

NU to face EPA fines for waste violations

By Brain Sharp
Staff Reporter

The University of Nebraska has nowhere else to go. And the Environmental Protection Agency will soon come knocking once again. That's how officials from both sides described the coming year for a relationship that's become somewhat tiresome. Last week, NU finalized its latest settlement with the EPA at a cost of \$580,000. It marked the third fine NU has received in the last four years.

The June 15 agreement came after NU was cited for violating federal environmental regulations. Included in the violations was NU's storage of hazardous waste. James Rhone, NU director of hazardous waste, said that while the university has now gotten itself in compliance with all EPA guidelines, it may not last. In one week, the only facility where NU ships its low-level radioactive waste will close its doors to the state. EPA guidelines say the waste must be shipped within 90 days. "We're going to have to sit on it (the waste)," Rhone said. "That could be a violation, even

though there's no place else to send it." The South Carolina facility is shutting Nebraskans out because they haven't held up their end of the deal, Rhone said. When Nebraska entered into a five-state radioactive waste pact along with South Carolina several years ago, it was agreed that a facility similar to South Carolina's would be built in Boyd County. Recent reports show the developer, US Ecology, is farming the land. "South Carolina is saying 'We only opened to give you an opportunity to get things started,'" Rhone said. "In other words, they're trying to force us to do what we should have done

five years ago." Now, NU is left to wait and wonder — wonder if the EPA will hit them with more fines for not getting rid of the radioactive waste. Dale Armstrong, EPA spokesman for region VII, said the EPA will be back, NU can count on that. "The university can expect repeated inspections," Armstrong said. "The whole purpose of this system is not to go out and fine people, but to make sure the hazardous waste is handled safely." Armstrong said that, ideally, a university would be the place that sets an example when it comes to following the environmental regulations.



Jason Levkulich/DN

Warehouse #1 is one of two buildings UNL uses to keep hazardous materials until they can be shipped out to various centers for refining, incinerating or burial.

That's why when the hazardous waste laws were changed (around 1986), NU was allowed interim status for six years, Armstrong said. The change in law required all companies to get a permit, he said. To handle the numerous applicants, the EPA first issued Part A permits, equalling interim status. They then notified permit holders individually to send in the paperwork for a Part B, or final, permit. Armstrong said EPA officials worked their way down the list, starting with those they felt were of most concern. NU was close to the bottom. But when they got to NU, Armstrong said, the documents for the final permit were never received. That's because they were never sent. Rhone said NU officials decided they didn't need the permit, figuring they could handle shipping the hazardous waste themselves. Rhone said that now, after further review, they have filed for the permit. If nothing else, NU can take comfort in the fact that they're not alone. Armstrong said similar violations have been found in other Big Eight schools, noting the University of Missouri in particular for viola-

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Financial aid fails to keep up with rising tuition costs

Funding drops as student eligibility increases

By Sean McCarthy
Staff Reporter

As the cost of tuition continues to rise, federal aid programs aren't keeping up with rising costs, said John Beacon, Director of Scholarships and Financial Aid. Proposed tuition rates for the 1994-95 school year include a 6.2 percent rise in rates for resident students and a 6 percent rise for nonresident students. In a 1991 survey by Gallup Poll, 87 percent of Americans believed that college costs are rising at rate that would make college out of reach for most people. The cost of attending college rose 77 percent for four-year colleges from 1980 to 1990 according to a report by the Office of Scholar-

ships and Financial Aid. That same report estimates that college costs will consume approximately 20 percent of an average median family income. "People come in and grumble at the financial aid office about the lack of money, but they never take the time to write their congressman about getting more money," Beacon said. Federal State Student Incentive Grants experienced a drop in the 1993-94 school year. They moved from \$190,856 in the 1992-93 school year to \$180,122 for 1993-94. "As department budgets continue to grow tighter, they are not able to provide students with enough money," said Beacon. Federal Pell Grants also experienced a drop, from \$8,342,387 for the 1992-93 school year to an estimated

\$6,000,000 for the 1993-94 school year, according to the financial aid office. "What we have is an increase in the eligibility for students to receive aid, but not an increase in money," Beacon said. "Federal funds are not able to stretch the money for the time period." Programs that experienced increases in the 1993-94 school year included Federal Perkins Loans and Federal Subsidized Loans. According to the financial aid office, Stafford Loans also increased from \$17,120,794 in 1992-93 to \$21,700,000 in 1993-94. One of the reasons for this increase is bigger loan limits, Beacon said. In 1992-93, the limit that a junior could borrow from the programs was \$4,000. In 1993-94 that limit increased to

The Cost of College

	Average Cost of Attendance	Median Family Income	% of Median Family Income used for college
1980	\$2,701	\$19,587	14%
1990	\$6,117	\$34,213	18%
1994	Projected cost and family income indicates that college expenses will consume 1/5 of family income.		20%

Source: 1991 Gallup Poll

Amy Schmidt/DN

\$5,500, Beacon said. "Undergraduates can now borrow as much as \$23,000 in loan debts, but you're going to have to pay it off sometime," said Beacon. "Don't feel

compelled to take the full amount of money you are eligible for." A new way for students to pay off

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