# 2010 WI Lakes Convention
## March 30, 2010
Green Bay, WI
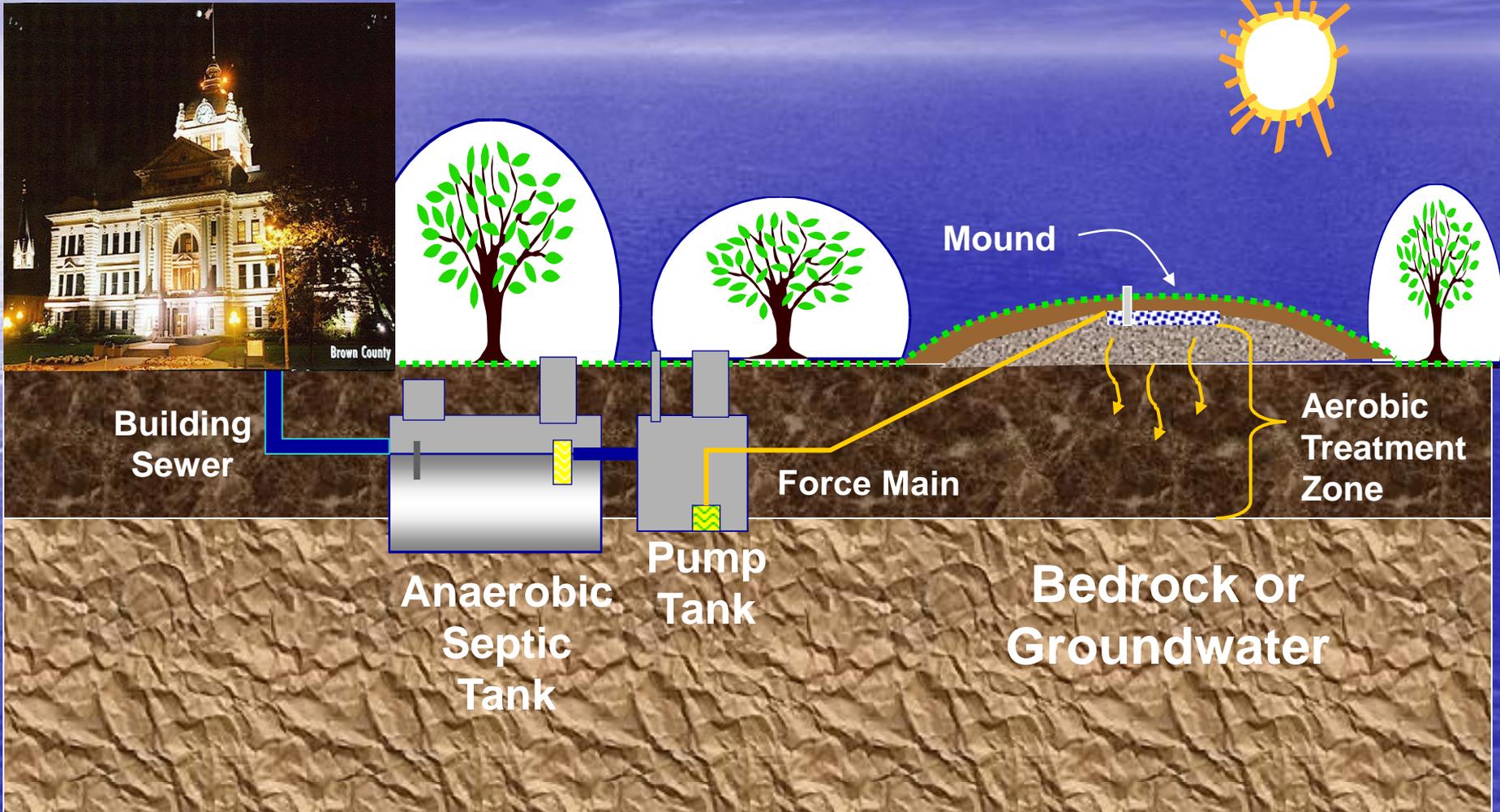
Presentation Outline

◆ Brief Overview of WI Onsite Program History

◆ Description of Various Maintenance/Management Program Attempts in WI

◆ Final Thoughts
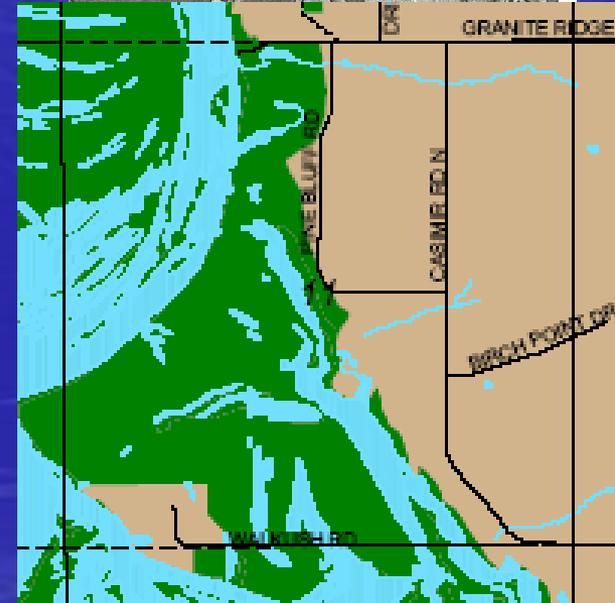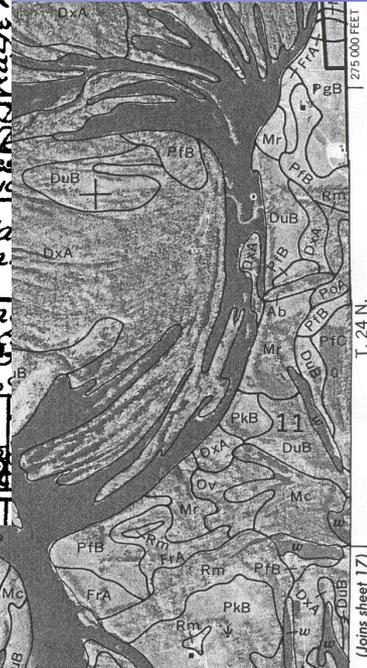
Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- ◆ Historical Perspective
  - ◆ "The 1913 Wisconsin Legislature, recognizing the importance to health of proper design, construction, **operation and maintenance** of plumbing facilities, enacted the Wisconsin Plumbing Law…".

  - ◆ Plumbing code since 1914

Wisconsin
State Plumbing Code

RULES AND REGULATIONS
of the
WISCONSIN STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
governing the
CONSTRUCTION, INSTALLATION AND INSPECTION
OF PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE
and the
LICENSING OF PLUMBERS
and
SUPERVISION OF APPRENTICES

Free distribution of this code is restricted to those having actual need
therefor. A charge of 50¢ per copy is made to those
residing outside of the state.

Ninth Edition, 1948

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ "Environmental sanitation is an essential cornerstone in building for better health in Wisconsin. This was recognized early in the development of the work of our Board of Health. Improvements in living conditions affecting the health and comfort of our citizens required that appropriate attention be given to eliminating hazards and assuring full benefits of modern sanitation."

June 29, 1948
Forward to 9th Edition of Plumbing Code
Carl N. Neupert, M.D.
State Health Officer

Wisconsin's Onsite Program
(Early History)

◆ "State Septic Tank Permit" – 1965

◆ Significant code revision - 1969
  ◆ If municipal sewer is not available, all sewage must enter a ST/SAS
  ◆ First reference to a 3' vertical soil separation to groundwater or bedrock

◆ Legislature revises law to make the State Plumbing code "Uniform" - 1972

Wisconsin's Onsite Program
(Early History)

◆ Small cross-roads communities began to take advantage of grants/loans to install centralized sewer systems

"Outfall" pipes continue
to serve some individual
rural properties

Wisconsin's Onsite Program
(Administration & Enforcement)

◆ 1977 Legislature amends state statute to require that a Sanitary Permit be obtained before a building (zoning) permit could be issued.

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Significant code revision - 1980
  - All systems must be inspected prior to backfill
  - New credential established -
    - Private Sewage System Inspector
- County programs beefed up
  - More scrutiny of Sanitary permit applications
    - More verification of information

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Late '70's early '80's
  - WI Fund Grant Program made available to counties

- Adoption of program requires:
  - County Board resolution
    - Agreement to operate a maintenance program for systems installed from the date of program adoption

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- State Code had a requirement for servicing of septic tanks since the '50's.

- Requirement to actually report servicing information was not added to the code until 1980.

- County Option
  - Counties may establish a mandatory maintenance program to insure continuing maintenance of private sewage systems.

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ 1980 version of the code also contained a requirement for semi-annual reporting for pumping of holding tanks.

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Early 1990's - "Septage Vision" Planning
  - Recognition that a coordinated effort was needed to implement a septage program.
  - Meetings with stakeholders
    - Commerce
    - Dept. of Natural Resources
    - WI County Code Administrators
    - WI Counties Association
    - WI Towns Association
    - WI Liquid Waste Carriers Association
    - ???

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Numerous efforts during the mid-'90's to initiate a septage program
  - All fail because of concerns raised by one or more of the stakeholders

- 1998 – Bill introduced in Legislature to:
  - Identify and require proper maintenance of all systems
  - Fund education efforts and DNR staff
  - Increase appropriation for WI Fund Grant Program
  - Provide money to counties to identify systems

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Septage Initiative Legislation failed because service providers did not want to be "tax collectors".

  ◆ Funds were to be collected by service providers per transaction.

  ◆ Unspoken concern...

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Throughout the '90's work was underway on a comprehensive revision of the state onsite code

◆ Maintenance of onsite systems was intended to be a major element of the revised code

◆ In 1999 the department released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a maintenance reporting system

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Level I
  - Provide data storage and 24-hour retrieval for approx. 680,000 records and expand by approx. 20,000 annually
  - Process up to *1,000,000* data transactions annually
  - Provide communication links between department, DNR counties and service providers
  - Accept a variety of data input methods including electronic file transfer, paper reports and faxes
  - Identify systems that have not been maintained
  - Maintain staff availability 24/7 to assure operational performance

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Level II
  - All Level I services
  - Generate and mail correspondence on county identified letterhead
  - Accept reports of real estate transfer inspections
  - Provide training for inspectors

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Level III

  ◆ All level I and Level II services

  ◆ Allow local printing of sanitary permits

  ◆ Provide automated department billing to counties

  ◆ Provide auditing capability

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Initially it appeared there would be a lot of interest in the RFP

- Ultimately, the RFP failed
  - Handful of bids received
    - None fully met the criteria listed in the RFP

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Comprehensive onsite code revision went into effect in July, 2000

   ◆ Separate sub-chapter devoted to Maintenance

      ◆ All systems are to be properly maintained

      ◆ Inspection, maintenance and servicing events are to be reported

      ◆ Owner of onsite system is ultimately responsible to see that work is done and reported

Reporting Requirements
Comm 83.55

- (EXISTING) Owner or <u>agent</u> reports to the Governmental Unit or Designated Agent at the completion of each maintenance or servicing event specified in 83.54(4).
  - Each septic or holding tank pumping event.
  - Service events specified by the manufacturer of a component.
- (NEW) Owner or <u>agent</u> reports to the Governmental Unit or Designated Agent at the completion of each maintenance or servicing event specified in plan.
- (ALL) Maintenance reports are sent to the Governmental Unit or Designated Agent by the owner or agent for any inspection or maintenance performed within <u>30 calendar days</u> as per Comm 83.55(2)(b).
  - In a manner (paper/electronic) specified by the Governmental Unit or Designated Agent

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Another approach to O&M…
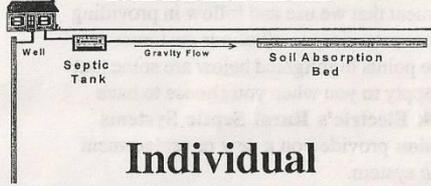
Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- 2004 - Legislature forms "Special Subcommittee on Septage"
  - Initial charge to subcommittee was to address growing problems with proper disposal of septage and holding tank waste
  - Discussion quickly veered towards onsite systems
    - How many are there in WI?
    - How often are they serviced?
    - How does anyone know?

  - End result – Introduction and passage of "2005 Wisconsin Act 347"

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Act 347
  - Adds duties and responsibilities to the department and counties in the law

  - In reality, law reinforces much of what is already in onsite code

  - Department is charged with adding details to existing code

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Proposed rule revisions reviewed by legislative committees in summer of 2008

◆ Several counties testify against proposed rule revisions

◆ Rule allowed to be implemented effective October 01, 2008

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ s. Comm 83.255
  ◆ POWTS Inventory within 3 years
  ◆ POWTS Maintenance Reporting program within 5 years.

  ◆ "Consequences"
    ◆ WI Fund Program
      ◆ Withhold grant awards if requirements are not met.
    ◆ Take away or not grant agent plan review status
    ◆ Take away entire program

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- What is the status of onsite system management in WI today?
  - Survey says...

- 64 counties have some form of maintenance reporting in place

- About 16 counties are fully retroactive
  - "All" systems inventoried
  - "All" in database

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Most counties are upgrading existing IT resources (AS400) to implement their programs

- About ~~six~~ five counties have opted to contract with 3rd party vendors for this service

- A small handful of counties are doing nothing, waiting to see what the Department will do to them…

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ October, 2009 marked the 1 year anniversary of the code revision that required the POWTS inventory and maintenance reporting

2006 – 28.7% inventoried

2008 – 63.4% inventoried

2010 – 74.2% inventoried

2006 – 762,000 systems

2008 – 732,000 systems

2010 – 757,000 systems

2008 District 6 POWTS Inventory

	Barron	Chippewa	Clark	Dunn	Eau Claire	Polk	Rusk	St. Croix	Taylor
Total POWTS	16,119	12,675	9,000	10,171	11,456	17,269	7,177	16,505	6,588
Inventoried	7,542	8,673	3,571	7,000	7,300	9,098	4,684	15,343	2,713
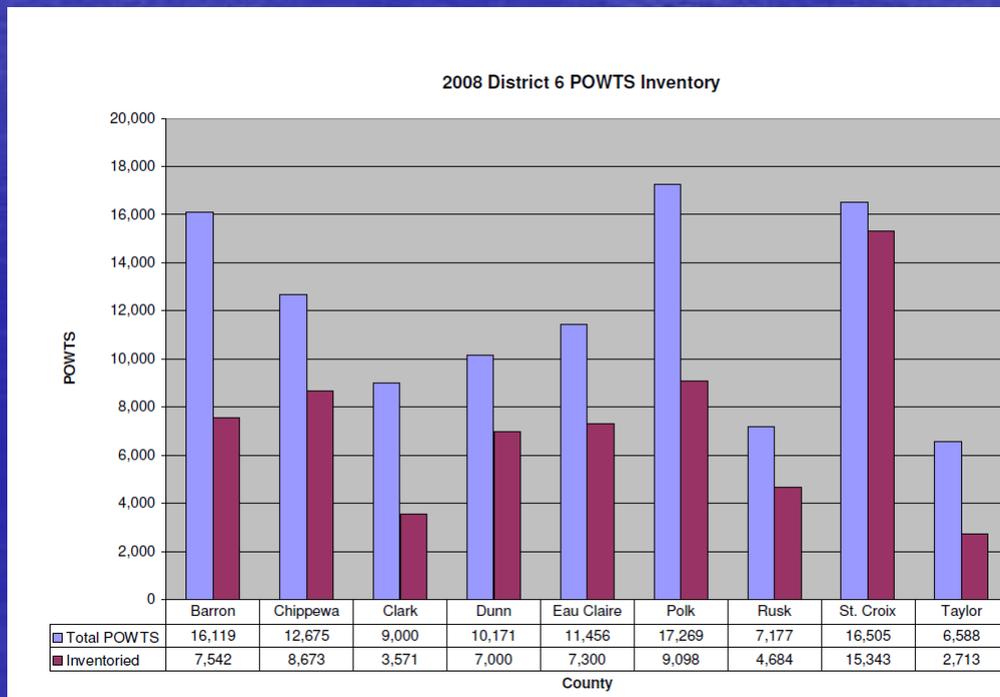
Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Lessons learned – so far

◆ Property owners are reluctant to report what is done to their onsite system, much less pay for the privilege of reporting that information

◆ Even when using electronic "tools" a maintenance reporting program is labor intensive

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Some basic elements add complexity to the data collection effort
  - Tax parcel identification assignment

  - Unwillingness to share data between courthouse departments

  - Pending retirements…

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

- Other considerations
  - Once you collect information, you have to do something with it!
    - Failing systems are identified
      - Potential safety hazards
    - Failure to comply with maintenance requirements
      - Legal action

  - Information overload

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ Implementing a robust maintenance reporting program is much more than setting up a database and waiting for the information to be sent in

◆ Education
   ◆ Service providers
   ◆ Property owners

Customer Service Notification
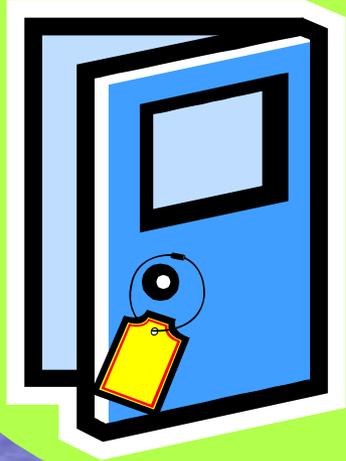
- Many customers interviewed indicated that they were not notified of any service being completed
  - Leave a card on the front door
  - Send a report in the mail
- Keep your customer informed of system maintenance and any repairs completed

Wisconsin's Onsite Program

◆ $$$$ - Someone has to pay for development, implementation and ongoing costs.

◆ Fee per transaction
  ◆ $10 - $15   1x/3 years

◆ Special Assessment on tax bill
  ◆ To operate the maintenance reporting program
  ◆ To operate the entire onsite program

A Look Back in History

◆ 1964 New York World's Fair

  ◆ AT&T introduces the

  "Picture phone"

    ◆ Public reluctant to have their

    image broadcast to another party.
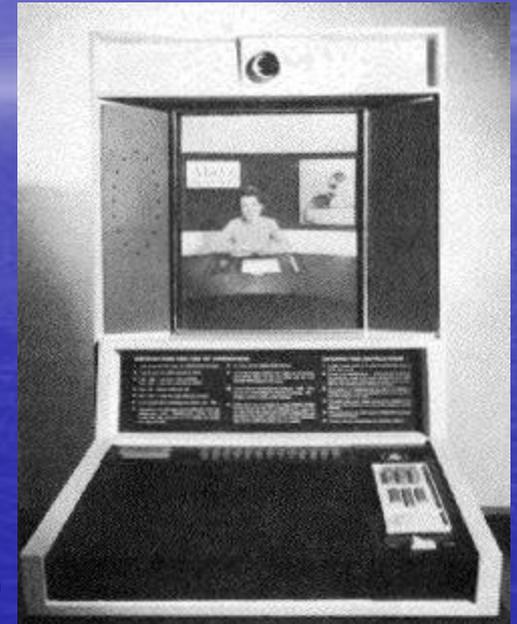
◆ 2009 Webcams are used extensively

A Look Back in History

- **1999 Wood County proposes to install sensors in Holding Tanks to monitor water levels.**
  - **Public and County Board members not enamored with the idea of staff knowing when someone flushes their toilet.**

- **2009 Sensors are being used to remotely monitor critical operating functions of POWTS components.**
  - **Public accepting of "technology" that gives them additional POWTS options.**

96% of WI land area, if developed, would need onsite systems
**30% of state's residences are served by onsite systems**

Wisconsin's Future – Which will it be?
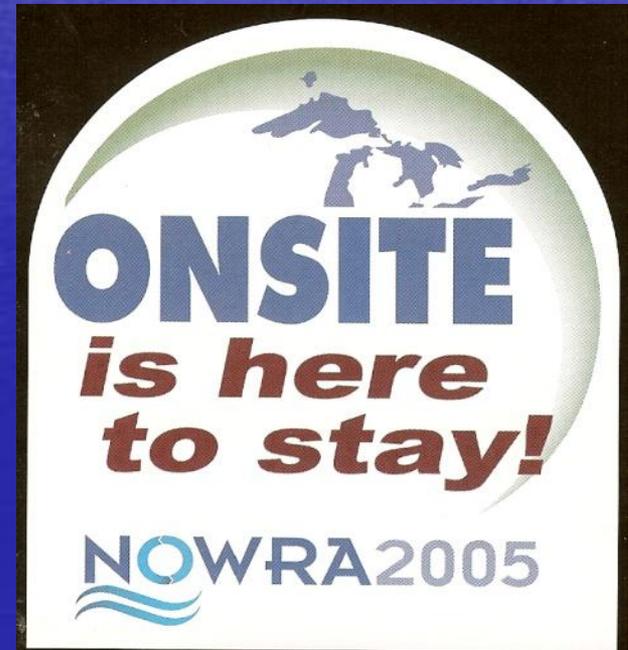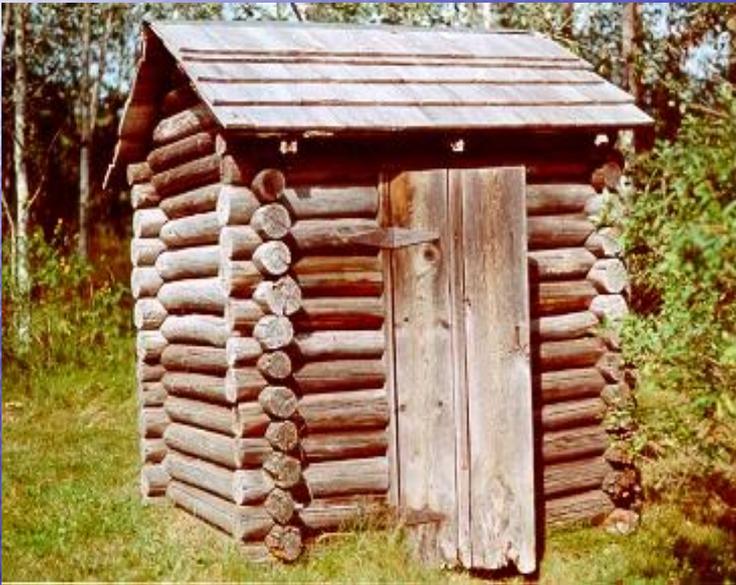
Decentralized Wastewater Program Strategy

◆ **Vision:** Decentralized wastewater treatment systems:

   ◆ are appropriately managed,

   ◆ perform effectively,

   ◆ protect human health and the environment and,

   ◆ are a key component of our nation's wastewater infrastructure.

◆ Wisconsin shares this vision...
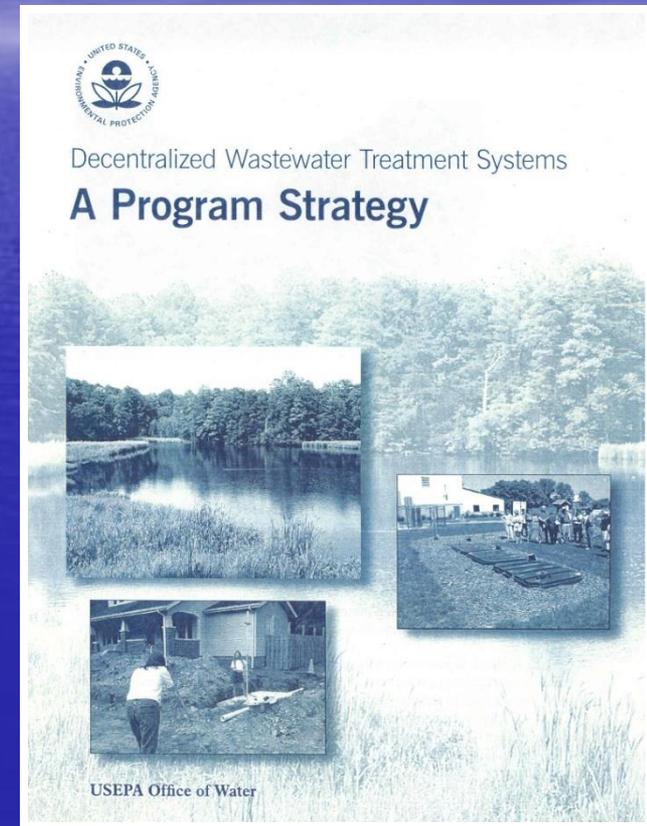
Wisconsin's Onsite Program
## (Partner Network)
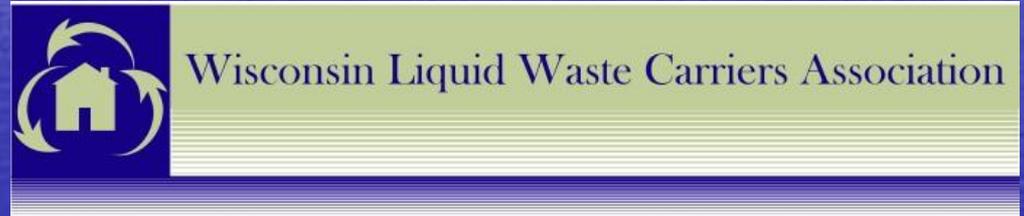
Thanks for your attention!

◆ Questions?

Commerce-Safety & Bldgs. Website

http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/SB/SB-POWTSProgram.html
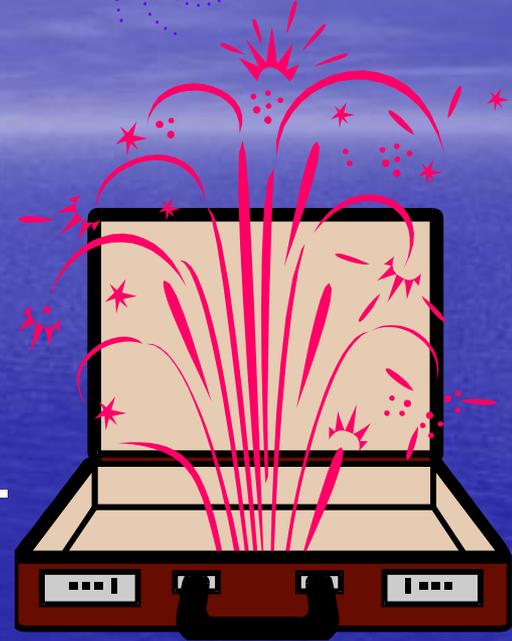
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