



**Request for City Council Committee Action
Health Department**

Date: March 23, 2015

To: HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
COMMITTEE

Subject: PRESENTATION OF GREEN BUSINESS AWARDS

Recommendation:

Presentation of the 2015 Minneapolis Green Business Awards for Pollution Reduction in recognition of Dunwoody College of Technology, Oscar Auto Body, and U.S. Cleaners for their investment in the health of their workers, customers, and neighbors in the City of Minneapolis by converting to cleaner technology through the Green Business Matching Grant Program.

Previous Directives: None

Prepared or Submitted by: Becky McIntosh, Director of Planning & Administration
Phone: x2884

Approved by:

Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner of Health

Permanent Review Committee (PRC): Approval ____ Not Applicable X

Policy Review Group (PRG) Approval ____ Date of Approval ____ Not Applicable X

Presenters in Committee: Dan Huff, Director of Environmental Health
Patrick Hanlon, Manager Environmental Initiatives
Ramin Hakimi, Oscar Auto Body
Ausdel Carrera, US Cleaner
Dunwoody College Representative, Dunwoody College of Technology

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

X No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information).

Background/Supporting Information Attached

The Green Business Matching Grant Program allows the City to invest alongside our business partners and the community to create a healthier environment through a win-win approach. This work is important on three levels.

Federal Air Standards: Ground level ozone is harmful to our health and can permanently scar lung tissue. There were 28 days over health benchmarks in 2012 and 19 days in 2013 for ground level ozone. New federal clean air standards are proposed that will put Minneapolis into non-attainment with the Federal Clean Air Act. If the Twin Cities goes into nonattainment for ground-level ozone, additional regulatory requirements will come into play. The Green Business Matching Grant Program assists businesses to voluntarily reduce the pollution that leads to ground level ozone.

Neighborhood exposure: The chemicals targeted by the Green Business Matching Grant Program are harmful to human health in a variety of ways including cardiovascular effects and increasing risks of cancer. Local businesses inadvertently release these chemicals into the surrounding neighborhoods. Participants in the Green Business Matching Grant Program have eliminated many of these chemicals from their business.

Worker exposure: Workers are often exposed to 100s of times greater amount of chemicals than the neighbors outside these facilities. The Green Business Matching Grant Program protects worker health by greatly reducing or eliminating the amount of harmful chemicals that workers in Minneapolis are exposed to on a daily basis.

We would like to recognize and thank:

Oscar Auto Body: 2827 1st Avenue South. Owner Ramin Hakimi made a huge commitment towards switching over his high VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) content paint line to waterborne paint. Waterborne paint is a safer alternative that reduces VOC pollution by about 80%. The improvements at Oscar Auto Body not only benefit the people that work there every day, but also lowers emissions in the local neighborhoods. This includes the Midtown Greenway that is only a couple hundred feet away. As a small businesses owner, Ramin attended a Clean Air Minnesota event this past summer and served as an ambassador for the statewide program modeled after the Minneapolis Green Business Matching Grant Program to voluntarily reducing emissions across Minnesota . We are proud to have responsible business owners like him in Minneapolis

Dunwoody College of Technology: Dunwoody College of Technology has made the commitment to teach its auto body students using waterborne paint. One of the main challenges for auto shop owners switching to waterborne paint is getting their paint techs trained in the new technique. By partnering with the Minneapolis Green Business Grant Program, Dunwoody College is now training the next generation of paint techs in a cleaner, greener, safer alternative to high solvent-based paints. It also opens a Minneapolis location for hosting workshops for local business owners and paint techs in switching to waterborne paint. Through state of the art training in low VOC techniques, Dunwoody College has filled in a huge piece of the puzzle for cleaner air in Minneapolis and the region.

U.S. Cleaners: Testing by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) at Parkway Plaza for a previous spill from a dry cleaning operation found significant levels of perchloroethylene (perc) at US Cleaners. The levels inside the dry cleaner, 87,000 ug/m³, were dramatically above health risk levels of 60 ug/m³. Additional testing revealed that perc was also found in a neighboring Somali daycare. Upon hearing the unpleasant news, Mr. Ausdel Carrer, a the owner of U.S. Cleaners acted quickly, inviting Health Department staff into his business with monitoring equipment to determine the source of the perc. Inspectors quickly determined one of his machines had a missing gasket on its reservoir. Installing a gasket dropped the perc readings immediately. Mr. Carrera continued to work to seal off his business from other businesses while researching what else he could do to lower the levels of perc. Within two weeks, and with support of the Minneapolis Green Business Matching Grant Program, Mr. Carrera was able to replace the existing dry cleaning equipment and become a 100% perc-free facility. This is a change that takes most business many months and up to a year to complete. Follow up testing shows perc levels in the business have dropped to almost zero. Thanks to the fast and responsible action of Mr. Carrera the people at Parkway Plaza, and especially the children, are breathing easier.