Attention for new solar array at local body shop illuminating

What surprised Pat Mulroy the most about his new 174-panel solar array was the instant attention it brought to the project and his Minneapolis business, Mulroy’s Body Shop.

On Earth Day this year, his grandson Kody ‘flipped the switch’ to empower his new rooftop solar array. His granddaughters also helped give a highly-publicized tour to Senator Al Franken, who stopped in before the system went online.

“We’ve gotten much more attention than we thought we were going to have,” says Mulroy, who has conducted rooftop tours of his facility ever since.

The initial time and investment barriers associated with such a project did not stop Mulroy from pursuing what seemed to him a good business decision. Continuous rises in energy prices, expensive peak power, and probable future energy price increases convinced Mulroy that having a renewable energy source on site made good business sense. “This is both for more stable energy pricing during peak times and for future generations, my grandkids,” adds Mulroy. The solar array will provide about 30 percent of his annual energy needs.

New metal plating and polishing regulation

Metal platers and polishers should be aware of federal regulations that could affect operations. These regulations are referred to as Subpart 6W of the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, or NESHAPs.

Facilities regulated are those involved in plating or polishing metals that contain chromium, lead, manganese, nickel, or cadmium. Regulated facilities must document their management practices that minimize the release of those pollutants into the air.

Many facilities have already implemented these practices, which include: using wetting agents or fume suppressants on plating tanks, collecting emissions and routing them through air emission control equipment, or covering process tanks. Compliance with the rules and submittal of confirming documentation to the EPA should have been achieved by July 1, 2010. For questions or to get text of the regulations contact Tom Jablonski at the MPCA’s Small Business Environmental Assistance Program at 651-757-2171 or 800-657-3938 or thomas.jablonski@state.mn.us. Click here for a direct link.
Proposed stormwater rule may affect small business developers

EPA issued a press release on July 21, inviting small businesses and municipalities to provide input on a proposed stormwater rule.

More information about the rulemaking:
http://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/rulemaking

If you are a developer or owner of sites such as subdivisions, roadways, industrial facilities, and commercial buildings or shopping centers and you are a small business, you may be affected by the rule. While the deadline has passed to offer input right now, EPA aims to have proposed rulemaking available for public comment in Fall 2011. Inquiries can be directed to (202) 564-2855.

Be recognized for your environmental efforts. Apply for a governor’s awards for pollution prevention this summer!

Starting in late July, Minnesota will seek nominations/applications for the 2010-11 Governor’s Awards program. Applications are being accepted for projects that reduce waste and pollution at the source, conserve natural resources, protect groundwater, save energy, and practice sustainability.

There are three categories:
- Business/Non-Profit - honors superior environmental achievements by Minnesota’s businesses, non-profits, and private institutions.
- Government - acknowledges Minnesota’s public institutions and government for their efforts and environmental successes.
- Partnership - recognizes exceptional environmental accomplishments from collaborations between Minnesota non-profit organizations, businesses, public agencies and institutions.

This is an opportunity to recognize leaders at the highest level of environmental achievement. For more information, including applications, past winners, and assistance go to www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/p2/govaward.cfm or call 1-800-657-3864 or e-mail govawards@pca.state.mn.us.

Applications are judged based on the following criteria:
- Benefits to the environment;
- Economic efficiency;
- Level of commitment and leadership;
- Partnerships (when applicable)
- Innovation; and
- Ability of the project to serve as a model for others.

The application deadline is September 15, 2010.

New metal plating/polishing (continued from page 1)

Take the next step. Consider these P2 ideas:

- Extend process tank life by installing conductivity controls to monitor bath concentration and to control make-up water additions.
- Remove impurities in process baths using additives, centrifugal separators, ion exchanges, and membrane filters.
- Reduce dragout loss of plating metals by spray rinsing parts and orientating them to return process chemicals to the treatment bath.
- Consider aqueous cleaning equipment. Go to http://mntap.umn.edu/mach/3-CleaningEquip.htm for a list of aqueous cleaner equipment manufacturers.

For more information contact Karl DeWahl at MnTAP at 612-624-4633 or dewah001@umn.edu.

Resources

Small Business Environmental Assistance Program
651-282-6143 or toll free 800-657-3938
www.pca.state.mn.us/sbeap
Provides free, confidential, multimedia environmental compliance and pollution-prevention assistance to small businesses in Minnesota. Free site visits, educational, and recordkeeping resources.

Small Business Ombudsman
651-757-2121 or 800-985-4247
www.pca.state.mn.us/sbo
Responsible for fair and appropriate review of small business-related environmental regulations. Manages complaints, mediates disputes, and represents small businesses during rulemaking.
EPA greenhouse gas “Tailoring Rule” for small sources possible by 2016

The EPA “Tailoring Rule” was issued May 13th, 2010. This rule helps differentiate greenhouse gases from criteria pollutants when setting permitting thresholds, and helps millions of facilities avoid getting a Title V air permit.

For example, Title V operating permits are required for facilities with actual emissions of criteria pollutants (such as nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter) over 100 tons per year (i.e., the big guys). To have these same limits on greenhouse gases would have resulted in even residential properties being required to get a permit. Instead, in the early stages of the rule implementation, facilities will have to emit at least 100,000 tons per year of CO2 equivalents in order to require a Title V permit due to greenhouse gases.

EPA is phasing in permitting requirements and will complete a study in 2015 to determine what burden greenhouse gas permitting has on smaller sources.

For existing Title V permittees, it appears that they will be regulated during phase 2 (July 2011-June 2013) if they have modifications exceeding 75,000 tpy CO2 equivalents. EPA will not require permits for smaller sources until at least April 30, 2016.

For the moment, EPA stresses that small businesses and farms will be shielded from the requirements. The MPCA is currently reviewing state air quality regulations to help ensure they meet the new federal requirements.

Pie Chart visually depicting the result of the tailoring rule:
www.epa.gov/nsr/documents/20100413piecharts.pdf

Fact sheet summarizing the new rule: www.epa.gov/nsr/documents/20100413fs.pdf

MnTAP interns to present findings - Aug 19

MnTAP interns develop solutions to industrial waste problems through pollution-prevention projects. MnTAP’s eight 2010 interns will present their project findings August 19th, 2010. This event will be held in the Johnson Great Room in the McNamara Building on the University of Minnesota campus in Minneapolis from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m and is open to the public.

Following the presentations, MnTAP will host a reception to celebrate its 25 years of providing assistance to Minnesota businesses. The internship program is one of MnTAP’s successful assistance methods and is one of the longest running pollution-prevention intern programs in the country. If you are interested in attending, RSVP by August 5, 2010, to MnTAP at 612-624-1300 or mntap@umn.edu. More information about MnTAP’s intern program and the presentations can be found at http://mntap.umn.edu/intern/index.htm.

New solar array (continued from page 1)

Mulroy took advantage of a solar array leasing program available through SolarFlow Energy in Minneapolis. With a $5000 deposit and a 20-year lease, Mulroy will realize production-based pricing for the first two years and a stable monthly lease price afterward, (which is “less than the monthly price for a new pick-up truck”, according to Mulroy.) Rebates and incentives are rolled in, and service and maintenance is covered during the lease.

In addition, there is online access to real-time energy production and environmental savings data. So far, the array has produced the energy equivalent of 17,598 computers (17.6 MWh) and offset 1,554 gallons of gas (15 tons of carbon) in just two months. Mulroy’s solar array production can be viewed at http://enlighten.enphaseenergy.com/public/systems/c4yx4148.

When asked what advice he might give to someone considering such a move, Mulroy says “investigate with your accountant first, and take advantage of tax incentives.” If interested in solar, check out rebates available to MN businesses with fewer than 20 employees at the Minnesota Office of Energy Security website. There also are state and federal tax incentives. To check with a solar installer, see Hiring a Renewable Energy Contractor at http://www.energy.mn.gov>Renewables>Solar>Purchase & Installation.

Installing the largest known small business solar array in Minnesota is just a continuation of Mulroy’s proactive environmental approach. Six years ago he installed a water-based paint system that has significantly reduced hazardous waste, eliminated neighborhood odor problems, and increased production time. He recently installed plug-in outlets for owners of electric vehicles interested in ‘powering up’ at the building. SolarFlow estimates that the solar array could power 10-11 vehicles a day. The widespread use of electric vehicles is just around the corner, according to Mulroy; in fact, he plans to purchase one this fall for his long commute. Looking into the future, Mulroy is strongly considering installing a geothermal system to power the office area of the building. More environmental information about Mulroy’s can be found at www.mulroysbodyshop.com/environment.htm.

Pat’s grandson Kody “flipping the switch”.

Mulroy’s solar array
Got run-off? Updates from the MPCA
Industrial Stormwater Program

WHAT’S NEW: Application deadline from Group Two Applicants

The deadline for sectors H, K, O, P, R, S, Z, and AC to apply for the Industrial Stormwater Permit or certify for No Exposure is August 6. The first group of applicants, sectors A, C, D, E, F, G, I, J, L, M, N, Q, Y, and AA, had a due date of June 7. Group 2 sectors must apply by August 6th (Group 1 applicants are out of compliance and must apply immediately). The MPCA is not granting extensions; facilities should make every effort to apply by the required date. To apply online or to obtain the paper application and instructions, visit: www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/stormwater-i.html and click on the “Quick Links” section. If you know your primary SIC code or Narrative Activity but don’t know what Sector your facility falls into, click on Application Instructions.

UPCOMING EVENT: Stormwater SWPPP workshop

What are the two most important questions to ask about your facility’s industrial stormwater permit application? Whether or not your facility is required to apply for a permit and how to develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Let us help! Consider attending the next SWPPP Workshop, organized by the University of Minnesota and MPCA. Watch for upcoming trainings at the University of Minnesota Erosion and Stormwater Management Certification Program.

For questions or more information, call the Industrial Stormwater Hotline at: 651-757-2119 or 800-657-3804 (non-metro only). Press “one” for the Industrial Stormwater Program.

Facilities might consider certifying and complying with the No Exposure Exclusion, a way to get out of the Industrial Stormwater requirements. Remembering that many facilities that certify for No Exposure often overlook these common sources of exposure: uncovered material storage bins, garbage compactors, fueling activities, loading/unloading of materials/waste, deteriorating or open dumpsters, metal storage (not intended for outside) outside and ignoring piles of aggregate as significant materials. For more information go to www.pca.state.mn.us/water/stormwater/stormwater-i.html and click on “Industrial Stormwater No Exposure”.

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