

## P2Rx Annual Meeting

May 24-25, 2010

Orlando, Florida

### *Summary*

The Annual Meeting of the P2Rx was held May 24-25, 2010 in Orlando, Florida. The meeting was appended to the 2010 National Pollution Prevention Roundtable Summit. The two-day meeting was organized around meetings with EPA's Regional P2 Coordinators. Additional side meetings, not included in this summary, included Scott Hutchins of DOE and the NPPR Board of Directors.

Attendees included: Andy Bray, Rachel Smith and Terri Goldberg (NEWMOA); Gary Hunt and Jullie Woosley (ESRC); Bob Iverson (GLRPPR); Rick Yoder (P2RIC); Thomas Vinson (Zero Waste); Myla Kelly (Peaks to Prairies); Kevin Dick and Donna Walden (WSPPN); Paula Del Giudice (PPRC); and P2Rx advisor, Scott Butner (PNNL). Not all attendees were at all of the sessions.

Monday morning session. The meeting started with a presentation on *Social Networking: Opportunities and Issues* led by Rick Yoder and the Content and Technology Committee. Yoder created a slide presentation on social networking that was presented to the P2 Coordinators the following day. The presentation provided a springboard to a discussion on the evolving role of social networking in information sharing and its implications for P2Rx.

*Discussion:* WSPPN has moved to WordPress which they have found to be easy to manage. If an organization is not on Windows, it is a very good tool. The discussion turned to the reliance on ColdFusion and whether newer programs are more effective.

- ❑ The Content and Technology Committee was tasked with discussing future use of Cold Fusion.

Social networking issues that were raised included:

How much of the user community has access to the tools (e.g. Twitter or Facebook)? Yoder commented that understanding and use of tools only happens with pushing. He is trying to increase use of Google Calendar in his region to facilitate a regional calendar.

Are many industries are going for technical information? Yes, social media is being used by industries. Walden pointed out that companies are very supportive. For example, Epsom uses full time bloggers.

What about social media that is blocked? Some agencies block Facebook and Twitter use. For example, not all of EPA is allowed to use Twitter or Facebook even if the Administrator does.) Centers noted that EPA uses its grantees and contractors to access social media.

How about resource allocation? Use of social media can be time consuming and addicting. Butner commented that the key to social media lies in the “social” part. Social media taps into existing routines and habits resulting in a high degree of engagement. If the Centers create ambient awareness of their capabilities via the social media, this awareness will lead people on the networks to the technical content. Bray supports using Facebook and other tools but would like to be more strategic with its use. He would like to move from social networking to social marketing. He suggests that users make a commitment then move to another point in the relationship. For example, we could post a challenge then follow up with those that respond. This would provide a demonstration of relationship building. Del Giudice noted that their standing in the NGO community has improved thanks in part to use of social media. Vinson reported that at the MEP conference there was a lot of buzz about use of social media to maintain relationships. Furthermore, because the press monitors Twitter, there were examples of getting into publications as a direct result of Twitter.

What about measurement? Tweets and retweets can be counted. There are issues with identifying sources using their URLs.

Session with Regional P2 Coordinators. The objective of the first session with the Regional P2 Coordinators was to share information on what the Centers work, and provide shared understanding of how each is set up, operates, and identifies priorities. To this end, Sten provided a national overview followed by short regional summaries activities presented by each Center. The national emphasis was on the collection, aggregation and validation of information from the state and local level and the establishment of P2Rx as an established, trusted source of information known throughout the P2 community. A question and answer session followed the presentations. Coordinators were interested in what EPA funding is used for, specifically asking about the “vast” resources accessible to the Centers. Sten and the Centers pointed out that the other funding was not “vast”. In fact, some of the state sponsors are having difficulty making the 50% match requirement. The Coordinators also expressed frustration with the lack of one-stop shopping on topics. For example, there is a Hospitality Topic Hub that doesn’t include information on three Center websites. This implies a lack of coordination.

The presentations were followed by examples provided by three Center-Coordinator collaborations: NEWMOA and Region 1, PPRC and Region 10, and ESRC and Region 4 to show how Regions and Centers are identifying stakeholder and state needs and targeting deployment of resources.

Debrief on meeting with the Regional P2 Coordinators.

- Questions asked by the Coordinators revealed the need for better communications and understanding of Center and P2Rx operations.
- The Centers were dismayed by the implication that the Coordinators believe that PPIN funding is supplemental to “vast” other sources. Not only are states having difficulty

making the 50% match, but some of the Centers would be eliminated if PPIN funding was no longer available.

- Other points made include: 1) The current level of funding supports less than 1 FTE at most Centers. 2) Division of the \$800,000 of PPIN funding among the EPA regions would provide them with about \$80,000 each with a loss of key services such as the Rapid Response Service, Topic Hubs and their maintenance, P2 News, regional work on the P2Results database and other regional activities. \$80,000 per region would yield less than one FTE without the expertise and support of a regional Center or access to the expertise and support of other Centers. 3) The Coordinators seem unaware that some of the Centers would cease operation if PPIN funding was withdrawn. 4) Some Coordinators showed little understanding of the value and synergies that accrue as the result of having of regional networks rather than independent grantees. The Centers agreed that they need to improve communications with the Coordinators to increase their understanding of the support system and synergy among the Centers. The equation is not one FTE per region, but 8 FTEs nationally that collaborate. Further, the FTE count does not convey that the funding pays for portions of staff time which expands the range of expertise accessible from the network from technical to behavioral to IT support.
- The Centers discussed the problem of one-stop-shopping for topics. They agreed that the Coordinators were right in saying that there could be more coordination among Centers working on the same topic. The Centers also noted that Topic Hubs design structure (which is similar to a one-stop-shopping approach) serves a purpose, but it is not the only way. Butner suggested that the topic hub content be exported to Delicious and let the community take it over. This approach would build on the information on demand approach rather than information collection. This approach could provide the value and increase Delicious use. The narrative for the Hub could be placed elsewhere (undefined). Tags would have descriptors and keywords which could be transferred over. This would be a low effort way of repackaging the collection to make it more accessible and reduce the current cost infrastructure of the Topic Hubs. Yoder restated the importance of direct contacts to increase use. Del Giudice expressed the concern that this effort has not been validated by our audience and whether it might affect how information services would be delivered.

□ This topic was referred to the Content and Technology Committee

- Sten brought up the possibility of P2Rx being funded under one large grant. She was concerned that the idea might be introduced to the P2 Coordinators. None of the Centers supported this approach. Issues included: 1) How could a state meet the match requirement? 2) A single grant structure would be likely to undermine the regional focus of Centers in favor of a national focus. 3) Under the existing system, P2 Coordinators have to work with the Center in their region. Centers expressed the concern that under a single grant system, this relationship would be undermined to the long term detriment of the system.

Emerging issues and their impact on P2Rx: increasing the relevance of our tools to meet emerging issues. Emerging issues included:

- Topic Hubs. Continuing the discussion above, the Centers agreed that the Content and Technology Committee should look at the issues of Topic Hub maintenance and updating. Further, they need to work closely with the Partnership and Marketing Committee to push out information more effectively. The Hubs need to move toward a new model that engages the community.
- International use of P2Rx. According to statistics collected at P2InfoHouse, a third to a half of the users are international. India and China are the largest users. An alliance with USAID might be fruitful.
- Rise of the Regulatory Programs. Compliance programs seem to believe that their approach will result in sustainability and address climate change. P2Rx Centers need to make the case--using data--that this is not valid.
- Decline of P2. State and local programs are struggling and declining. P2Rx must continue to support the P2 Community while expanding its reach both in terms of clients and partners. Some states don't plan to apply for PPG because of the high match requirements.
- Is "good enough" getting in the way of "better"? Reductions are not resulting in environmental gains. When considered per unit, reductions tend to be overwhelmed by growth. P2Rx should push for new measures at EPA that are related to sustainability gains. We can capture more aggressive measures if they are required in grant reports and other vehicles.
- Blurred P2 message. The Centers could have a role in redefining and repositioning pollution prevention and rejecting recycling as a form of pollution prevention.
- P2Results. P2Results should be mined for newsworthy aggregations of information. Get P2Results more up to date then spend time evaluating the data and pushing the information out via Press Releases and social marketing.
- Connect with the Social Economics people at EPA (e.g. Betsy Shaw) to identify areas of joint interest.
- TOSCA reform and the return to toxics. Early P2 programs were staffed to deal with these issues, but much of that expertise has been lost. P2Rx should explore its role relative to this issue.

Partnership Discussion

The objective of the Partnership discussion was to consider a topical area, identify areas of mutual interest and potential collaboration, identify potential partners, define a strategy for approaching the partners with two objectives: in the short term, collaboration and relevance, and in the long term, funding. The Centers broke into two groups: Sustainability and Energy Efficiency. The groups met, self-organized, and addressed the objectives.

- ❑ The Energy Efficiency group divided into several areas. Each member will be preparing a white paper for discussion at a later date.
- ❑ The Sustainability group focused on Hospitality and Sustainability. They will provide an outline of their discussion.

Sector Priorities. Del Giudice led discussion on the past year's work on sector priorities: accomplishments, challenges and next steps. She observed that because the grant process did not support collaboration (it is too rushed), the Centers did not develop coordinated programs. Follow through, coordination or increased workgroup connections would have made the efforts more powerful. Clearly, the Centers are rebuilding relationships damaged by competition. The situation is improving. Centers working on hospitality did some up front communications then focused regionally. More communication is needed in the future. A part of the problem is that it takes time to discern the regional focus. Collaborations on tools are easier than content.

*Conclusions:*

- ❑ The Centers agreed that a strategic approach with common goals and routine communications would benefit the quality of the sector work.
- ❑ The grant process should be amended to provide more time to collaborate prior to proposal submission. The Centers agreed that 90 days between issuance of the RFP and submitting the proposals would be good.
- ❑ The next face-to-face meeting should be timed around the RFP response schedule.
- ❑ The Centers would like to see a reduction in the transaction costs associated with the competitive process. Multi-year grants would be helpful.
- ❑ More communication is needed in the future.

The Centers then attended the EPA Regional P2 Coordinators' meeting where they participated in an agenda developed jointly by Rob Guillemain, Suganthi Simon and Carolyn Gangmark, all Regional P2 Coordinators, and Madeline Sten. Rob Guillemain lead the discussion with observations on increasing the relevance of pollution prevention. This presentation was followed by the P2RIC slide show on Social Networking which explored how a new generation of web tools can facilitate outreach and technical assistance. The slide show was well received.

The Centers, Regional P2 Coordinators and OPPT participated in a facilitated session organized along a World Café model. The objective was to learn about the assets and skills of each group and to encourage future collaboration. The participants were divided into tables with each group represented. The tables were given a list of priorities from the EPA Administrator, OPPT, Regional priorities and Center priorities. Each group was charged with identifying a project that satisfied the priorities. Each participant was challenged to contribute his or her skills, contacts and resources to addressing the project. Participants generally seemed to enjoy the exercise and learned more about the challenges each group faces.

### Discussion with Beth Anderson

The Centers met with Beth Anderson at lunch. They discussed the meeting with the Coordinators and the grant process. Action items include:

- ❑ Sten should participate on the monthly Coordinator conference calls which are held the third Thursday of each month. Paula Del Giudice will cover the June 17 call.
- ❑ Summaries of P2Rx conference calls should be sent to the Coordinators
- ❑ The Centers (perhaps via Sten) should communicate to the Coordinators about the need for more time to coordinate their proposals, match difficulties and the need for multi-year grants to reduce transaction time.
- ❑ The Centers should develop a list of suggestions on grant conditions and ways to improve the quality of the proposals, increase collaboration, and decrease transaction time.
- ❑ The Centers should develop standard language that describes the national umbrella of Center activity
- ❑ The Centers should offer recommendations on how the RFP is developed
- ❑ Beth will look at options for extending the RFP response period to 90 days (45 may be the maximum) and setting up a 2-page pre-proposal period.

### Strategic Planning

The Centers decided to develop a new strategic plan. The plan will be short, nimble and directed. It will be prepared fairly quickly, if possible by Fall 2010. The Centers brainstormed topics, discussed clients and started a discussion on strengths and weaknesses.

- ❑ The Centers will decide on a process for moving forward with developing the plan.