



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Office of Waste Management (OWM)



# WASTE MATTERS!

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## NEW NAME Equals REFOCUSED PRIORITIES

By: Filomena DaSilva



RIDEM's Main Headquarters in Providence

RIDEM's Office of Waste Management (OWM) will soon have a new name with refocused priorities. On April 22nd, 2020, OWM's name will officially change to *Office of Land Revitalization and Sustainable Materials Management*. The new name better encompasses all the regulatory activities the Office oversees and was pushed forward by the Office's Administrator, Leo Hel-

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## CONNECTING FARMS with FAMILIES in PROVIDENCE

By: Ashley Blauvelt



Photo courtesy of Ken Ayers, Chief of the Division of Agriculture, taken on February 4th, 2020.

There is a lot of development going on down by Sims Ave in Providence. One project that RIDEM is especially excited about is the new Farm Fresh RI Food Hub which will be located at 498 Kinsley Avenue. Farm Fresh RI, a Rhode Island non-profit, will be locating all its operations to this location and providing co-locating space for a cluster of food and farm related businesses. Construction is now well underway, but did you know that the Office of Waste Management has been involved with this project since 2016? Farm Fresh RI is a Brownfields site, a LUST site, and recipient of two State Brownfield Bond Grants.

See *FARMS* on Pg. 5

## FIRE DESTROYS OLD MILLS in PAWTUCKET and CENTRAL FALLS

By: Rachel Simpson



Photo courtesy of K. Wiles Jr. Photo

On Saturday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a very large fire broke out in Pawtucket and Central Falls line, leading to the destruction of at least eight mill buildings, all in the vicinity of some active sites within the Site Remediation Program in the Office of Waste Management at RIDEM. The buildings were mostly reduced to charred rubble, with only bits and pieces of the structures' frames still standing. Fortunately, no one was injured but a cause to the fire has not yet been identified.

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, the EPA Brownfields Coordinator, Jim Byrne, reached out to states to see if any communities and/or non-profits may need their assistance. Due to the recent fires and knowing the struggles these cities would face in the coming months, RIDEM suggested Central Falls and Pawtucket. After some discussion between the municipalities, RIDEM, and the EPA, the City of Pawtucket submitted an application to have assessment work conducted at 420 Pine Street in Pawtucket. EPA will be spearheading a Phase II environmental site assessment at this Site in the near future. RIDEM will work closely with both EPA and Pawtucket as necessary.

## GOING REMOTE

By: Jeff Crawford

I never could have imagined in all of my years at RIDEM that the staff would have been allowed to perform remote working from home due to a worldwide pandemic. Through the last 33 years, we have experienced snowstorms and blizzards, a brown out, three mobile moves, layoffs, retirement reductions and changes in administration leadership at least six times. Now a nasty Corona virus has sent people across the world, our country and our State to their homes to quarantine, work remotely, overwhelmed our medical facilities, laid off millions of people, infected a million people and placed the world's economy in a strangle hold.



Although I am only in Day 3 of remote working, I have found it challenging and rewarding. When there is a complete change in the work environment and things are not so readily available, such as printers, fax machine, scanners, copiers and the hard files and reports you use so regularly, you start to miss them. Along with those items are your co-workers and the comradery which evolves within the work environment. Now that staff meetings and project meetings are being performed virtually, there is a sense of isolation as we attempt to communicate to keep the program moving forward while assisting the property and site owners, consultants and the people of the State of Rhode Island.

## Farewell to Pete Susi

By: Jeff Crawford

Sadly, in the drafting of the above article, we lost our co-worker, Peter Susi, on Friday, April 3, 2020. As Deputy Chief of the Agriculture office, Peter has worked diligently over many decades to assist businesses, farmers and residents in many of the programs that the Agriculture Office oversees. He was a very good friend to many, a father, a grandfather and most importantly a member of our DEM family. He will be missed.

## in the NEWS



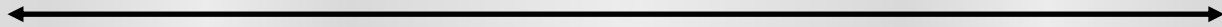
### COVID-19 and Medical Waste

By: Mark Dennen

When COVID-19 crisis first hit the city of Wuhan, we saw photos of bags of medical waste outside hospitals and worried what would happen if (as it turns out when) this virus spread around the world.

We engaged with the regulated community early on, particularly commercial medical waste treatment facilities. This is important considering RI MW treatment facility manages most medical waste that generated in the New England states. Currently, the increase of the medical waste in generation because of COVID-19 is not overwhelming the system. This may be due to a significantly increased permitted capacity during last permit renewal and also other kinds of medical waste generation, has been greatly reduced due to shut-down of some non-critical care (dentists, etc.).

Another concern is to make sure the waste is treated. The data we have seen to date give credence to the idea that COVID-19, being an envelope virus, is not more difficult to treat than many other viruses. We have, however, sent communication to all medical waste generators that proper packaging of waste (tying off red bags, closing sharps containers) as soon as it is generated is more important than ever to prevent the virus escaping before, during and after transportation.



**REVITALIZING NEW ENGLAND:  
BROWNFIELDS SUMMIT 2020**

**OCTOBER 7 & 8, 2020**  
Devens Common Center | Devens, MA

Registration will open in Spring of 2020. For additional information, click on the following link: <http://www.newmoa.org/brownfields2020/>



## Staff Corner



The Office of Waste Management welcomes **Michelle DeBlasio**, an Environmental Engineer, who will be working on the site remediation program. She recently graduated from University of Connecticut and has designed and performed field tests to determine the effectiveness of certain equipment. Michelle has also written comprehensive standard operating procedure manuals for custom equipment for use by outside parties.



In our last issue we asked our readers to name our new Q&A Mascot which was created by one of our Seasonal Technical Interns, Miranda Riccio. Submissions poured in! Please welcome, Oscar! Thank you, Lisa, for playing along! Feel free to ask Oscar anything related to waste, remediation, or underground storage tanks by clicking [here](#) or emailing Oscar directly at DEM.WasteMatters@dem.ri.gov. He will be happy to find the answer for you!



This week's question is: How do I dispose of a fire extinguisher?


There are two options to dispose of a fire extinguisher. The first is to break off the lever and fully discharge it into a trash bag (the contents are not hazardous). You can then check with your City or Town about their rules on scrap metal disposal or any fees they may charge. The second option is to bring the whole container (no need to discharge it) to an Eco-Depot Collection. Remember to call Rhode Island Resource Recovery Center (RIRRC) ahead of time at (401) 942-1430 x 241.

lested with strong support from his team managers and staff. To give a little background, the name *Office of Waste Management* never really captured the breadth of activities that the Office handles each day. On the facility "permitting" side, OWM manages a little bit of everything including underground storage tank (UST) facilities; hazardous, solid, and medical waste facilities, and all the recycling programs from electronics to food wastes. On the "remediation" side, programs oversee Superfund clean ups, Department of Defense sites, remediation of brownfield sites, leaking UST's, the State's Brownfield Bond, landfill closures, and more. The new name, which is long overdue, will better encompass more of these duties that are tasked to the Office. "The new name also purposefully re-focuses emphasis onto the program's aim, versus the reactionary nature of the traditional regulatory framework...," said Leo Hellested. For example, *Land Revitalization* acknowledges the link between successful environmental cleanup and transforming a brownfield site into a reusable piece of property. Both are critical to success and most importantly improving the livability of RI's communities. *Sustainable Materials Management* emphasizes the recycle/reuse goals and zero waste concepts which are the ultimate aim of managing waste and materials so the new name does a much better job of communicating that important distinction. The new name roll out is scheduled for Earth Day this year.

## DID YOU KNOW?

By: Holleigh Pouliot



- ? There are approximately 546,000 active petroleum Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) and 3,400 hazardous substance USTs (at approximately 200,000 sites) which are regulated by a UST program in the United States. Since 1984, more than 1.9 million USTs have been properly closed.
- ? Providence, RI has a single-use plastic bag ban (in stores only) that had gone into effect on October 22, 2019. The ordinance was approved unanimously by the City Council on Earth Day, April 22, 2019 and signed into law by Mayor Jorge O. Elorza on May 1st, 2019.
- ? Looking for a tour of a RI landfill? Call RI Resource Recovery (RIRRC) at (401) 942-1430 to schedule a date. RIRRC conducts tours of the landfill on a regular basis.
- ? Only 19 States have laws banning electronics from the regular trash. In States without such rules, like Nevada, electronics often end up in garbage and recycling bins.
- ? How much Medical Waste is produced? Every year American hospitals produce  5.9 million tons of medical waste. Florida alone has approximately 38,000 facilities that generate biomedical waste.

# FARM.....

Cont'd from Pg. 1



This Site had a long history of industrial and manufacturing uses which complicated future redevelopment. Additionally, the site was completely vacant after a significant fire in 2015 which necessitated the demolition of all buildings. Farm Fresh had completed both a Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and knew going into this project that the soils at the site were widely impacted with Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), metals, and petroleum hydrocarbons. Additionally, almost six inches of petroleum product had been found in a monitoring well on the western side of the property. Farm Fresh RI successfully applied for assessment funding from the Brownfields Remediation and Economic Development Fund and were awarded \$71,720 for reimbursement costs associated with completing a full Site Investigation, public notice, writing a Remediation Action Work Plan, and assessing the petroleum release.

One year later, having completed the bulk of the environmental assessment work, Farm Fresh RI was ready to start implementing the approved RAWP and start redevelopment. Once again, they applied for reimbursement funding through the Brownfields Remediation and Economic Development Fund and were granted \$480,000 for remediation costs, one of the largest grants awarded through this fund. By the middle of 2019, the old underground storage tanks (USTs) on the Southern end of the Site had been removed, impacted soils excavated, and the LUST program had issued a No Further Action Letter for the tanks. When construction is complete, there will be approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre of green space, less impervious barriers where possible, new stormwater controls featuring underground infiltration chambers, and renewable energy components. Farm Fresh RI's new hub adds to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Extension and the Brownfields Area-Wide Vision Plan.

On top of the things that OWM gets excited about, this project embodies many of RIDEM's values by strengthening the food system and supporting local farmers. Located near transit lines and within walking distance of several residential neighborhoods, Farm Fresh will be making local food available to more people in underserved neighborhoods. This redevelopment is already a Brownfields success story and has had the support of their neighbors since the beginning. RIDEM is pleased to have been able to play a role in it as well. "We cannot wait to see the finished product!" exclaims Ashley Blauvelt, project manager for Farm Fresh RI.



**FARM FRESH  RHODE ISLAND**

For more information on Farm Fresh RI, click [here](#) or visit their website directly at [www.farmfreshri.org](http://www.farmfreshri.org).



# Earth Day Word Search

By: Kaylee Connors

T U C C Y T E N A L P C T E Q R P P Y A  
E N B O I G U C A G B X L Q E Y R I T K  
Q D E S N P R V O D G B N D X N E G I Z  
H A Y M G S I E T L A C U Q E O S O L X  
E H B N T V E S N D O C G N J I E L I P  
Z R L P R I J R A E E G V E E T R K B H  
R K U U P L M R V F E I Y V S U V L I M  
M E S T B B G M W A R L T M U L A R S C  
R W V V U E R H O O T M B F E L T D N O  
V F A C D F T C N C G I P A R O I T O N  
V X R O R R M M G U P O O Y W P O P P C  
C L I M A T E C H A N G E N H E N D S E  
T B V E O N R E C Y C L E I A A N E E R  
S N O I T A R E N E G E R U T U F E R N  
W J L X D R E T A W N A E L C J A N R J

Biodegradable

Clean Water

Climate Change

Commitment

Concern

Conservation

Earth

Ecology

Environment

Future Generations

Planet

Pollution

Preservation

Recycle

Reduce

Renewable Energy

Responsibility

Reuse

Survival