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United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Region 5  
77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago Illinois 60604

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# Celebrating Success In 2002





As each of us goes about our daily work, it's easy to lose track of all the great things we do as a Region. We've put forth a lot of effort during the year, and it's important to stop and take the time to enjoy our accomplishments.

That's what this booklet is for. We're going to take a look back at a few of Region 5's achievements in 2002.

This is by no means a complete list of our successes over the past year, but this booklet offers a look at some of the many ways in which we worked hard to protect public health and the environment. Whether it was helping eliminate lead poisoning among children or keeping our public drinking water systems safe from possible terrorist attacks, Region 5 got the job done.

I'm proud of what we accomplished together in 2002, and I'm looking forward to having even greater stories to tell at the end of next year.

Tom Skinner  
Region 5 Administrator

# AIR



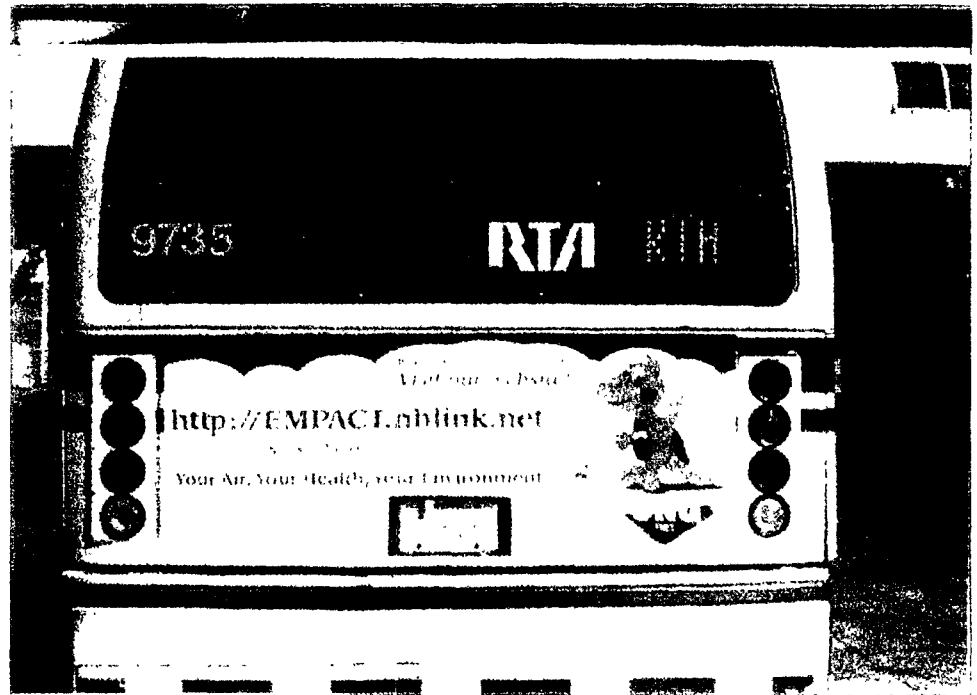
The Illinois trading program for volatile organic compounds is the first state cap-and-trade program in the nation to earn EPA approval. And it's the only cap-and-trade program that reduces and regulates emissions of VOCs. Region 5 has been working with Illinois EPA to track the results of this program, which has operated smoothly for two years. As expected, the innovative process has resulted in emission reductions that might not have been possible otherwise. In addition, analysis shows the program has led to a relatively uniform reduction of hazardous air pollutant emissions.

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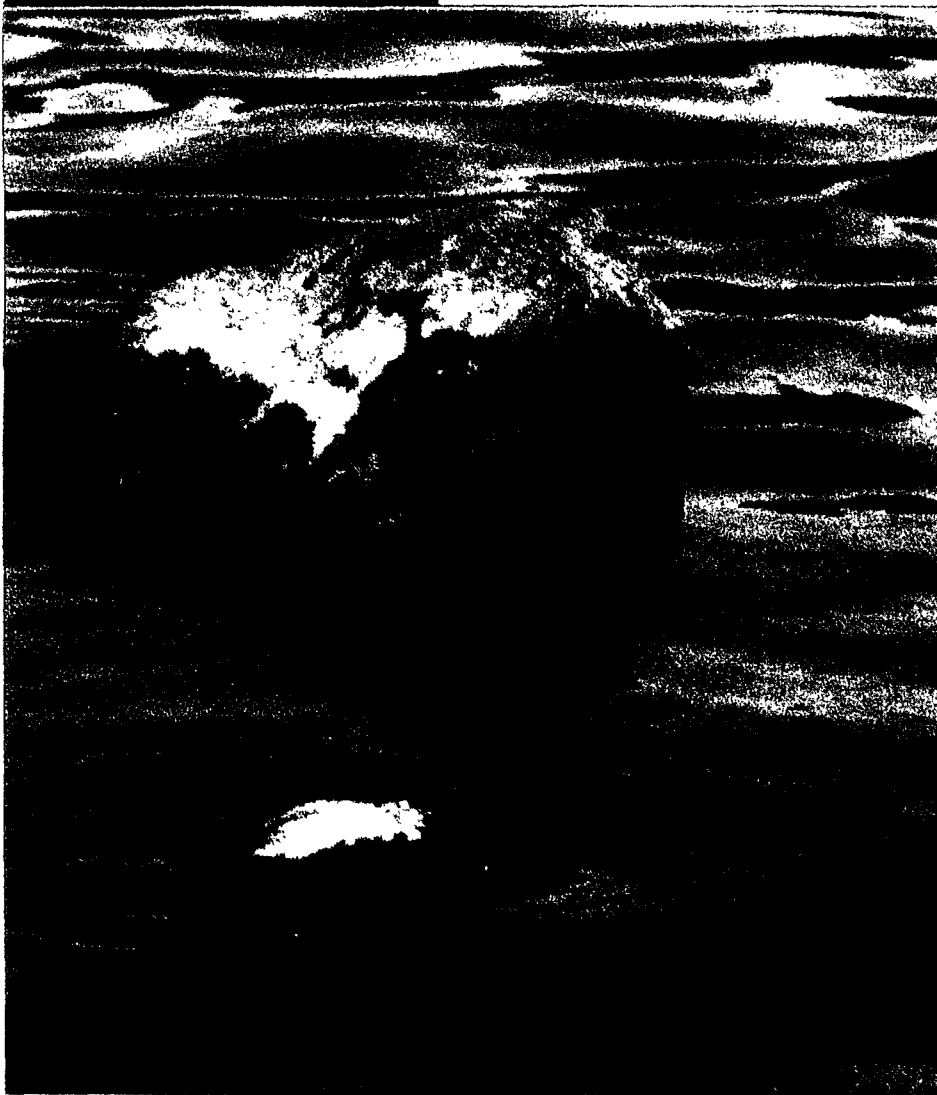
The Northeast Ohio Project provides local environmental and health information for residents of a 15-county area. Urban sprawl and environmental quality were identified as two of the region's top problems, and the project addresses the environmental impact of expanding population beyond a city's boundaries. Residents of Northeast Ohio receive near-real-time data on air quality. There's also an extensive community outreach program. The project was part of EPA's Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking Program.

Excessive ground-level ozone has been a problem in the Lake Michigan shoreline states since the first standards were set in 1971. But a series of reduction strategies in Chicago, Northwest Indiana, Milwaukee and other shoreline areas have made an impact. In 2002, the Air & Radiation Division approved a group of plans that represent a joint effort to meet the one-hour ozone standard by 2007.



Region 5 approved rules from Illinois and Indiana this year that could lead to a 30 percent reduction in the ozone-forming chemical nitrogen oxide by 2007. Other states in the region are expected to institute similar rules. All will be part of an eventual 21-state trading program that will significantly reduce the movement of ozone in the Eastern United States. This will help many areas attain the one-hour ozone standard, and could become the basis for the trading program envisioned under the Clear Skies Initiative.

# WATER



About \$1.4 million in BEACH Act grants went to Region 5 states in 2002 to make Great Lakes beaches safer for swimming. States used the grants to improve beach monitoring and public notification programs, including outreach materials to educate swimmers about the risks of swimming in contaminated water.

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Enforcement actions have also helped reduce the amount of untreated or partially treated waste water that is contaminating lakes, rivers and streams in the Midwest. A settlement with the city of Toledo, Ohio, is one example. Toledo agreed to spend nearly \$400 million to upgrade its water treatment system. The project will drastically reduce discharges of untreated waste water, and eliminate sanitary sewer overflows. This will help reduce the number of beach closings along Lake Erie near Oregon, Ohio.

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One of the year's priorities was protecting public drinking water systems from possible terrorist attacks. Striving to protect the most people in the

complexes. All this in an area of East Moline, Ill., that was once an unregulated dump. With EPA Brownfields assistance, the city identified areas contaminated by metals, and built a new road to cover them. The most heavily contaminated soil was removed. Town homes are under construction, with plans for an office building, a restaurant, a visitor's center and possibly an indoor sports complex.

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Eight cities in Region 5 received awards for pilot projects to redevelop properties contaminated by leaking underground storage tanks. Each city will receive up to \$100,000 for the projects, which are expected to demonstrate the benefits of a partnership approach to the cleanup and reuse of idle or abandoned commercial properties such as gas stations. Awards went to Freeport and Waukegan in Illinois, Indianapolis and South Bend in Indiana, Detroit and Kalamazoo in Michigan, as well as Minneapolis, and Youngstown-Boardman, Ohio.

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A mercury spill at a residence in Flint, Mich., sent the Superfund Technical Assistance & Response Team into action. Mercury vapors in the house were as much as 15 times higher than the acceptable limit. Timely action by EPA and its contractors had the residents back in their home in just 10 days.



# COMMUNITIES & ECOSYSTEMS



The Critical Ecosystems Team finished its initial work in identifying the highest quality intact ecosystems in the Region. The data gained from this study will help EPA focus community efforts to restore and protect critical ecosystems, and protect areas from further decline.

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In a continuing project with the Chicago Department of Health, Office of Strategic

Environmental Analysis staff used GIS maps to identify areas where children might be in danger of lead poisoning. The maps helped select homes for a door-to-door screening campaign. The effort found 350 children who had not previously been tested for lead poisoning, and 164 of them showed elevated levels of lead in their blood. Because of the project, these children will get the medical help they need sooner rather than later. Region 5 is also working with 10 tribes to reduce the incidence of childhood lead poisoning. More than 500 tribal children have been tested, with very few showing elevated blood-lead levels.

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Great Lakes National Program Office and the Great Lakes Commission launched the first large-scale collaborative effort to assess the ecological health of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. A group of wetland scientists and



shortest time, Region 5 targeted water systems serving large numbers of people. The Region awarded \$5.5 million this year to 50 of these systems, helping local officials assess the vulnerability of their systems and outline steps needed to improve security. This helped improve the safety of drinking water for more than 20 million people.



A plan to build three new bridges across the Fox River in Kane County, Ill., included the loss of sensitive wetlands. The Office of Strategic Environmental Analysis worked with the Federal Highway Administration to reduce the amount of wetlands lost from 4.5 acres to 2.5 acres.



Children at an elementary school in Roselawn, Ind., have clean, drinkable water after action by Region 5's Underground Storage Tank Section and Drinking Water Branch. Responding to a citizen's complaint about underground storage tanks at a local gas station, EPA staff found the school's drinking water had 10 times the acceptable level of the gasoline additive MTBE.

# LAND



Virginia, Minn., is a town on the Mesabi Iron Range that is short on land for development. It is surrounded by open-pit mines and former mines, and much of the remaining area is wetlands. An area known as the Oneida Addition remained unused for years, littered with old, rusting mining equipment and covered with waste from ore-sifting. After a relatively simple environmental assessment funded by an EPA Brownfields Assessment grant, the site is home to much-needed senior citizen housing. There are townhouses, assisted living apartments and an Alzheimer's care unit.

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A new roadway invites walkers and cyclists to observe wildlife, and construction has begun on new business and residential



# EMS

resource managers from the U.S. and Canada will design and validate indicators to assess the wetlands, design a long-term monitoring program and create a binational database.

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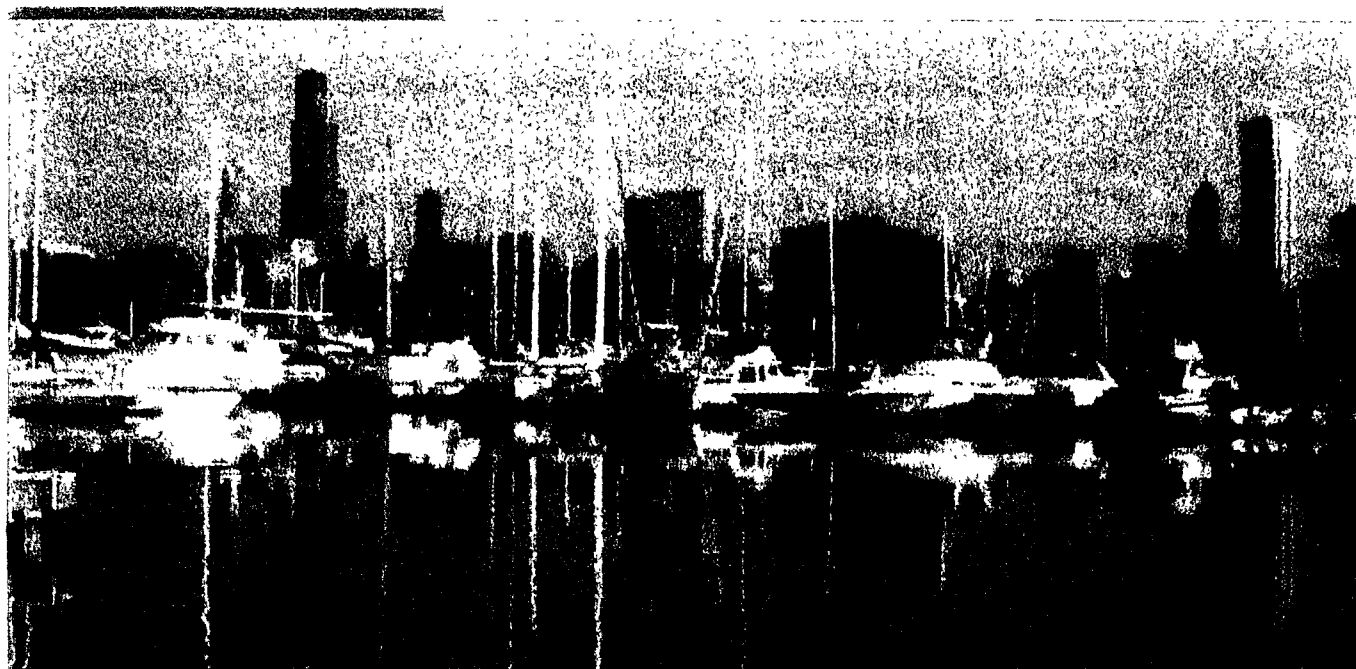
Region 5 continues to work with states and tribes to build integrated environmental information systems. These systems will provide the public and regulators access to information they need to document environmental performance, understand environmental conditions and make sound decisions that ensure environmental protection. Network Readiness grants awarded in 2002 will help states and tribes build links to the National Environmental Information Exchange Network.

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Input from the Office of Strategic Environmental Analysis has helped the Federal Highway Administration select locations for one or two new Interstate Highway bridges across the Ohio River in southern Ohio. The recommendations, coordinated with Region 4, included comments on how the bridges will affect wetlands, air and water quality, noise, and wildlife habitat.



# COMPLIANCE AND ENV



Teaching marina operators and boat owners about oil spill prevention is helping reduce the number and size of oil spills around the Great Lakes. Compliance assistance tools have been developed as part of a series of Marina Oil Pollution Prevention Education Seminars. A Web site designed for marina operators provides additional information, including help in developing their own plans for spill prevention control.

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Region 5 and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources started a project that will encourage local governments and lenders to take title to abandoned properties. The new title holders would only be required to take actions such as razing worn-down buildings or installing a fence around the property. That would control any immediate risks. In return, the state will agree not to force the new owners to do a complete cleanup. In most cases, the cost of a complete cleanup might exceed the value of the property. This project helps address the most pressing needs.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

A regulatory innovations project is expected to make the air in Tomahawk, Wis., cleaner. A site-specific rule allows Packaging Corporation of America to opt for an alternative compliance in its pulping process. The result should be a seven-fold increase in the treatment of hazardous air pollutants over what would be achieved by strictly following federal requirements.

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Murphy Oil Corp. agreed to pay a \$5.5 million civil penalty as part of a settlement with EPA and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. This is the largest penalty ever levied in an environmental enforcement case in Wisconsin. The settlement is also significant because the control measures Murphy is required to make will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 1,300 tons a year. They will also significantly reduce volatile organic compounds. The case involved Murphy's refinery in Superior, Wis.

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Region 5's training program sponsored more than 100 classes in 2002, despite budget cuts. The region's Workforce Development Board directed course selection, with an increased emphasis on distance learning over the Internet and the launch of a New Skills/New Options developmental program for clerical and administrative professionals.



## OTHER REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Roadside poetry promotes Wisconsin's Integrated Pest Management program to area farmers. The creative sign campaign, reminiscent of old-fashioned Burma Shave ads, also promotes the IPM Web site, funded by Region 5.

EPA says indoor air quality is important, and our own building is no exception. The Public Health Service checked out air quality in the Superfund Division work space and found no major problems.



Region 5 is supporting the work of federal and state agencies to keep the Asian carp – and other invasive species – out of the Great Lakes. If the Asian carp reaches the Great Lakes, it could have a significant effect on native fish and shellfish habitats. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has built a barrier in the Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal near Romeoville, Ill. Great Lakes National Program Office supported early development work on the barrier's design.



The Office of Public Affairs helped manage several appearances in Region 5 states by EPA Administrator Christie Whitman. One of those visits was in Muskegon, Mich., where she officially released Great Lakes Strategy 2002. The Strategy presents a basin-wide vision for protecting and restoring the Great Lakes, and identifies common goals for federal, state and tribal agencies to work toward. The office was also heavily involved in the roll-out of President Bush's Clear Skies Initiative, which attracted extensive media interest.



Region 5 supported a seminar on local response to terrorism, sponsored by two county health departments in Ohio. An EPA speaker presented valuable information on chemical agents and decontamination.

Some great numbers:

- Since 1990, air emissions of mercury have declined by more than 40 percent.
- At least 30 percent of PCB-containing transformers in use in 1994 have been safely disposed of.
- Since 1987, there has been a 70 percent reduction in dioxin emissions.

