and other toxic substances. Employees of industries living in close proximity to these industries often double their exposure to chemicals.

## **Do EJ issues affect people of all races or just people of color?**

We have to keep in mind that EJ Communities are not always African American. Many other people of different races and ethnicities live in communities that have problems. Many times, those who are not aware of the dangers have never been exposed to living in any place other than their own community. These communities represent a way of life for a great number of people all over the country that must be protected, and given an opportunity to live a gainful and healthy lifestyle.

## **Do people who are the targets of racial discrimination know about EJ issues?**

No. For example, why are additional Plant Vogtle reactors [nuclear power plants] being built in Burke County? Because there is no resistance to these projects. The people who live near Plant Vogtle don't have any knowledge of the danger it poses, and they're overruled by the majority who don't live in the immediate area. In addition, power plants recruit its employees outside of the immediate area residents. The only thing that the immediate area residents are provided with is a first hand dose of toxic waste dumped on them. If you were to ask these residents if they lived in an EJ community, they would tell you, 'no.' Their perspective changes once you explain the reasons why their health is poor and their water wells are going dry. They come face to face with the reality that their proximity to such plants in their neighborhoods is hindering them.

## **Is there an easy way to tell if people know if they're being targeted?**

One question we always ask in a community meeting is, “Are there other comparable communities suffering with the same symptoms that you are suffering with?” If their answer is no, then they can be assured that their community is an EJ community.

## **Have you ever had to deal with EJ issues in your personal life?**

There are some communities that lack the bare necessities that most of America takes for granted, such as public water, sewage and paved streets. I can speak with experience because I grew-up in a community without these things. At the time, I thought it was supposed to be that way. I knew there was a better way of life that existed beyond my community borders after I had an opportunity to see and visit other places. Until everyone is aware of these communities and the disproportional amount of contamination that many of these communities are exposed to, EJ work must continue.

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**Is environmental racism a thing of the past, like segregation?**

In my opinion environmental racism and segregation are the same. Although there's a perception that segregation no longer exists, it's not a thing of the past. We still have potholes of predominantly Black communities being dumped on by contaminating industries.

**Do you think EJ issues have increased over the years or decreased?**

Increased. Some companies would rather pay the fines than stop polluting because it takes more money to correct the problem.

**What role does EJ play in your work with BREDL?**

Environmental Justice is my main concern in my job with BREDL. It's my responsibility to raise the awareness of those living in and around contaminated neighborhoods of the dangers of toxic exposures. It is imperative that I provide them with a clear understanding that they do have rights against those plants and polluters. My work within the EJ communities is to get them involved, become active, and have their voices heard within the political process.

**How can EJ contribute to a safe and clean environment?**

The main ways that communities can help protect themselves is through educational programs, community involvement, supporting legislation and regulations designed to protect people, and partnering with other organizations - like BREDL. EJ serves as a conduit in making the rest of our world aware of these endangered communities and what we must do to make these communities "whole." ■

## **Mitchell County Citizens declare victory over asphalt plant**

*But asphalt plant owners dead set on opening another ...*

Mitchell County Citizens for Clean Air (MCCCA) declared a victory in its efforts to stop an asphalt plant from being built in Spruce Pine when they recently learned that plant owners Young & McQueen decided not to build the plant. The proposed asphalt plant was to be built less than a half mile from a school, nursing home, public park and residential area. In addition to the potential health affects from the plant's emissions on nearby children, seniors, and residents, other concerns included impacts on local lake and reservoir that supplies drinking water to area residents.

MCCCA pulled out all the stops in their efforts to stop the plant from being built. Don Cooper, Treasure of MCCCA, says, "We made it a point to go to every commissioner meeting, we wrote editorials that were published every week in our local newspaper, we used BREDL's strategy to 'adopt a commissioner' in our efforts to educate them about the risks from the plant's emissions, and we encouraged the people in our community to send letters directly to Young & McQueen asking them not to build the plant."

Lou Zeller, BREDL's Nuclear and Clean Air Campaign Coordinator, conducted a worse-case scenario model of the emissions from the plant's cement boiler, the second largest source of emissions. When Lou ran the model he found that arsenic, benzene and formaldehyde would be deposited at dangerous levels not far from the plant's boundaries, placing communities at further risk. The data from Lou's report convinced the DENR Division of Air Quality (DAQ), that before granting a permit, all of the plant's air emissions should be taken into consideration. As a result, the DAQ approved the permit, but with a condition that the plant use natural gas or propane instead of # 2 recycled or unadulterated fuel oil to power the boiler. Lifting the exemption cut down on the plant's emissions under the worst-case scenario model.

Rumors have it that Young & McQueen are looking to build another asphalt plant in Burnsville, NC. Even so, MCCCA may have another fight on their hands: the NC Environmental Management Commission has proposed a rule which would create a permanent exemption for all combustion sources from industrial facilities that burn unadulterated fossil fuels. Stay tuned.

For more information contact Don Cooper at: [doncooper5@bvelsouth.net](mailto:doncooper5@bvelsouth.net) or 828-765-5047.

# Stanback Intern Develops Zero Waste Plan for Salvation Army

By Siyu Zheng

2008 Duke University Stanback Conservation Intern

*Note: The Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is fortunate to work with students from Duke University's Stanback Conservation Internship Program. This year we have students working on air toxics, nuclear power and zero waste. Here is a summary of the zero waste project, investigating the role charitable organizations can play in community zero waste programs.*

"My Stanback project aimed to reduce the waste from the Salvation Army operations in the Winston-Salem area, in accordance with the zero waste model. Through these efforts, we hope for the Salvation Army to serve as a model of recycling and reusing resources for the community.

Current recycling practices in the administrative offices and facilities are limited. Hundreds of pounds of paper and cardboard that are disposed each month should be recycled. Tens of thousands of disposable plates, thrown away from feeding programs each year, can be replaced with reusable plates.

Seventy-five percent of the waste disposal costs for the Salvation Army originates from thrift stores, so I looked at what was being thrown away in the stores and found that much of the waste is actually reusable. Cardboard, metal, wood and plastics can be sold, while the unsold items from the store can be given away.

The biggest waste, however, are mattresses and couches. These items are bulky and heavy, with high disposal costs. Instead, these are valuable resources that can be used to create revenue and employment.

With the Salvation Army's goal to help prisoners' transition back into society, training them in the mattress and couch recycling can help them new income and lease on life. I hope these practices will be implemented for the benefit of the Salvation Army, the community, and the environment." ■

## What does your hospital do with its medical waste?

What burns 22 million pounds of medical waste each year and spews toxic pollutants into the air? If you answered "Stericycle," you win! Stericycle burns over 22 million pounds of hospital waste each year. In addition to hospitals in NC, approximately 24 states, including Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, ship medical waste to Stericycle in Haw River.

In 2005, our chapter, Group Against Stericycle Pollution (GASP), halted the burning of mercury-laden dental waste at Stericycle which were measured at 13 times the federal standards. BREDL member, Carolyn Cole, has revived GASP's efforts in an attempt to curtail an array of other toxic air emissions which include lead, arsenic, formaldehyde, furans, particulates, hydrogen fluoride, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, chlorine, hydrogen chloride, cadmium, and dioxins. Dioxins, which are often referred to as the "most toxic substance known to man," are carcinogens that have been linked to birth defects, immune system disorders, and other harmful health effects.

Carolyn's developed a no-nonsense, comprehensive website in easily understood lay terms outlining the problems with medical waste incineration, the history of Stericycle's permit violations, alternatives to medical waste incineration, what hospitals can do and what YOU can do to end toxic air emissions from medical waste incineration. A key part of the new Stericycle Awareness Campaign is to educate the public about toxic emissions from medical waste incinerators, and to encourage hospitals to reduce waste incineration and look into using cleaner, less polluting alternatives, such as autoclaving.

Carolyn says, "Many people think incineration is necessary. In fact, there are alternatives that allow healthcare facilities to be good stewards of public health and the environment." Alternatives include using non-incineration methods such as autoclave and microwave treatment.

For more information see <http://www.bredl-medwaste.org> or email Carolyn at: [info@bredl-medwaste.org](mailto:info@bredl-medwaste.org)



## FibroWHAT?

*By David Mickey*

It's true. You can actually burn poultry manure in a boiler and generate electricity. It's actually possible to grow corn and soybeans in the Midwest, grind it into chicken feed, ship it to North Carolina, feed it to thousands of chickens, scrape up what passes through the chickens, mix it with some other "fuels" and burn it. It costs more and pollutes more than coal, but if the state guarantees the price and ignores the additional pollution, you can do it.

If you are Fibrowatt LLC, this is exactly what you plan to do. The company that got its start burning poultry manure in the UK, now has a plant running on turkey manure in Minnesota and plans for three more manure burners in North Carolina. Armed with a mandate from the General Assembly, Fibrowatt selected a plant site in the east near Faison and in the west outside of Elkin. A third site is planned for the Montgomery, Stanley, Richmond County vicinity.

Poultry manure found its way into North Carolina's renewable energy plan with the following provision: "For calendar year 2014 and for each calendar year thereafter, at least 900,000 megawatt hours of the total electric power sold to retail electric customers in the State shall be supplied, or contracted for supply in each year, by poultry waste combined with wood shavings, straw, rice hulls, or other bedding material."

Generally referred to as the "Fibrowatt provision" because of the company's participation in developing the legislation, the company has positioned itself as the only provider of this electricity generation—and the three plants proposed for North Carolina would satisfy the state's mandate.

BREDL urged the General Assembly to exclude dirty renewables, such as poultry manure, from the state program, but support from the poultry industry and their friends in the legislature guaranteed the provision. Changing this misguided policy is now a priority for our organization.

Fibrowatt has sold itself as a solution to a perceived poultry industry problem: too much waste concentrated in a small area. Farmers have a long tradition of spreading poultry manure as fertilizer. Rich in both nitrogen and phosphorous, poultry manure is a valuable resource, particularly in a time of rapidly escalating fertilizer prices. If repeatedly over-applied, it is possible to have too much phosphorous for uptake by crops and the excess could pose a threat to local surface waters.

However, burning poultry manure not only destroys both the phosphorous and nitrogen nutrients, the nitrogen ends up as a

## New interstate highway would destroy Virginia's history – and habitat

Ann Rogers, spokeswoman for the Virginians for Appropriate Roads (VAR) says being a chapter of BREDL has been a life-saver for VAR. The way Ann puts it, BREDL gave VAR "its teeth in fighting a tooth and nails battle" with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). The VDOT is hell-bent on putting in a new interstate highway (I-73) to bypass old U.S. 220. The new highway would cut a vast swath through rural Franklin County, taking with it Oak Hill, a historic farming community established by Old German Baptists in the late 1700s. It would also wipe out the pristine aquatic habitat of the Pigg River (the home of the federally-endangered Roanoke logperch), and impact 3,370 acres of forest habitat. Not surprisingly, the new highway would result in an increase in air pollution and greenhouse gases as well.

VAR's first victory came in 2004, when it successfully placed Southeast Roanoke on the National Register of Historic Places. That didn't make the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) happy at all, according to Ann. "The FHWA fought against our position vehemently. It seems contrary to the way things ought to work, since the identification of historic resources is the FHWA's federally-mandated responsibility. We had to hire our own consultant to get the job done right."

Right now VAR is in a holding pattern, Ann says, awaiting the next steps in a lawsuit filed by the group against the FHWA. VAR will present oral arguments in 2009 which contend that the FHWA failed to study options to fix the old U.S. 220 before proposing to build the new interstate freeway. "I can't adequately express the high regard we have for BREDL. Without BREDL, VAR wouldn't be around to fight these fights."

For more information contact Ann Rogers at: 540-725-8222

## Community challenges toxic neighbor next door

Be Safe, Not Sorry, BREDL's Alamance County chapter, is relentless in its investigation of the South Atlantic Steel Galvanizing (SAG) plant. Thanks to Beverly and Julius Kerr, the NC Division of Air Quality (DAQ) agreed to set up two air monitors on the Kerr's property to measure pollution coming from the steel galvanizing plant. At the same time the state began its air monitoring of the plant's emissions, SAG installed curtains around the plant's acid vats. Then, after the two air monitors were in place, SAG set up a video camera on its property facing the state's monitoring equipment. Beverly says she wonders if the camera set up by SAG might be able to detect when the air monitors were on. She adds, "Maybe it's just their way of saying, 'How do you like being on camera?'"

The DAQ told the Kerrs that the preliminary data gathered by the air monitors indicated there was no problem. The monitoring results subsequently sent to Beverly from the Winston-Salem Regional Office, were limited to total suspended particulates, and indicated emissions below the state's accepted levels for that pollutant.

Before the letter from Winston-Salem with the information about the particulates reached the Kerrs, BREDL had already filed a public records request asking DAQ for the monitoring data and the testing protocol. The letter to DAQ from Executive Director Janet Marsh outlined our concerns about the new curtains and the video monitoring by South Atlantic that may have affected the accuracy of the test results. BREDL's letter requested the state to regulate air emissions from SAG and challenged the DAQ's testing protocol, stating that it was "wholly inadequate" because the monitoring was intermittent, too short to provide valid sampling data, and did not include testing for major contaminants such as lead, zinc, ammonia, and hydrochloric acid.

The DAQ had long promised the Kerrs they would conduct tests for hydrochloric acid since the results from a "penny test" by Beverly signaled the presence of hydrogen chloride. But that testing hasn't happened yet.

Meanwhile, white chemical fumes hang over Storybook Farm, the couple's childcare center, and loud explosions, hissing, and metallic odors fill the air. Julius has removed nineteen trees that have died at the edge of their property nearest the plant boundaries.

BREDL and Be Safe, Not Sorry will keep the pressure on the Division of Air Quality until South Atlantic takes action to protect the plant's neighbors, the children AND the trees.

For more information contact Beverly Kerr at 336-376-9060 or [beverlybkerr@netzero.net](mailto:beverlybkerr@netzero.net)



The dead and dying trees on Beverly and Julius Kerr's property.



## Sewage sludge: coming to a farm near you

By Sue Dayton  
*NC Healthy Communities Coordinator*

Most people aren't aware that sewage sludge is being spread by the billions of gallons on farmlands in their counties. It's nasty, and smelly, but many farmers say it makes their crops grow as green as an emerald. What's even better, it's free. Though it's little more than a cheap imitation, considering the rising costs of commercial fertilizer, farmers save big bucks using sewage sludge on their crops. For municipalities, it's a relatively economical and easy way to dispose of sewage residuals. For private companies that contract with wastewater treatment plants to haul it, spread it, and compile annual sludge reports for municipalities, it's a multi-million dollar industry.

You may have heard sewage sludge politely referred to as "biosolids," the name picked from a slew of goofy runner-ups ("bioslurp," "black gold," "geoslime," "sca-doo," "the end product," "humanure," "hudo," "ROSE") in a national contest held by wastewater pundits in an effort to make sewage sludge more acceptable to the public. In reality, sewage sludge is far from being even a close second to commercial fertilizer.

The Harper-Collins Dictionary of Environmental Science is often quoted for its definition of sludge: "A viscous, semisolid mixture of bacteria and virus-laden organic matter, toxic metals, synthetic organic chemicals, and settled solids removed from domestic and industrial waste water at sewage treatment plants." The Federal Clean Water Act takes the definition a step further and defines sludge as a "pollutant." [33 U.S.C. 1362(6)]. The Act also gives local governments authority in determining how to manage sewage sludge.

There are a lot of problems with land application of sewage sludge. The most obvious: sewage sludge can contain any and every toxic substance under the sun – and there are a lot of them, thanks to EPA's partnership with industry that allows industry to manufacture and produce dangerous chemicals that find their way into our environment and, ultimately, our bodies. From the hundreds of thousands of chemicals that can be found in sludge—pharmaceuticals, hormones, antimicrobials, pathogens, parasites, heavy metals, fire retardants, dioxins, phthalate plasticizers, and industrial solvents—only 9 toxic metals, nutrients, and total coliform are required to be tested by the EPA.

What's not known are the long-term effects of the miniscule amounts of these contaminants, either individually, or in combination with each other, on human health and the environment, on farnyards, on foods grown in sludge, on surface waters, and on wildlife resources.

## FOGS expands its vision to protect environment

The members of Friends Of the Green Swamp (FOGS) are much like the turtles of their beloved Green Swamp they managed to save, poking their heads above the water, watching for the next threat.

In a battle that lasted seven years, FOGS defeated a mega-dump (dubbed Mount Trashmore), proposed by Riegel Ridge, LLC, and Waste Management, Inc. that would have destroyed the fragile ecosystem of the Green Swamp. In 2007, a mega-dump bill adopted by the NC state legislature prevented the construction of any landfill within a mile of North Carolina State Game Lands. At the same time the mega-dump legislation was passed, the Nature Conservancy acquired property within the Green Swamp for game lands effectively preserving the Green Swamp as a wildlife sanctuary.

FOGS is now in the process of defining its future vision, but remains committed to preserving the unique and valuable resources of the Green Swamp and surrounding areas. Lonnie Fox, FOGS new President, says FOGS will continue its focus on preserving the Green Swamp in Columbus County while it looks at other issues as well. "We want to determine how we can best continue and expand our activities, and strengthen and expand our membership base in order to get more people actively involved in the organization. Whatever we decide to do, we want to try to create and maintain the same sense of purpose and passion for accomplishing a task that existed when we fought the landfill."

For more information about the Green Swamp and FOGS contact Lonnie Fox at: (910) 646-4672.

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Studies have proven that endocrine disrupting compounds concentrate in sewage sludge and damage the reproductive systems of fish and other aquatic species. As far as humans are concerned, there are hundreds of reports from people around the nation who have complained about odors, fly infestations, burning eyes, sore throats, coughs, nose bleeds, upper respiratory infections, and a decreased quality of life as a result of living next to fields where sludge has been spread. There are plenty of other reports about contamination to surface waters, groundwater and private wells from sewage sludge.

Farmers in NC who contract with applicators to spread sludge are under the impression, partly because they haven't been told about the potential risks associated with using sewage sludge as a fertilizer, that free sewage sludge is the best thing since sliced bread. It's clear that farmers aren't getting the information they need to make fully informed decisions, and there are no regulations that require that they get this information.

In a recent lawsuit, sewage sludge was deemed by a federal judge to be responsible for the deaths of hundreds of dairy cattle that were fed sludge-tainted feed from soil that contained levels of arsenic, toxic heavy metals and PCBs two to 2,500 times federal health standards. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) was ordered to compensate the farmer for his cattle loss, as well as the loss of his farmland, that was no longer productive. Milk from another nearby dairy had to be pulled from shelves due to the discovery of the same contaminants in them. The judge concluded that the data collected by USDA and EPA officials concerning toxic heavy metals found in the sludge provided by Augusta's sewage treatment plant was fraudulent.

On the one hand, the US EPA supports the land application of sewage sludge. however, the other hand fully acknowledges that the pollutants and pathogenic organisms in sewage sludge “. . . upon exposure, ingestion, inhalation, or assimilation into an organisms either directly from the environment or indirectly by ingestion through the food chain, could, on the basis of information available to the Administrator of EPA, cause death, disease, behavioral abnormalities, cancer, genetic mutations, physiological malfunctions (including malfunction in reproduction), or physical deformations in either organisms or offspring of the organisms." [See: US EPA 40 CFR Part 503.9 (f).]

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## **TEC Tire Incinerator Permit Terminated**

*By Mark Barker*

Citizens for a Clean Environment had a victory for clean air in the Martinsville/Henry County area of Virginia in September, 2007, when the Tire Energy Corporation (TEC) tire incinerator was permanently shut down by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's (VA DEQ) and its air permit terminated. While we were not successful in stopping the incinerator's initial construction and subsequent operation, Citizens and BREDL continued to watchdog the incinerator and were successful in getting a more stringent air permit for the incinerator. The VA DEQ reclassified the facility as a "major source" of pollution instead of a "minor source." Our concerns over several pollutants led VA DEQ to require testing for mercury, lead compounds, formaldehyde, hydrogen chloride and naphthalene. The VA DEQ set lower limits on tire burning from 13,140 tons of tires per year to 11,100 tons. Also, the final permit was clearer regarding TEC's monitoring and record-keeping responsibilities. Over time the facility was plagued with operational problems. It was hit with a fine of \$22,035 for noncompliance for sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, lead, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter levels; it had trouble meeting the 1800-degree F minimum chamber temperature; and its bag house and ductwork were in need of rebuilding.

The tire incinerator finally ceased operations on July, 17, 2007, ending four erratic years of sporadic operation, financial trouble, failing pollution control tests and emission levels exceeding the state regulatory standards. Members of Citizens for a Clean Environment and BREDL were there from the beginning to the end of this experimental facility!

For more information contact Mark at: [mebarker@cox.net](mailto:mebarker@cox.net)

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The public in NC is being sold a bill of goods that the Division of Water Quality's (DWQ) residuals management program (aka, sewage sludge spreading) is "highly regulated." In truth, the business of sewage sludge is a self-regulating industry, due to that fact that it is both underfunded and understaffed by the state. As such, the majority of monitoring and oversight is left to the appliers and farmers, in hopes they follow the rules.

It is left up to farmers to adhere to the regulations that require a 30-day waiting period to graze their cattle on sludge-applied fields. It is left up to appliers, who make their profits by wooing farmers to take sewage sludge, to enforce and monitor the use of sludge on farmlands. In other words, it's like the proverbial fox guarding the henhouse.

Why are farmers being encouraged by our federal and state governments to spread millions of tons of sewage sludge on thousands of acres each year as an alternative to commercial fertilizers? One might also wonder why sludge can't be tested for all of its potentially toxic substances to get a handle on what's in it. According to DWQ, it's too cost prohibitive. ■

*In our mission to educate consumers about the dangers of sewage sludge, NC Healthy Communities is expanding its sludge campaign to food vendors, grocery stores and restaurants that support locally grown, organic food or foods grown without the use of sewage sludge. If you'd like to know more about sludge, request a presentation on sludge in your community or know someone who has been affected by sludge spreading, please contact Sue Dayton at: 336-525-2003 or sdayton@swcp.com*



If you see one of these doing this, run the other way. Then call the NC Division of Water Quality, Aquifer Protection Section, and ask them why there are no signs posted limiting public access to the sewage sludged field at: (919) 715-6189.

*(FibroWHAT? continued from page 10)*

contributor to ozone pollution. Replacing the nitrogen component with fossil fuel (natural gas), and mining additional phosphate creates even more pollution and is far more expensive. Fibrowatt's poultry industry "solution" is really no solution at all.

New businesses that could compete with Fibrowatt for poultry manure are now operating in other states. Organic Growing Systems in Alpharetta, Georgia, for one, is making fertilizer from poultry manure. Their plants are spreading across the south, with a Mississippi plant expanding to 200 tons per day, another plant to follow in Gainesville, plus more plants in Texas and California. With a product that's more beneficial to the soil than synthetic fertilizer, available at a fraction of the cost, and requires less over time, it's easy to see why. Perhaps our state's leaders should pay organic growing systems a visit.

Until energy alternatives develop, BREDL is working to convince the state's Division of Air Quality to set tight limits on emissions from Fibrowatt plants. Last year's legislation requires "Best Available Control Technology" (BACT) for these facilities, but that gives tremendous leeway to the regulators. Other states are setting strict limits on biomass incinerators and North Carolina should do likewise.

At the same time, we are ready to help communities targeted by Fibrowatt to organize to stop these projects. Local governments need to be much more skeptical of these proposals. So far, with little public opposition, they have not been. However, on September 30, 2008, Citizens for a Safe Environment took legal steps in Sampson County to reverse a decision to re-zone land on I-40 near Faison. Fibrowatt proposes to build on the site. The complaint cites negative impacts to the neighboring African-American community, air and water pollution, and potential harm to organic farmers and the area's farm economy.

Meanwhile, when I come across a supply of chicken litter, I plan to put it on my garden - not in my wood stove. That makes a lot more sense to me. ■

For more information contact David Mickey at: 336-769-0955 or davidmickey@bellsouth.net

## **FACES faced with 30 years of impacts from quarry**

The members of Fieldale and Carver Environmental Society (FACES) say they've had enough. Todd Woodall, a founding member of FACES, says "We were tired of all of this, tired that it's gone on for too long, and tired of people looking the other way."

The "this" that Todd is referring to is thirty years of dust, explosions, cracks in walls, mud in water, truck traffic and a decrease in property values and quality of life as a result of activities from a rock quarry run by Boxley Aggregates. The plant is located about 50 ft. away from the property line of the nearest resident on Carver Road. And if a rock quarry in your neighborhood isn't bad enough, there's an asphalt plant that sits directly across the street from the quarry, both grandfathered in under the old zoning codes.

Fieldale and Carver Environmental Society was born after a neighborhood meeting was organized by Gail Riley to address the impacts to their community from the rock quarry. "Gail organized the first public meeting about three years ago," says Todd. "Quarry representatives attended and spoke about how they donated some T-shirts to a local softball team. They wanted us to believe that because their company threw a few dollars at something like t-shirts it makes them a good neighbor."

Due to the poor state of the local economy, members of FACES are refraining from saying "shut it down." "We're trying to call attention to the situation and to look for a solution that is beneficial to the overall community which doesn't jeopardize jobs," says Woodall. The group has created a website (<http://fieldale.wordpress.com>) and have been taking photos of uncovered trucks leaving the quarry, which violate the Virginia Cover Law. "We must be doing something right," Todd adds, "because right after we put up our website, the quarry put out a newsletter called, 'Neighbor News,' saying what good neighbors they are. One of the articles claimed they put more water back into the creek than they take out. I'm still trying to figure that one out."

For more information contact Todd Woodall at: [faces@post.com](mailto:faces@post.com)

## **Bringing environmental health issues to the community table**

In between taking calls for help from people all over the country who have been injured or disabled by exposures to toxic chemicals (primarily pesticides), Elizabeth and Daisy O'Nan of Protect All Children's Environment (PACE) have been working with the McDowell County Health Coalition on a state mandated health survey.

"They called it a 'Community Needs Survey,' " Elizabeth says, "but the survey only contained 'blame the victim' issues such as obesity, smoking and access to medical care. It lacked questions about environmentally-related diseases and concerns about environmental quality. It was like they were saying that if people had a health problem it was because they ate too much, smoked too much or didn't go to the doctor."

The Coalition told PACE it could not accept environmental groups as coalition members, so PACE formed a new group called the McDowell Environmental Health Authority (MEHA). MEHA was still denied membership in the coalition, and local politicians with ties to industry and development, who sat on the Coalition's board, made matters even more difficult. The final straw came when a Title V polluting industry (Baxter's Health Care) donated over half of the Coalition's budget at \$60,000.

As fate would have it (and with a little pressure from Elizabeth), the Coalition decided to include MEHA's survey questions in their survey, some of which are associated with environmental pollution such as asthma, brain tumors, and diabetes. MEHA then went to work creating posters for library displays encouraging residents to take the health survey. Over 700 residents took the survey. "They only had 300 take it the year before, so I think our efforts helped a lot," adds Elizabeth. The final comparative survey results will be presented during the next Health Coalition meeting in November.

Though MEHA is still not a bonafide member of the Coalition, Elizabeth says she has a dream of seeing the McDowell County Environmental Health Authority become a local and national forum for concerned citizens to participate in making decisions that will contribute to a healthy environment. "We have to stay on top of it. When a polluting industry moves into a community they need to be thoroughly scrutinized. Once you've been poisoned and disabled by chemicals, your life is changed forever, particularly if your child has been affected."

For more information contact Elizabeth O'Nan at: 828-724-4221.

## Stay in touch via our Website!

In May, the BREDL website surpassed the 10 millionth hit since its launching on February 15, 1999. The site receives an average of 2600 daily hits, 840 daily page views, and 350 daily visitors.

In 2007, BREDL switched host servers to better accommodate our growing website. Our website is over 110 MB and contains over 2,100 files, including BREDL press releases, letters, comments, reports, photos, graphics, and in-depth facts and insights on BREDL campaigns and chapters. **We accept credit card donations online using PayPal's Secure Server.**

Some of our more popular postings involve the issues of asphalt plants, proposed new nuclear power plants, waste gasification, sewage sludge, and zero waste. For example, we post online our legal documents regarding several proposed nuclear power plants planned throughout the southeast.

Internet surfers throughout the world have stopped by the BREDL website. We also get our share of visitors affiliated with colleges and universities, the U.S. military, industries, utilities, anti-environmental public relations firms, and local, state, and federal governments.

Visit us at:  
**[www.bredl.org](http://www.bredl.org)**

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