

Business, health aspects of county air quality to be topic of public forum

A controversial issue involving local business development and concern for the health of Sheboygan County residents will be the topic of a free, public forum on May 30 at 6 p.m. at Mead Public Library, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Sheboygan County.

Air quality in Sheboygan County is complex, because the prevailing winds bring out-of-state emissions and earn the county an EPA “non-attainment” status for ozone -- and highest readings occur along the lakefront. Elected officials say local businesses are unfairly penalized for pollution that originates elsewhere, and they have sought to alter monitoring practices to bring the county into compliance. Recently signed Wisconsin legislation asks the EPA not to use the air monitor at Kohler-Andrae State Park, in favor of a new, inland location at Haven, which records lower levels of ozone.

This change in policy may relax the emissions limits on local businesses and foster development, but does it adequately protect the health of county residents? The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, has gathered a distinguished panel of experts on health, economic development, and environmental policy to examine every aspect of this complex issue:

- Dane Checolinski, Director, Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation
- Sarah Geers, Staff Attorney, Midwest Environmental Advocates
- Seth Hoffmeister, Field Director, League of Conservation Voters
- Donna Kenski, Ph.D., Director of Data Analysis, Lake Michigan Air Directors Consortium
- Dona Wininsky, Director of Public Policy and Communications, American Lung Association in Wisconsin

“Ozone Alert: Balancing Air Quality with Economic Development” will include brief presentations followed by panel discussion and audience questions. The event will be in the Rocca Room of the Mead Library, 710 N. 8th St., Sheboygan. Seating is limited.