

BURNT Celebrates 20th Anniversary

On a cold, overcast December Sunday afternoon in 1988, an intrepid group of citizens, very much not the movers and shakers of Nashville, met at the Vanderbilt Center for Health Services with a single goal--stop the \$300 million expansion of the downtown incinerator which included a \$100 million for a solid waste processor in Rutledge Hill. The group, gathered by Joyce and Wesley Vaughn, with moderator Clay from Lois Gibbs' Center for Health, Environment & Justice was very clear as to goal but not clear on process--the BURNT members did not know when the Metro Council met, how the decision would be made, and had no idea of how ingrained support for the incinerator was among the active political leaders

BURNT did formulate two basic tenants in our opening meetings--be researched based and offer positive alternatives. We rode the crest of two years of intense citizen activism unrivaled by anything since then in Nashville--neighborhoods, East Nashville citizens and neighborhood groups, the Sierra Club--many were positive parts of the very significant victory initiated by our meeting in December 1988. If Nashville had invested \$300 million in our incinerator, we would be burning garbage on the Riverfront into perpetuity.

In addition to research and offering positive alternatives, our third fundamental lesson was never be a single issue group because if you win on your single issue, you have nothing to do. With our knowledge of air pollution laws, we led the way with downtown businesses, Germantown, and East Nashville to clean up then close the downtown Rendering Plants which processed meat oil. Nashville tolerated this for fifty years, but BURNT paved the way to clean up downtown air.

BURNT generated hundreds of millions in increased commercial real estate value by closing the Rendering Plant and stopping the incinerator expansion. Would the Titans have located their practice facility in Metro Center with a Rendering Plant polluting the air or the Symphony build in downtown next to the polluter? .

Pesticides, state policies in recycling, Dickson County landfills, Nashville neighborhood pollution, 'No-Spray'---we have learned that pollution migrates to minority and poor people.

BURNT takes a lot of losses. We know we might not win if we fight but we can never win if we do not try. BURNT is one of few groups working for recycling with landfills a central argument. BURNT has played a central role in 2007--2007 solid waste reform effort in Tennessee

BURNT has completed our business plan. We must increase our funding and people.

We are oriented to clean water and ground water. We are starting to address low level, multiple chemicals in the environment and humans.. Nonetheless, we have a sound legacy of closing multiple chronic polluters which increased commercial real estate value and made our city better. We appreciate the opportunity to participate.

BURNT actions and history break into four (4) components

---**BURNT has improved the value of commercial real estate by shutting down or stopping large chronic polluters** including the 1990 decision against the \$300 million expansion of the incinerator which led to closure, closing the downtown Rendering Plant which stopped noxious air pollution in many urban neighborhoods including downtown, Germantown, east Nashville, and Metro Center.

---**Environmental injustice.** BURNT worked with neighborhoods hurt by the incinerator, the Rendering Plant, North American Galvanizing, White Way Cleaners, Southern Services Class IV Landfill, and Dickson County. Inevitably, pollution rolls downhill to the minority and poor.

---**Legislative and Administrative law.** BURNT has long been active at the State Legislature, Metro Council, and appeals to State and Metro Agency Boards.

—**We have developed a strategy of decision** explicated in our brochure distributed at the 2006 National NAACP Convention in Washington, D. C. [link AOL 'environmental injustice, landfill'
http://www.burnt-tn.org/images/NAACP_brochure]

When BURNT is involved we have a decision making process.

BURNT has history, we have proven strategies, we have issues including low level multiple chemicals in the environment, and Tennessee Solid Waste Reform.

The only thing missing from B RNT is U

Now, we need to broaden our approach to bring our natural base of families, youth, and minority concerned with a future saturated with low level multiple chemicals, human and business waste [sewer sludge] used to grow crops, environmental injustice, and recycling and composting to reduce landfills.

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