

Public hearing held on permit for Haw River incinerator

Steve Earley
News Editor

A public hearing was held in Graham Monday night regarding the approval of an air permit for Stericycle, Inc. The company operates two dual-chamber hospital, medical and infectious waste incinerators in Haw River, just off I-40/85 at exit 150, about 12 miles from Elon.

The hearing, organized by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Division of Air Quality, was held to illicit citizen input before the division makes a ruling with regard to Stericycle's Title V air permit, which most notably defines allowable emission levels of toxic pollutants.

The permit, issued in June 2002, took effect in August 2002, but is being reviewed in order to clarify existing monitoring conditions, define previously unde-

finied terms and conditions and better organize state and federal requirements.

The current draft of the permit allows Stericycle to annually emit 19,272 pounds of hydrogen chloride, 1,394 pounds of mercury and 8,760 pounds of chlorine. All are defined by the DAQ as toxic pollutants.

Other conditions of the permit require Stericycle to limit the amount of waste burned each hour to 3,822 pounds, test control devices within 180 days of initial startup, annually inspect the incinerator scrubbers — the primary air pollution control devices — and continuously monitor the scrubbers for acidity and pressure.

Speakers at the hearing — which included those who have lived in Alamance County for as little as two months and for as long as 48 years, as well as high school students — for the most

part echoed the sentiments of GASP for Clean Air, a citizen organization opposing the permit.

GASP Co-chairperson Martha Hamblin said the ultimate goal is to stop incineration. In the meantime, the group calls for strict government oversight. She said non-toxic alternatives to burning waste are autoclaving — essentially steam-pressured sterilization — and microwaving.

In addition to objecting to the level of allowable pollutants, speakers commonly contested that not only is Stericycle burning the region's medical waste, but waste from 17 other states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

"There are some states that don't even allow incineration [of medical waste]," Alamance County resident Amy Edgar said. "We allow it and we say, 'Give us yours.'" Edgar turned to

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—Anne Cassebaum, associate professor of English

Hearing Officer Steven Vozzo, a DAQ regional air quality supervisor, rhetorically asking for an explanation. "You're going to have to answer that," she said. "Why are you allowing this to happen?"

Associate professor of English Anne Cassebaum, who attended the meeting along with Janet MacFall, associate professor of biology, was also asking questions.

"We're asking our trusted officials not to be poisoned," she said. "Why do we have to press to have limits not expanded?"

The lone speaker to hint at supporting Stericycle was Eastern Alamance High School

student Christopher Pratt. "Personally, I don't see the effects of the toxins released," he said. "But I could just not know."

Pratt's peer, Eastern Alamance High School student Katy Champion, was more certain of her opinion. "I don't have any fancy words or statistics," she said. "All I know is these toxins aren't good to be breathing."

Written comments were also accepted at the meeting, and will be accepted until 5 p.m. Sept. 19. Vozzo said a decision should be made on the Stericycle permit by early-to-mid October.

Contact Steve Earley at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

Chapel to mark anniversary of attacks

Laura Somerville
Reporter

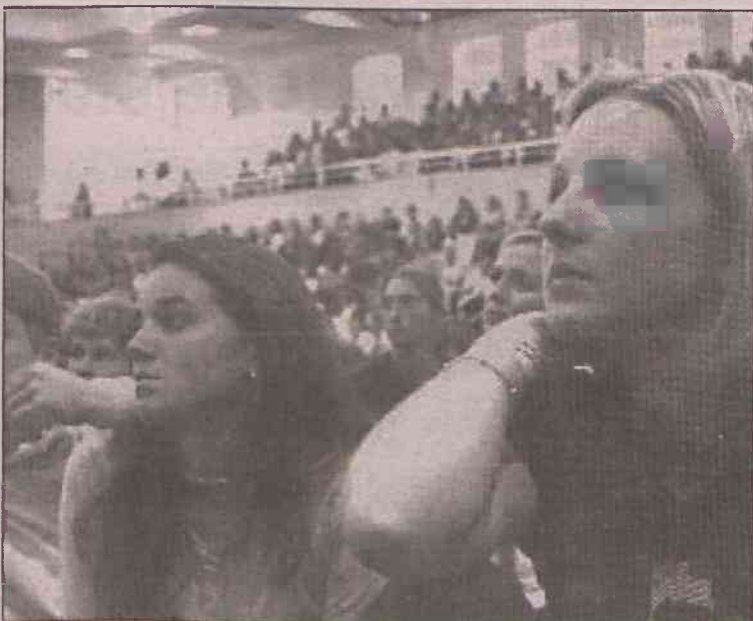
At today's Chapel, Chaplain Richard McBride will take time to recognize the second anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Activities at the 9:50 a.m. service in Whitley Auditorium will include the viewing of a portion of a PBS documentary on spiritual questions rising from the World Trade Center attacks, and the formation a "Circle of Hope" in cooperation with September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows.

McBride will also discuss broader issues in attempt to move on from the attacks.

The service will address the practice of hope, a theme from McBride's series "The Art of being Human." This series of devotions focuses on the "spiritual practice that helps us to become fully human," McBride said. "We must first pay attention," he said. "If we're not attentive we don't get to be human."

Understanding that the nation is paying attention to the tragic events of two years ago, McBride said, "Our nation is not going to



Tim Rosner / Asst. Photo Editor

Students filled Alumni Gym at last year's ceremony held on Sept. 11. This year's service will be in Whitley Auditorium today from 9:50 a.m. to 10:20 a.m. as a tribute to the national experience and to remember those lost.

forget September 11. That is forever in our consciousness." However, this year he said he would rather "give hope as a way of being healthier in the future, because we are inevitably going to encounter difficulties in life."

President Leo Lambert will be a guest speaker at Chapel. McBride said students will be given a chance to speak as well.

McBride also invites members of the Elon community to observe a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m., 9:03 a.m., 9:43 a.m. and 10:10 a.m. - the time of the plane crashes in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania two years ago.

Contact Laura Somerville at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

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