

A Breath of Fresh Air

Arena Managers Unite For Air Quality

BY BRANDON KLEMENT

The indoor air quality article in *Rink Magazine's* January/February issue discussed several issues

with skating facilities and indoor air quality. It discussed the problematic recurrence of media outlets reporting stories about poor indoor air quality, facilities being proactive and not reactive, states that have indoor air quality legislation in place, and Minnesota's current air quality laws and proposed changes to those laws. Since the article was written, it has been a very interesting past several months for skating facilities in the Minnesota.

During the first part of March 2010, members of the organization Minnesota Ice Arena Managers (M.I.A.M.A.) were notified that there was a bill being proposed with changes to the current Indoor Air Quality Law for enclosed arenas.

The initial revisions of the HF3512 (House), and the SF3175 (Senate) bills would require all indoor ice arenas to contain a continuous electronic air monitoring device with a carbon monoxide alarm by January 2013. The monitoring device should be equipped with an alarm that sounds when the carbon monoxide level in the facility is elevated. The monitor must then activate an exhaust system. Ice arena personnel would be required to have training in operating and maintaining the device. The bill was amended to exempt arenas that use only electric resurfacers and edgers.

Also included in the first several revisions of the Bills were installations of three-way catalytic converters on all fossil fuel pow-

ered resurfacers and edging equipment, and all facilities would be required to only use electric resurfacers and edgers by 2013.

In meetings with stakeholders, the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) and M.I.A.M.A.

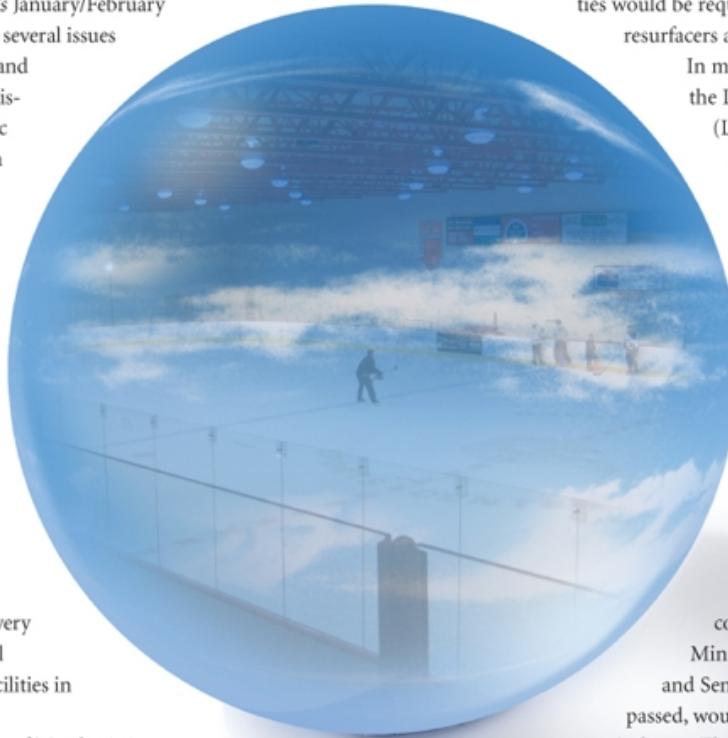
acknowledged safety considerations, but also raised concerns about the potential cost of implementing this legislation. The groups came together and suggested recommendations that would improve compliance with air quality, safety precautions, and monitoring.

DE7 (seventh revision) was reached by keeping an open line of communication with both Minnesota State Representatives and Senators to craft a bill that if passed, would be more manageable to our industry. The goal was to come together as a group and take a proactive approach to address

the issues with air quality.

DE7 major topics required documentation from a qualified technician establishing that the ice resurfacing equipment was properly tuned and tested for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and hydrocarbon emissions, as applicable, during the previous year. They would also be required to meet the manufacturer's specifications for those emissions.

Indoor ice arenas would be required to obtain an operator training and certificate. After March 1, 2011, no indoor arena would have been allowed to operate without a trained indoor ice arena operator who held the valid indoor ice arena certificate issued by the commissioner of health. A trained operator would have been required to be present or available on-call whenever the arena was open for use and responsible for direct operation of the



RINK ISSUES

■ Air Quality

Media outlets reported stories about poor indoor air quality ... and it's been a very interesting issue for several months.

indoor ice arena as well as meeting and maintaining air standards.

A waiver from the requirements of this subdivision could have been granted to an arena that demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Department of Health that the capacity of its air handling system was sufficient in relation to the airspace within the arena to make the risk of failing to meet applicable air quality standards insignificant. The Department of Health would set conditions, including air quality testing protocols, on exemptions

granted under this subdivision.

Finally, all catalytic convertor requirements were removed along with the posting of required placards that would state equipment in the facility produces carbon monoxide and could be hazardous.

Despite efforts this bill-aimed at reducing the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, which the bill's proponents say may be caused by exposure to fumes generated by non-electric ice resurfacers and edgers — did not gain final approval by the Legislature.

In the end, staff training and certification is one area we cannot neglect, as demonstrated by the issues with air quality. As an organization, whether it is STAR or M.I.A.M.A., we can draw on the wealth of knowledge and expertise of our membership to ensure we have well-trained staff at every facility and that we work together with our state and local government agencies to reach the facts and produce regulations and laws that work for everyone. ★

A special thanks to the M.I.A.M.A Board and President Michael Sheggeby for voicing concerns and creating a bill that was acceptable to both law makers and facility operators.

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