

Ned Beecher Talk
Resource Management Inc. EMS Certification Celebration
Holderness, NH
March 26, 2010

In the fall of 1997, at the same time that the “New England” (now “North East”) Biosolids and Residuals Association (NEBRA) was forming, another good idea was crystallizing around the country.

In the fall of 2006, NEBRA worked with the NEWEA Residuals Committee and the NBP’s Pete Machno, and Lori Stone, to create a new group of New England EMS participants. Six different organizations signed up, attended workshops in Tennessee, and built their EMSes. The differences this time were that NBP had continued to experiment and innovate, based on feedback and learning from the early years of its program. The template documents were more refined, and the process was streamlined. And, for the first time, three of the participating organizations were private companies – including RMI.

NEBRA offered support to the organizations – including RMI. I was involved in RMI’s internal audit and I saw some of their grueling third-party audit. Shelagh, Jessica, Mary, and the others here have worked hard over the past few years, through many complications and challenges, to develop an EMS that strikes the difficult balance between meeting the NBP requirements and fitting with RMI’s operations and culture.

Through the challenges, the question continually arises – why bother?

In 1999, one early adopter of the NBP’s program said this about EMS: "What the EMS will provide is a reminder to me of what I need to pay attention to."

I’d guess that today, not all RMI staff can point to improvements brought on by their EMS. They may not be feeling all warm and fuzzy about it. Some will certainly tell you it has been a heck of a lot of work, sometimes frustrating.

And it’s hard to appreciate - to measure the benefits – of an EMS. How do you measure avoidance of a dumb mistake? Like with insurance, how do you know you are getting your money’s worth if you never get sick? The smoother things run, the more it may seem like the work on the EMS was what – a waste? But you can’t know what might have happened without it. Now, through the EMS, RMI staff know that it is less likely that a contractor will fail to take proper actions if an accident occurs. They know that if an accident does occur, the

underlying cause of that accident will be investigated and corrective actions taken to ensure the same thing doesn't happen again.

Of course, RMI has a culture of quality and innovation, so these kinds of improvements may have occurred without an EMS. But the EMS is helping set priorities, sharpening the focus on what's most important, and providing documentation and recognition of RMI's fine work.

Look around at all the great things RMI has to show here at this open house: the video of the restoration of soils at the Wilson Farm in Alstead, the system that keeps track of trucks and where they unload biosolids, and the GIS capability. These show RMI's continuing commitment to quality, compliance, environmental integrity, and working with interested parties. The EMS adds more formal structure to that commitment.

I'm thrilled today to see you all here and see RMI recognized for its achievements and the quality of its work. The NBP EMS program, while asking them to meet ever-higher standards, also provides a public reminder that these people have already done a lot of good work. New Hampshire wouldn't be the same without RMI's biosolids management facility and its smart, capable staff. This is a small business that has seen consistent success, providing critical services for municipalities, resources for farmers and other landowners, employment for many, and benefits for the environment and public health.

NEBRA congratulates RMI for its biosolids EMS. This morning, they – and we – celebrate this accomplishment. But I know that this afternoon, they will be back at it, going further. It's how they work. After all, it's about continual improvement.