

New Jersey BUSINESS

JANUARY 1992

\$2.25

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NEW JERSEY BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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Enviro-Sciences: Balancing Business and Government

By Anthony Birritteri
Assistant Editor

“THE role of an environmental consulting firm is to be objective and marry the concerns of business and government regulatory agencies,” says Irving D. Cohen, president, CEO and co-founder of Enviro-Sciences, Inc. (ESI), Mt. Arlington. “New Jersey is a state that views its environment strongly, but government realizes that the regulatory pendulum has swung too far to the right and is now trying to adjust cleanup standards. There is a give and take situation going on.”

ESI was established in 1975 with a staff of five. During the pre-ECRA (Environmental Cleanup Responsibility Act) years, the company worked mainly on environmental impact reports, permitting and emissions issues and energy projects associated with building refineries and operating plants. With the creation of ECRA in 1985, an entire realm of issues opened for the company leading to an increased staff of 79 professionals, a number of subsidiaries and satellite and field offices in Houston, Texas and Wichita, Kansas.

The company services a wide range of businesses throughout the U.S., Europe and Asia including energy, chemical, pharmaceutical, textile, general manufacturing, waste management, real estate and small neighborhood commercial enterprises. A profile of its services include air pollution control, environmental impact and liability assessments, permitting, hydrogeology, industrial hygiene, laboratory services, pollution monitoring, regulatory compliance, site remediation, wetlands delineation and waste remediation management.

ESI has handled over 600 ECRA assignments. Cohen says the New



Irving
Cohen,
ESI
President

Jersey law is the strictest in the nation. It has created a whole new concern regarding lender liability for real estate projects. “With the 1986 Superfund amendments to the Comprehensive Environmental Response Cleanup Liability Act,” he says, “financial institutions may begin to share some of the liability for the clean up of hazardous substances on property in which they hold a financial interest. Banks may now be reluctant to loan money to builders where a chance exists that something may go wrong. You have to evaluate everything before anybody is going to put forth money and an environmental consulting firm can help reduce risks and increase lender receptivity.”

Concerning all environmental regulations, the state comes in a close second next to California. “Industry has to exist,” explains Cohen, “and the state is currently changing its limits to what it regards as clean or dirty. Some of the new Department of Environmental Protection and Energy (DEPE) standards I agree with. In other issues, the DEPE is taking the pendulum and swinging it all the way back to the left and is not really protecting what it should be.”

The entire regulatory process can be streamlined through the registration of environmental consultants. “We need a peer group to set a code of ethics everyone can adhere to. This will eliminate red tape,” says Cohen.

Many consulting firms do not

adhere to certain safety requirements mandated by state agencies. To acquire a project, for example, a firm may bid low, but not provide proper service, unknown to an uneducated purchaser. A firm may also know that a bid package is incomplete and not say anything. Firms bidding higher, offering full professional service, are at a disadvantage.

Cohen explains that businesses need to be pushed by government because, “environmental issues are rarely on the right side of a company’s bottom line. If the regulatory agency wasn’t there, nobody would volunteer to do something that would cost money.” On the other hand, the regulatory community is forcing industry to take the lion’s share of the blame rather than the general public for certain issues such as clean air. “Industry may be asked to cut down emissions, but nobody turns to John Q. Public and says, ‘Gee, you have to stop driving as much.’”

Air quality is an important focus for ESI at present. When asked if wetlands are just as important, Cohen immediately answers “Yes. Wetlands are the birth place, the nurturing grounds for everything in the food chain. Unfortunately, humans are the only animals in existence with the capability to destroy themselves. Unless we acknowledge that fact and look at ourselves and how we affect each other, breaking away from the microcosm we have placed ourselves in, we will be destroyed.”

Concerning ESI’s future growth, everything looks positive. Cohen expects a 20-25 per cent yearly growth over the next five years. Its list of client’s include Exxon, Hoffmann La-Roche, Jersey Central Power & Light, Johnson & Johnson, Mobil Oil, Port Authority of N.Y./N.J., Revlon Group and IBM, to name a few.

Long-range plans may call for the opening of an England office. ESI’s

first foreign project was in Pakistan in the early 1980s. "The company is known almost by word of mouth," says Cohen, "We can supply overseas service within 24 hours. This is our niche, to respond quickly and operably. We have maintained ourselves as a company that is responsive to our client's needs."

Environmental Round-Up

Chemical Waste Management, Inc.

CHEMICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT, INC., with 31 offices nationwide, has its Eastern region headquarters in Princeton. Its facilities provides a comprehensive array of environmentally-sound hazardous waste management services for large and small corporations.

Some of the services provided include:

- **Remedial**—For the largest Superfund cleanups to small spill response actions, ENRAC (Environmental Remedial Action Division) offers an integrated project approach, an array of mobile technologies and off-site waste treatment and disposal capabilities can be used to tailor a cost-effective solution to remedial problems.

- **Lab Packs**—Technical service teams provide turn-key management of the collection, documentation, packaging, transportation and disposal of aged chemicals, reagents and other laboratory wastes which pose special disposal problems.

- **Assured Destruction**—CWM assists companies with special safeguards for the destruction and disposal of tampered, aged, counterfeit or damaged products to ensure they are not diverted into the marketplace.

- **Waste Reduction**—Experts assist clients in reducing the volume of hazardous wastes they produce, resulting in substantial cost savings and ensuring compliance with federal waste minimization requirements.

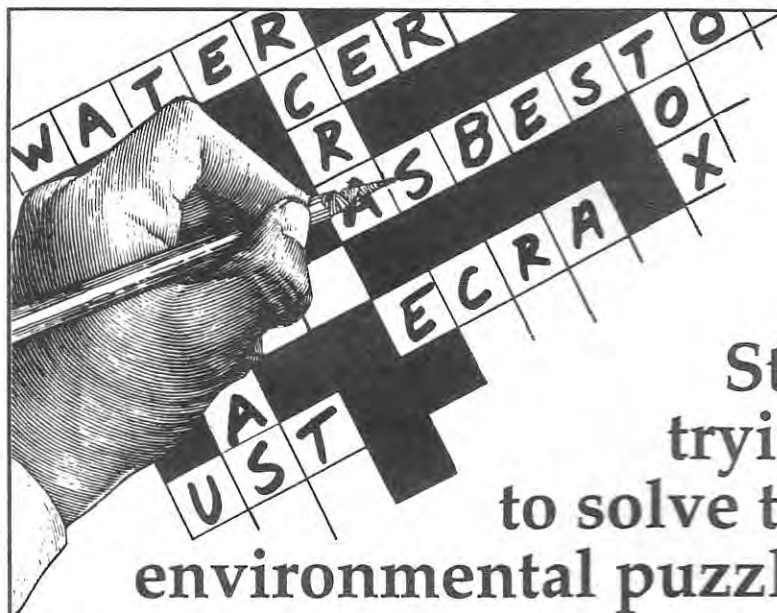
Handex

HANDEX of New Jersey, Inc., Morganville, is a full service, en-

vironmental consulting and contracting firm which specializes in the remediation of hydrocarbon contaminated air, soil and groundwater from leaking underground and above-ground storage tanks, petroleum distribution systems and related contamination sources. As a specialist in hydrocarbon remediation, the company's clientele consists mainly of petroleum producers, retailers and distributors. Work is performed primarily at retail service stations, bulk distribution facilities and terminals.

Services include initial site investigation, contamination delineation, system design and installation, R&D and application of innovative technologies, permit negotiation, system monitoring and maintenance and ultimately site closure.

HNJ has a staff of 150 employees, including hydrogeologists, environmental scientists/technicians, engineers, NJ licensed drillers, installation and maintenance crews as well as support staff. Additionally, Handex Environmental Management (HEM) was established in 1987 to provide turn-key hazardous waste management at industrial and commercial facilities, from industrial site assessment to cleanup.



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