

Village of Wilmette Clean Air Counts Community Bronze Level

Soon after her reelection as Wilmette village president, Nancy Canafax sent a newsletter message to her constituents: "Although I had the good fortune to run without opposition ... I missed the opportunity for public discussion concerning some issues on the horizon for Wilmette." She pledged to focus on three issues in particular and welcomed public dialogue on each. One of them, she said, would be air quality.

"The air in our region is polluted with contaminants to the degree that it violates the federal government 'clean air' standards ... The village can adopt programs in which residents may participate voluntarily ... The voluntary programs should enhance the effectiveness of the compulsory ones."

In the months that followed, the village board adopted a resolution committing itself to help clean the region's air. The village adopted clean air policies for its own vehicles and facilities while continuing to encourage residents to follow suit at home.

Village Vehicles

Businesses and governments that operate vehicle fleets are subject to federal requirements that a portion of their vehicles meet "clean fuel fleet" standards, meaning that their emissions are 70 percent cleaner than the general vehicle population. Since the inception of these federal requirements, Wilmette has met or exceeded full compliance. As of January 2004 it had acquired 22 clean fuel vehicles, 15 more than necessary.

Public Education

The village newsletter, *The Communicator*, has plenty of village news to cover but regularly makes room for tips on cleaning the air. In recent years it has featured clean air articles about lawn care, low VOC products such as paint and cleaning solutions, and home energy audits. The 2004 Wilmette village vehicle sticker -- required on all resident-owned vehicles -- began arriving in mailboxes this spring. To generate enthusiasm for village voluntary clean air efforts, the sticker featured the Clean Air Counts logo along with a sketch of a lakefront outdoor scene.



Energy Conservation

The village has completed or plans several initiatives, including:

- Energy efficient roofing over the village generator building.
- Energy efficient lighting, copying machines, water heaters and heating, ventilation and air conditioning.

The village routinely promotes public transportation to reduce vehicle pollution and is considering a new effort to promote bicycle use, including a village bike route map and bike helmet safety education.

Landscaping

Last year the village began experimenting with a prohibition on herbicides at all village facilities except the village hall, and it has tested organic weed control at the village yard. It also stopped using pesticides at village facilities. It planted native plants in several areas including the Metra station platform, parking lot islands and in planter box areas in the village center.