

NCER Assistance Agreement Annual Progress Report

Period Covered by the Report: October 2002 – September 2003

Date of Report: 16 September 2003

EPA Agreement Number: R – 82942901 – 0

Title: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) From the Commonwealth of Kentucky, SIP

Investigators: David S. White

Institution: Murray State University

Research Category: EPA EPSCoR

Project Period: October 2001 – September 2004

Progress Report

The objective of the SIP has been to enhance competitive research in environmental problems in the Commonwealth of Kentucky under the management of the EPA EPSCoR Subcommittee of the Kentucky Statewide EPSCoR Committee through information exchange activities, fellowships, and review processes to assist the investigators of the SEER Projects as they address research on environmental and human health biomarkers and use of biomarkers for pollution prevention in Kentucky.

Because of some time of year issues in beginning the research in the fall and logistics of the accounts for the SEER grants, SEER research was not fully underway until January 2002. Originally we had planned to hold a Special Conference on Biomarkers in May of 2002, but with the late start the KY EPSCoR Committee agreed that it would be much more profitable to move the Conference to 2003. This proved to work out very nicely. On May 11-12, the KY EPSCoR Committee hosted a Special Conference in conjunction with The Kentucky Statewide EPSCoR Conference at the Hyatt Regency in Lexington Kentucky. Three internationally known biomarker researchers (Patrick Hatcher, Timothy Fennell, and Margaret Whalen) agreed to be invited speakers (with Hatcher also being a keynote speaker for the entire conference). Each of the 4 SEER Co-PIs presented results to date, which was followed by an open forum discussion. Flyers had been sent to faculties and agencies throughout the state (a copy is on the web site), and attendance was good. A PowerPoint summary of SEER 2 (Hurst) is available on the website, and we plan to have a similar PowerPoint summary of SEER 1 (Whiteman) available soon.

With the success of the first Conference, the KY EPSCoR Committee felt that it would be beneficial to the SEER grants and to biomarker research in Kentucky to hold a second conference in 2004 in conjunction with the Statewide Conference. We have begun planning for this meeting. Also we are beginning planning for a SEER meeting with the Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission (and other state agencies) for sometime in early spring 2004. Results of both meetings will be disseminated statewide and made available on the web site.

Members of the KY EPA EPSCoR Committee continue to meet regularly with SEER grant investigators both in Louisville and in Murray. The committee is tracking

publication of the results and new proposals being developed. To date, we have been satisfied with the progress being made.

Other progress includes a revamping of the web site, which is now connected to the Kentucky EPSCoR site and is searchable through the AERC web site. All reports are maintained on the website including the 2003 reports for the SIP and both SEER grants. Two members of the KY EPSCoR Committee (White, Farrell) were re-elected to 3-year terms on the Statewide Committee, which has provided a broader outlet for the importance of long-term funding for environmental research in the Commonwealth. The site is <http://www.mursuky.edu/qacd/cos/hbs/epaepscor-program.htm>

There have been no changes in key personnel with the exception of addition of new members of the KY EPA EPSCoR Committee in 2002 (see previous report).

State matching funds through the Kentucky Statewide Committee for the 2001-2003 budget year were held up in the Kentucky legislature (no State budget passed) through April 2003 slowing some aspects of the research. All funds were released to us in April; however, we did not expend as much of the supplemental undergraduate/graduate student funding and travel funding as we had planned for both years. Thus we asked for and have received a one-year no-cost extension to the entire project. Both SEER grants plan to take advantage of students and travel this during the final year. Otherwise, funding is approximately on schedule with no expected variance from the originally negotiated total cost estimates.