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Cardinal Resources banking on sustainable remediation

Pittsburgh Business Times - April 25, 2007 by [Dan Reynolds](#)

A Monroeville environmental consulting firm is quadrupling its sustainable remediation practice this year, buoyed by increased work with Dow Corning Corp. and other corporations.

In a sustainable practice known as phytoremediation, Cardinal Resources Inc. uses such things as poplar trees and willows to create plantations at manufacturing sites to clean up toxic wastes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The company also uses a solar-powered water filtration system to purify water used in manufacturing.

Cardinal Resources is in the process of creating a five-acre phytoremediation plantation at Dow Corning's Greensboro, N.C., manufacturing facility and is beginning work this month on a chromium contamination site on the Camelia Peninsula near Sydney, Australia for a consortium of businesses known as the Camelia Committee.

Other companies Cardinal is working with include Houston-based lighting and tool maker Cooper Industries Inc. and the Dallas-based mining company U.S. American Resources Inc.

From 10 percent of its revenue in 2006, Cardinal Resources president Kevin Jones said the company will take in approximately \$1 million, or 50 percent of its 2007 revenue through sustainable remediation practices, what Jones calls green production. Boosted by its sustainability practice, Jones said the company's revenue will increase by 15 percent this year.

Jones said Cardinal Resources has been working with Dow Corning since 1996, but saw its work with the company start to decrease in 2004. Jones said the work load started to decrease because Cardinal had largely completed traditional toxic remediation measures such as digging up and offloading contaminated soils for incineration or disposal.

But with increased regulatory scrutiny on emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases that scientists say contribute to global warming, Jones said companies like Dow Corning are starting to take other measures that are more preventative in nature.

"They are a very proactive company. They started worrying about their carbon footprint and what ways could they use to reduce that," Jones said.

Jones said the value of Cardinal Resources contracts with Dow Corning this year is approximately \$350,000.

Not only do the plants used in phytoremediation reduce an industrial site's carbon dioxide emissions, their root systems create a filter for cleaning storm water runoff or industrial chemicals that are leaching into groundwater or soils.

David Hails, president of Apollo-based environmental consultants Ecological Restoration Inc., said phytoremediation practices also buy companies time as they struggle to comply with state and federal pollution regulations.

Hails, who also operates a subsidiary, Wetland Supply Co., which sells plants used in phytoremediation, said environmental agencies will give companies time to let phytoremediation work, once the company has demonstrated a willingness to address contamination.

Hails said phytoremediation won't adequately clean severely contaminated sites, but is an excellent method for treating acid mine drainage and other persistent, long term problems.

Hails said as the plants used in phytoremediation grow, they drink in and filter more contaminated water and process more carbon dioxide.

"The main reason why industry likes it so much is that it buys them time," Hails said. "As the plants get larger they take in more and more of the material," Hails said.

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