

## Pollution Prevention (P2) Program Assessments

Pass by a service station or convenience store and invariably one thinks of handy shopping, quick snacks and unfortunately, rising gas prices. But what isn't always seen is the commitment many owners of these stations have to developing and maintaining environmentally responsible enterprises that efficiently reduce the potential for contamination of the air, water and land, and help conserve natural resources.

The New York State Association of Service Stations, supported by a grant from Empire State Development, is undertaking a pollution prevention program for service stations, auto repair shops and related businesses to further aid retailers in this industry meet these commitments.

This new program, called the "Pollution Prevention," or "P2" Program, is intended to identify possible changes in equipment, processes or other practices that can prevent pollution and save business owners money.

Together with WOH Environment and Energy Solutions, TRC Solutions, Allen Engineering and the New York State Economic Development Council, they have designed the program with simple goals:

- Save money for business owners by reducing the potential for normal business operations to produce waste, consume unnecessary energy or otherwise damage the environment;
- Recognize businesses that participate in the program and encourage them to continue operating in an environmentally friendly manner; and,
- Demonstrate that the program works by totaling up the dollars saved and the amount of pollution prevented.

P2 is a completely voluntary program, free of charge to service station dealers who are members of the New York State Association of Service Stations and Repair Shops and affiliated trade groups. The assessment is not a compliance audit. It simply encourages good business practices that protect the environment and save proprietors money.

Participation requires only a few hours of the business proprietors' time. It begins with a call to schedule a convenient time for an assessor to visit. Once the proprietor has provided, in advance, background information about their business goals and operations, they meet on-site at their business locations with the P2 experts who will conduct a P2 Assessment of their business. The assessor — a professional environmental consultant — develops his/her recommendations by reviewing the information provided by the business owner or manager, and then inspecting and assessing the facility using a basic "checklist" that has been developed for reviewing customary items.

Independent observations are made about such items as materials usage and handling, the structure and practices in the building, energy usage, and cleaning and waste disposal practices. Once the assessment is completed, recommendations for improvement are then given to the business owner or manager, with an explanation, for consideration. The P2 Assessment Team is available to answer any questions the business owner or manager may have on the report,

recommendations, and implementation. These recommendations can materially add to the bottom line of a small business.

Each recommendation is supported by a rationale that includes the estimated initial costs of adopting the recommendation and the projected long-term savings, as well as an outline of the potential environmental benefits that can result.

While these recommendations will be encouraged, there is no obligation that they be adopted. WOH Environment & Energy Solutions contractors and trade association field representatives are available to assist the business owners in obtaining State grants or private sector funding necessary or helpful in making investments in new equipment or adopting any process changes explained in the recommendations. One such funding program — the Environmental Investment Program — is administered by Empire State Development. Another is called the Energy Smart program, operated by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

“The service station/repair shop industry of today is light years away from when I was in business. We thought of marketing first, second and third. But today we think of our environment obligations first. It’s too expensive not to,” said Ralph Bombardiere, Executive Director of the New York State Association of Service Stations & Repair Shops, Inc.

There are numerous examples where P2 programs have helped protect the environment and save money. At ITT Automotive-Fluid Handling Systems in Gates, NY, an environmentally friendly wash system replaced one using hazardous chemicals. The new process and other innovative process changes saved more than \$600,000 annually in utility charges, disposal costs, labor and materials. Smaller businesses also benefit. Bob’s Transmission and Clutch in Simi Valley, CA, switched from solvent to aqueous parts cleaning, saving \$7,600 after 8 months, with an initial investment of \$5000 for the new unit.