

Delaware Department Of Natural Resources  
and Environmental Control

# Community Outreach Program

Building Bridges With Our Communities

## Mission

We are committed to ongoing and proactive communication with our neighborhoods, businesses and community based organizations to strengthen our public safety practices and programs to ensure the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) is working toward responding to, and reducing the fear of, contamination.

## Vision

Our vision is to build, strengthen and sustain community relationships and transparent communications with respect, equality, equity jobs, taxes and trust throughout the general public.

## Goals

Our goals are to strengthen relationships and build opportunities for open communication, dialogue and trust between the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control and Delaware's municipal and county communities.

Additionally, we want to increase participation of individuals from minority communities working in partnership with DNREC on public safety issues. This will facilitate honest and open interactions between the DNREC and Delaware's various communities. It will also adhere to the standards of mutual respect, patience and a commitment to address problems and concerns as we respond to community concerns in an honest, timely and dependable fashion.

## Conceptual Overview of Our Community Outreach

Community outreach is the responsibility of everyone in the Department, not just a select few. Community outreach starts at the highest level (beginning with the Governor of the State of Delaware) and filters throughout the agency to the newest employees, be they casual seasonal or temporaries. With over 1,000 State of Delaware employees, DNREC has contact with hundreds of thousands of community members each year. By virtue of those contacts, each employee has a role in the community outreach efforts of DNREC.

Experience has shown that relegating community outreach to a few, select individuals and communities is a disservice to DNREC and more importantly to all of the communities it serves. Experience has also shown that community members will show deference to, and in some cases affinity for, department members with whom they have established a relationship, however, those positive feelings do not transcend to DNREC as a whole. In fact, it is very possible for community members to trust one person in the agency, or form of government, while at the same time feeling very distant from the agency as a whole.

### Our Community Outreach Strategy (External)

To be effective the community outreach strategy (Plan) must be multi-faceted and diverse, in great part because the community we serve is multi-faceted and diverse.

The strategy we propose focuses on multiple areas:

- Community Civic Associations (Update List)
- Crisis Communication
- Community Meeting Notification/Protocol/Analysis
- Door to Door Discussions
- Non-traditional Community Outreach (Church Events, Field Days at School, College Presentations)
- Recruiting Public/ Community Assistance
- Independent Public Meetings
- Attend Umbrella Community Association Meetings on a Public Relations Basis
- Media and electronic communications such as: Newspaper, Radio, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

### Our Community Outreach Strategy (Internal)

The role of the Community Outreach Committee as it pertains to the towns within the state of Delaware is to ensure information about specific issues and messages are consistent and are known to all area legislators. The unit will strive to ensure that community issues and public safety concerns that arise throughout each town, city and county are communicated to the necessary Departments as community concerns are addressed. The goal is to identify where State and community connections are missing (or could be stronger) and engaging them in a sustainable, positive manner where that is currently not occurring. This communication will strengthen the credibility of the Department within the community and show that we are committed to transparency. Avenues for communication will continue through the Public Affairs Office, the web page, the Newspaper and Radio.

### OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE WILL -

Engage in a comprehensive assessment and self-evaluation of the Department's activities in regards to community outreach and engagement. This assessment will look at geographic and demographic needs as it relates to our communication and the continuity of the response(s) from the Department as well as public safety and for all facets of our natural resources.

- The DNREC-SIRS (Site Investigation and Restoration Section) will be the primary focus of this assessment which will be the development of several key responses to institutionalize our community outreach and engagement activities, including but not limited to:
  1. Development of a comprehensive statewide calendar outlining all community meetings being held to address public safety issues. This calendar will be available to all DNREC personnel and regularly updated.

2. Convene a committee of recognized academics from surrounding colleges (Delaware State University, University of Delaware Wesley College and Wilmington College) to ensure focus, vision and innovation for the outreach efforts of the Department.

### **Materials**

- Handouts
- Site Fact Sheets
- Comprehensive Plans Involvement and Comments