

July 15, 2006

All About Operator Training

H₂O'C Engineering / MWWC
operator training sessions

Tuesday, July 25, Willard, MO

All About Distribution

Wednesday, July 26, Kimberling City

All About Disinfection

Tuesday, August 22, Arcadia, MO

All About Distribution

Vouchers accepted, lunch included

Register by email: tom@h2oc.com
or by phone: 573-761-0376



Man Fired for Getting Gassed on Spilled Ethanol *adapted from Des Moines Register, July 9, 2006*

An Iowa judge has denied unemployment benefits to a man who claimed discrimination after being fired from an ethanol plant for drinking automobile fuel produced by the company.

Cory Neddermeyer, 42, was fired in April from Amaizing Energy in Denison, where he worked as a maintenance technician. According to Neddermeyer, he showed up for work and saw that there had been a spill of fuel alcohol. Hundreds of gallons of 190-proof alcohol were contained in a 6-inch-deep holding pond. It proved to be too much to resist, Neddermeyer said.

"I am a recovering alcoholic, and I thought about the availability of this alcohol throughout the day," he wrote in a statement later provided to state officials. "Curious about the taste and its effects, I dipped into this lake of liquor and drank what I considered to be 2 to 3 ounces. The next thing I remember is waking up in Crawford County Memorial Hospital."

Neddermeyer had been found by his co-workers in an incoherent state, unable to say his name or the day of the week. He was taken to a hospital, where his blood-alcohol level, according to state records, was reported at 0.72 - nine times the legal limit for driving, and almost double the level that is considered potentially fatal for many adults.

He was briefly hospitalized for acute alcohol intoxication, during which time his employer searched his work area and allegedly found three empty pop bottles that contained trace amounts of the fuel.

At a subsequent state hearing on Neddermeyer's request for unemployment benefits, plant manager Jeff Bruck expressed shock at Neddermeyer's actions. At the hearing, Administrative Law Judge Teresa Hillary asked Neddermeyer, "Why would you drink fuel?" "I don't have a good explanation for that," he replied. "Curiosity?"

Neddermeyer argued that his employer shared in the responsibility for the incident because the spill at the plant provided an "opportunity" for him to drink. He also argued that Amaizing Energy was discriminating against him due to his "disease of alcoholism."

He asked Hillary whether the protections afforded him under the Americans with Disabilities Act could be applied to his request for unemployment benefits. Hillary denied the request for benefits, saying Neddermeyer had committed job-related misconduct that could have resulted in his death. "The employer has a right to expect employees not to drink the fuel," Hillary ruled.

Neddermeyer said Thursday that he has been struggling with alcohol for at least 10 years and is now getting additional help. "Things were going pretty well until that day at work," he said.