

Profile: VET Environmental Engineering, LLC
By Sara R. Hamidovic, CHMM

I would like to start by thanking Michelle Lechner, Executive Director, and the Auto & Truck Recyclers of Illinois (ATRI) Board of Directors for affording me the opportunity to become a part of this great organization. I am excited to be involved with your group as I am dedicated to improving environmental awareness, increasing compliance, and encouraging participation in ATRI as the Illinois Green CAR Program Manager. I have had a wonderful experience in working with recyclers in both Indiana and Illinois. In my experience, recyclers are not only savvy businesspeople but are also some of the most down-to-earth and enjoyable folks to work for. I would also like to thank Chuck Forney from Bloomington Auto Parts and Auto Heaven in Bloomington, Indiana for, once again, allowing me to use his yards for photographic props.

A little bit about me: I am originally from Bloomington, Indiana. In 1999, I was nominated by Senator Richard Lugar to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. I graduated from West Point in 2004 with a degree in Environmental Engineering and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army. After graduating from the Officer Basic Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, I received orders to serve with the 54th Engineer Battalion (Combat Mechanized) in Bamberg, Germany. I served in a range of positions with the 54th - my favorite position was as Platoon Leader, Bravo Company, 3rd Platoon. I had the privilege of leading 31 of the best and the brightest, on a deployment to Ar Ramadi, Al Anbar Province, Iraq. We brought all of them home.

During my tour in Germany, I passed the Fundamental Engineering Exam to earn the title of Engineer in Training (EIT). I left Germany at the end of 2007 and reported back to Fort Leonard Wood to serve as cadre for the Engineer Officer Basic Course with the 554th Engineer Battalion. In April of 2008, I was greeted by a perfect, 9 pound 8 ounce baby boy, Adis. Some of you met him at the 2013 Central Midwest Auto Recyclers Convention (CMARC). He's my wingman. Upon his arrival, I decided that I could no longer fulfill the requirements of an officer in the Army - I could not be away from my boy. In July of 2009, I left the Army as a Captain. That's when all of the fun began!

Prior to leaving the Army, I took and passed the Professional Engineering Exam in the State of Indiana and was licensed as a Professional Engineer (PE) in July 2009. I am currently in the process of requesting reciprocity for my license in the State of Illinois - this gives me the ability to offer a range of environmental consulting services in both Indiana and Illinois. Later in 2009, I moved home to Bloomington, Indiana and took a job working for my father, Rudy Fields, at his company, Fields Environmental, Inc. It was an amazing experience working with my Dad. I learned more in four years working for him than in any other period of my professional life. I am fortunate to have such a wonderful friend, teacher and supporter in my father. We still collaborate on some projects but our business plans vary so that our services are complementary, not competitive.

In the beginning of 2010, I began working for auto recyclers in Indiana. I have consulted for yards all over Indiana from New Albany to South Bend. In 2011, I was licensed as a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM). I enrolled in Graduate School at Indiana University the following year to study Environmental Science at its School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA). I plan on graduating this December. In 2013, I decided to start my own business - VET Environmental Engineering, LLC (VET). Owning my own business allows me to focus on the specific areas of the environmental consulting world that interest me most and where I feel I can make the biggest difference. One of those areas is auto recycling.

One of the best lessons I learned working for my Dad is that a small company is capable of providing dynamic and personalized consulting services. Small businesses, like many auto recycling businesses, may be lost in the shuffle in a large consulting firm. I pride myself on being able to keep my finger on the pulse of a smaller portfolio of clients while providing top-notch and highly personalized consulting services. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, being small also allows me to maintain rates at a very competitive level. This month VET brought on an intern, Lauren Zangl, MSES/MPA. Lauren is in the cover photo with me. She graduated in 2008 from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

with degrees in Microbiology and Chemistry. She recently graduated from Indiana University with graduate degrees from SPEA in Environmental Science and Public Affairs. Lauren is a hard worker and has been an outstanding addition to my organization. I'm hoping I can keep her around.

I will be working through the list of Illinois Green CAR certified yards and I will contact each of you individually to discuss a plan of attack for each yard. There are two new yards that have expressed interest in becoming Illinois Green CAR Certified. I will be further discussing certification with both of them and looking for new yards that will benefit from involvement with the program. I believe that every business and every environmental compliance plan has room for improvement. I am interested in learning each certified yard's goals and intricacies so that we can make meaningful improvements. I'd like to thank Michelle and the ATRI Board of Directors again for this wonderful opportunity. I am excited to get started.