



Memorandum

MONTEREY REGIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

DATE: October 27, 2008
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Gary Bales, Director
SUBJECT: Wastecon Conference Summary

During the week of October 21-23, 2008, I attended the SWANA Wastecon Conference in Tampa, Florida. This conference was attended by some 2,500 solid waste professionals with technical presentations, training, and a trade show with 245 vendors spread over a three-day period. This conference is designed to offer education for persons in management of all types of solid waste facilities and to learn about the latest innovations in the field.

This year the theme of the conference was “Reducing Our Carbon Footprint” and “The Energy, Climate, and Solid Waste Connection”. Speakers reported on global warming problems (such as 9 of the last 10 years being the hottest years on record), the impacts of global warming, and changes in oceans impacted by melting ice caps. While there is still some disagreement on causes for global warming, most scientists tend to agree that at least a good part of the problem is man-made due to the burning of fossil fuels.

The waste industry contributes both carbon dioxide and methane from our landfills to the problem. One speaker indicated that the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 3% of the total problem comes from the waste industry. Another speaker indicated that controls in the waste industry may be the most cost effective to start with rather than trying to change our transportation systems.

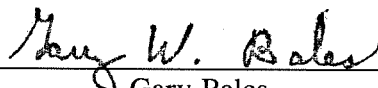
The main points I gained from the presentations I attended are as follows:

1. There is a lot of effort being directed toward reducing carbon footprint and green house gas emissions and these efforts will intensify in the future.
2. There will be increased regulation and control of the waste industry. We will see more reporting requirements and expenses in the future.
3. Many of the future decisions will be based on sustainability, which one speaker defined as decisions made today are good for future generations.
4. There were several presentations on types of activities solid waste facilities like ours can take to make their sites more carbon neutral. I am pleased to report that many of the suggested changes, which would pertain to our operation, have already been made, such as our Gas-to-Energy Program to collect methane gas, our recycling programs, our Last Chance Mercantile, and our Household Hazardous Waste Collection programs. All of these encourage conservation of our resources, and do not create carbon and methane problems.

Some other items for future discussion:

1. We heard several case studies on communities impacted by natural disasters. While these communities were able to cope, they many times lacked markets for waste products generated by the disasters. William has been planning for the District to address these issues in a District Disaster Debris Management Plan.
2. Waste Management, Inc. (WMI) is working on a plan to process fluorescent and CFL bulbs. We are mandated to the extent possible to keep these items out of the landfill. WMI's program of central processing will help with this requirement.
3. In the past, we have had discussions on how to handle Styrofoam. Since it is lightweight and bulky it is not cost effective to process for any useful purpose. There is now a machine which condenses the Styrofoam into small heavy balls of the substance which as I understand can then be more efficiently transported and used for other products. Staff has information on this new machinery.
4. One firm at the trade show was offering communities and waste facilities assistance in reducing their carbon impact. The web site for this firm is www.planetpartnership.com

In all, it was a very informative and useful conference for both me and District staff members who attended. Thank you for allowing me to attend to represent the District.



Gary Bales