

Kansas ag department receives EPA award

Kansas Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky announced in late May that the department received an award from the Environmental Protection Agency for a grant project carried out in 2002 and 2003 to help anhydrous ammonia facilities meet federal risk management program requirements.

"It's an honor for the department and for our pesticide and fertilizer program to be recognized this way," Polansky said. "Ours was the only state-run project to receive this prestigious award."

Before launching the yearlong project, pesticide and fertilizer program staff worked closely with EPA to identify

mutual goals and objectives related to protecting human health and the environment from accidental anhydrous ammonia releases. Federal law requires that certain anhydrous ammonia facilities have risk management plans that include a hazard assessment, a prevention program and an emergency response plan.

All KDA anhydrous fertilizer field inspectors were trained by EPA Region 7 staff in accident prevention, site visits and risk management plan requirements. Inspectors used that background to help facility operators and their employees meet those requirements. During site visits, KDA staff:

- shared information about chemical safety practices;

- raised awareness of the need for safety at anhydrous ammonia facilities and in the communities where chemicals are located;

- helped build cooperation among facilities, government agencies and others;

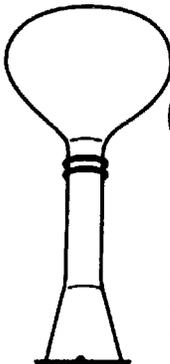
- helped facilities improve their chemical safety management programs;

- encouraged facilities to coordinate risk reduction activities with local emergency response personnel.

"One thing that made this project so successful was our ability to blend the grant work with our annual inspection of anhydrous ammonia facilities and equipment," said Gary Meyer, manager of the pesticide and fertilizer program. "Plus, we had an incredible amount of interest from the Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association and Kansas Farm Bureau."

Interest also has come from outside agriculture. Area first responders and sheriff's deputies are beginning to attend KDA workshops and seminars that are designed to promote anhydrous ammonia safety awareness and to increase understanding of risk management program requirements.

The EPA-Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention state risk management program implementation national award was accepted in an Arlington, Va., ceremony by Diana Keller, the pesticide and fertilizer program employee who managed the grant project.



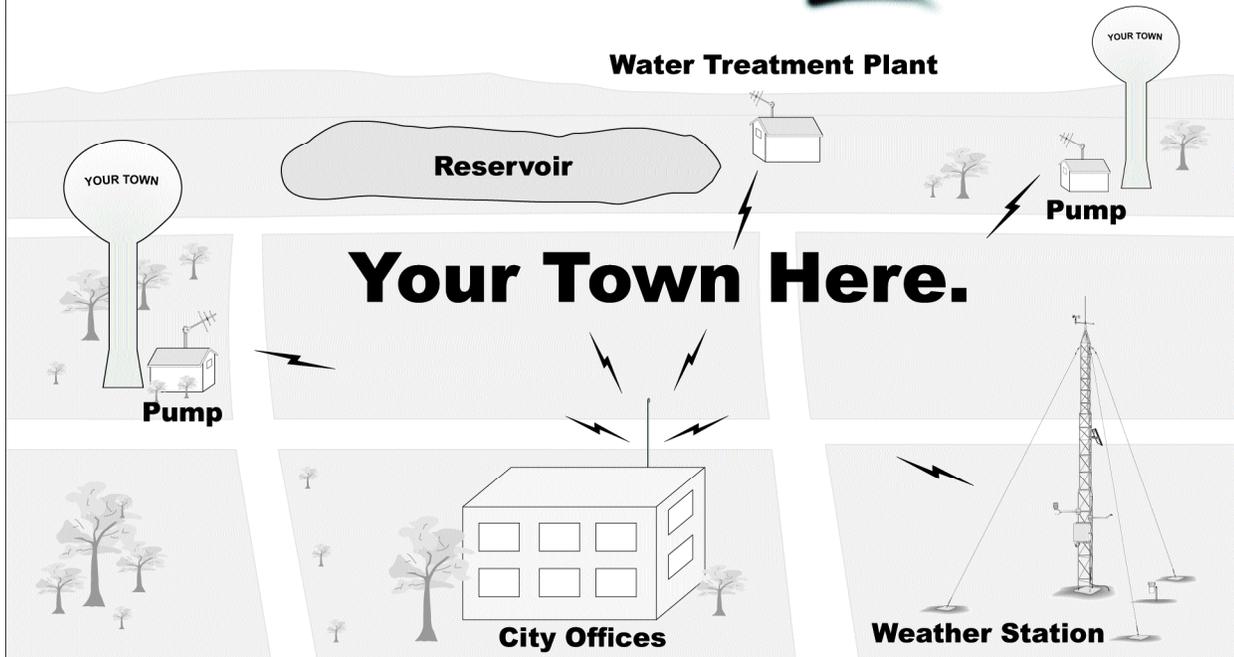
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