

The Watertown Tire Recycler fire is out. The issues surrounding it have not yet been extinguished. Documents from the Watertown Fire Department, Dodge County and other agencies are available for you to read on the document page of this web site. Do the research.

Further, given the fact that our WI DNR intends to renew Mr. Springer's collection and transportation license, we ask that you call Governor Doyle's Office: (608) 266-1212 between 8 – 5, Monday – Friday. It is quite simple: merely state something i.e. “I want Watertown Tire Recycler shut down and I want the transfer site license non-renewed.” You will be asked your name and address. You can also email the Governor's Office: governor@wisconsin.gov

Since the DNR does NOT offer the option to phone in and have your position recorded, we need to provide them with written statements re: our position. The petitions will help, as will your letters and emails to:

GeneMitchell@dnr.state.wi.us

P Gene Mitchell

Waste Program Supervisor

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

South Central Region

3911 Fish Hatchery Road

Fitchburg, WI 53711

Key points:

1. The DNR has instructed WTR to work with the county – Mr. Springer has taken legal action AGAINST the county.
2. Mr. Springer's statement regarding wishing to continue to service his customers sounds very loyal and responsible – Mr. Springer turned what was supposed to be a tire recycling operation and a transfer and collection site operation into a tire junkyard. The number of tires far exceeded the limits of the state permit. – The tire processing equipment was broken prior to the December 2004 Board of Adjustments hearing in Dodge County. Why were tires stockpiled during the equipment failure? Why weren't they transported to other facilities? That has been done since the fire, why wasn't it done on a continuous, large scale sooner?
3. On the day of the fire, a WTR employee was moving shredded tire materials. To quote the Watertown Daily Times: “The end loader driver said the new stock pile was warm to the touch. He had moved four such piles the day before the fire, and two on the day of the fire. Each pile weighed between 15 and 25 tons. The driver said he drove the end loader into the tire material to level it out so he could build up the pile. While he was doing so, the end loader would sink into the tire material up to its axle.” Does this action not send up red flags everywhere???
4. One might think Mr. Springer would know the right phone # to call after 2 previous fires. He didn't call the Watertown Fire Department. He called 911, which puts you in touch with the Dodge County Sheriff's Department. This influenced reaction time.

I have taken into consideration input from Jerry Swensen, owner of Auburndale Recycling, that even though his business could handle all of the tires in the state, a transfer site would be needed in our area. He would be willing to add that feature to his business. Jerry further indicated that the DNR would understandably desire a back-up recycling facility for scrap tires in our state.

I am not arguing the need for services to handle Wisconsin's 5 million scrap tires per year industry. I am arguing that Mr. Springer has repeatedly shown himself to be irresponsible. The scrap tire industry may not be a high priority for the DNR when compared to potential for mercury poisoning, etc. However, when the scrap tire industry is not run responsibly, it does indeed become a high priority, causing damage to our air, water, soil, human health and property values.

My neighbors and I have invested a great deal of time and effort to correct this situation. Now we need YOUR HELP. Please help us and help our environment from future assaults. Your petition signatures and your contacts with the Governor's Office and the DNR would be greatly appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 108 fire departments that assisted in fighting the blaze. I know there are 108 because I've sent them all thank you notes.

About the author:

I live 1/5 of a mile from the Watertown Tire Recycler LLC. I attended my first Dodge County Board of Adjustments Hearing August 20, 1998 to voice my opinion against the expansion of WTR. A WTR Board of Adjustments Hearing was held in December 2004. Several township residents and I aired our concerns.

On July 21st, while the fire was still burning, over 100 neighbors assembled on my property for a meeting with officials from the DNR, Dodge County Health Department, Conservation Warden, Representative Joel Kleefisch and members of CFSE – Citizens For A Safe Environment. It was documented that 65 cars were parked on my lawn.

On July 27th, The Dodge County Emergency Management Officials sponsored a public meeting at the Watertown Senior Center. Approximately 200 were in attendance. This session gave the community an opportunity to ask questions, get updates and vent.

On August 8th, a public meeting was held at the Watertown H.S. Auditorium. The objective of this meeting was to reach more people, increase awareness, obtain further information updates regarding issues associated with the fire and to generate action. Those in attendance were given an opportunity to sign the petition regarding closing down WTR.

The panel participant list is as follows:

Mike Bauer – Director of Legal Services for the State of Wisconsin

Tom Dawson – Director of the Environmental Protection Unit

Gene Mitchell – Waste Program Supervisor of the Wisconsin DNR –
South Central Region

Anita Boseman – EPA, Superfund & Emergency Response Branch

Jennifer Warmke – Dodge County Office of Emergency Management

Jody Langfeldt – Dodge County Health and Human Services --
Public Health

Joe Marsik – Dodge County Board of Adjustment, Vice Chairman

Joe Giebel – Dodge County Planning, Development & Parks Department,
Assistant Code Administrator

Doug Ninmann – Dodge County Sheriff's Department

Henry Butts – Watertown Fire Department, Chief

City of Watertown: John David – Mayor

Carol Quest – Health Department

Paul Lange – Waste Water Specialist

Rick Schultz – Street Department

Neale Jones – Town of Shields, Chairman

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