WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Columnist: Are you a ´real´ garbage man?

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Art HenSchen | WRN columnist

Nov. 22 -- Do you remember, back in the day, when real garbage men carried around wads of cash (from those roll -off loads) that didn´t hit the books? They sported diamond rings, gold chains, a Rolex, (real or not) and either a Lincoln, Cadillac or a tricked-out pickup.

A real garbage man (to this very day) drives down the alleys when he goes somewhere just to see what the competition looks like. Even on vacation he drags the wife and kids down the alleys in Branson, Orlando, Hollywood or NYC. C´mon, you know it; you drop the wife off in front of the mall and tell her, "I´ll be right in." Yeah, right in after you drive around back and check out the containers!

My son, Aric, who now manages two companies for Allied Waste (Republic) in the Chicago suburbs, was greasing trucks for me when he was 7. His first words were "beeeeg truck!" Now my grandson and I can´t go anywhere that he isn´t shouting from his car seat, "There´s one of Daddy´s trucks! There´s an Allied Waste container!" "Grampa, here comes another garbage truck!" Boo Boo is 4 years old.

A real garbage man gets his kids every truck and container that "Toys R Us" markets. My little guy has a fleet that could handle the city of Chicago if they were all real.

We go to the movie theater and embarrass whoever we are with by shouting, "There´s a garbage truck! Did you see the garbage truck? I think it was one of National´s. Did you see it?" I find it fascinating that in almost every TV show or movie there´s a garbage truck. Or if we are watching a DVD, or something on TiVo, "Back that up! I want to see whose truck that was!" And don´t tell me you don´t strain your eyes to see the decal on every container in the alleys on television.

Back in the day, Christmastime would come around and the real garbage man wouldn´t have enough space in the cab for all the six-packs and bottles of booze the folks would bring out.

Those days are long since gone. Drivers aren´t even allowed to scrap anymore. I remember back in the late ´60s and early ´70s we used to put together enough brass, copper and batteries to make an extra $15 apiece every week. A beer only cost 35 cents then and a pack of smokes was the same. Then around 1975 I think they both went up to 50 cents. I didn´t mind when you could get two beers for a buck. But when they raised it up to 75 cents, now that ticked me off!

A real garbage man used to have "treasures" all around his house. Pictures, lawn mowers, furniture, just about anything you can think of! I was picking up in a ritzy subdivision one day just after Christmas and there was a brand new barbecue grill still in the box sitting curbside. The guy who owned the house was outside shoveling snow, so I yelled at him asking if this was supposed to go. He says, "Yeah, I don´t have the time or desire to put it together!"

There are a million stories of what real garbage men find in the trash. Everything from money, body parts or bodies, jewelry, dirty pictures, live people, dog crap, baseball card collections, wallets, purses, booze. If you can think of it, we´ve found it.

A real garbage man loves his truck. He typically spends anywhere from 10 to 12 hours a day with it. He spends more time with his truck than anything else. A real garbage man takes care of his truck, his fleet, his shop, his customers and his buddies. He is patriotic and hard-working. He knows most of his customers by name, where they live, the dogs´ names and where every hot chick in town lives!

A real garbage man will talk your ear off. He has opinions about every subject imaginable and knows how to resolve any crisis. When it comes to foreign policy, a garbage man has his finger on the trigger and would be more than willing to press the button.

WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Win a garbage hauler for your kid´s birthday

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Oct. 19 -- Advanced Disposal Services Inc. is offering a new service, at least in its Columbia, S.C., market: birthday party entertainment.

The Jacksonville, Fla.-based hauler says it has become "the first waste services company to make birthday wishes come true," with its "Truck on Over to My Birthday Party."

The company is asking Columbia-area parents of 2- to 6-year-olds to submit videos showing why their kids would want an Advanced Disposal truck to visit their birthday parties. The videos will then be posted on YouTube. The video with the most "likes" wins a visit from a garbage truck and driver and a prize package that includes invitations, a personalized hat, food, prizes, games and more.

"We receive calls from parents of children who absolutely adore our garbage trucks and the professionals who pick up their trash each week, and they would ask if we have any garbage-themed giveaways," said Advanced Disposal´s chief marketing officer Mary O'Brien, in a news release. "We invented the ´Truck on Over to My Birthday Party´ contest at the suggestion of our Chief Operating Officer Wally Hall, to give one boy or girl their dream birthday party."

For more info, visit Advanced Disposal´s **Facebook page.**

Contact Waste & Recycling News editor John Campanelli at jcampanelli@crain.com or 313-446-6767.

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WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Update: Composting ´failed´ in Congress; now using WTE

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By Shawn Wright | WRN reporter

Nov. 1 -- Despite "good intentions," the U.S. Congress composting program has "failed."

So Congress has devised a new plan to deal with its waste: Convert it to energy.

Although composting is good in theory, it hasn´t worked in practice, said Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Calif. And with a waste-to-energy program, the rest of Congress´ waste won´t have to be landfilled, as was done in recent years.

"There was really no win-win-win on it," Lungren said. "We were looking for ways to save money, but also do a more efficient job of reducing landfill à and we thought this showed real promise."

One reason composting failed, Lungren said, was it cost too much. Congress was spending nearly $500,000 a year to ship food scraps about 70 miles away, and higher fuel prices made the effort untenable.

The new program will save about $60,000 annually, he said.

Under a deal which begins in November, about 5,300 tons of Congress´ annual trash will be sent to waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities in Virginia. The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) agency has entered into a contract that will divert up to 90% of the U.S. Capitol Complex´s solid waste from landfills.

The waste will be shipped to nearby incinerators and used to fuel generators that will produce electricity for the Capitol´s power grid, which the AOC said will generate enough electricity to power an office building the size of the Dirksen Senate Office Building or the Longworth House Office Building for several months.

The decision to send waste from congressional facilities to waste-to-energy plants instead of landfills was based on an analysis

conducted by the AOC´s Office of Energy and Sustainability, with direction from the Committee on House Administration (CHA).

"We had a report that showed the failure of the composting program that had been utilized, and that had been recognized on a bipartisan basis," said Lungren, who oversees the AOC as CHA chairman.

When the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives in January, Lungren said they asked the Democrats what changes they would make.

"And one of the subsequent recommendations they made was to get rid of the composting program because it had failed, despite all good intentions," he said.

Because composting only dealt with about 10% of the Capitol´s waste -- about 535 tons a year -- Congress sought a more comprehensive waste program.

"We thought we´d expand it beyond [composting] and see if we could come to some alternative," Lungren said. "One of the things that came on our radar screen was the waste-to-energy program that, when you do a little research on it, actually is being recommended by the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. EPA and a number of different government agencies when they look at it objectively."

Under the new contract, Washington-based Urban Service Systems will be collecting the waste and will transport it to Covanta Energy Corp.´s WTE plants in Virginia, said Eva Malecki, communications officer for the AOC.

In metropolitan Washington, there are three Covanta WTE facilities that can process a combined 3,000 tons of waste per day and can generate up to 23 megawatts of energy that is sold to Dominion Virginia Power Co.

"We were looking at what we need to do to maintain the [Capitol] campus and take care of the needs here, and one of those things is waste disposal," Malecki said. "We look at the various options and look at what makes the most sense for our customer and the taxpayer."

The contract stipulates that the waste must be burned within 50 miles of the Capitol complex, which also puts forthcoming facilities in Maryland as possible destinations for Congress' trash. Maryland has three WTE projects under development or already permitted for construction, according to the Washington-based Environmental Integrity Project (EIP).

"Maryland does not want Congress' trash," Mike Tidwell, director of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, said during a conference call. "Maryland doesn't generate enough trash, really, to sustain all these plants. They're being developed and considered as a regional center for trash combustion. We would just prefer ... that Congress do better at recycling and that we not get trash from the District of Columbia or surrounding areas."

Malecki said Capitol Hill already has a "very robust recycling program."

According to the AOC's 2010 Sustainability, Energy and Water Conservation Management Report, 738 tons of waste was recycled in fiscal year 2008, a 45% increase from fiscal year 2005.

"This doesn't remove any of that from this process; it just takes the waste that we can't recycle and takes it to the waste-to-energy facility," Malecki said.

Contact Waste & Recycling News reporter Shawn Wright at swright@crain.com or 313-446-0346.

WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Solar landfill covers gain ground

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By Jim Johnson | WRN senior reporter

Oct. 17 -- A new solar power system covering a landfill near Atlanta has Tony Walker hopeful for a green future.

The system, which started producing electricity earlier this month at the Hickory Ridge landfill, is the second such project for Republic Services Inc., which capped 45 acres of disposal space with a geomembrane cover that includes 10 acres of solar power cells soaking up all that Georgia sun.

As a point man for Republic Services' solar power projects, Walker sees the potential to greatly expand the use of solar power systems on landfill sites -- both open and closed.

"There's about 100,000 closed landfills in the U.S. and doing something like this, a renewable energy project à it makes a lot of sense and it's good for the community. It really changes the image a little bit of the landfills," said Walker, an engineering manager with Republic Services.

A 60-mil geomembrane cover encompasses the 45-acre site, keeping it sealed from the elements. Nearly 7,000 solar panels are then deployed over that cover on the south and east portions of the project site.

As the largest solar power project at a landfill in the world – and one of the largest in Georgia – the site will generate one megawatt of electricity, enough juice to power about 224 homes, the company said.

That's about 10 times larger than Republic Services' first solar power project at its Tessman Road landfill in San Antonio, which began operating in 2009.

Carlisle Energy Services Inc., which made the solar cover system for Republic Services, also teamed up with Madison County, N.Y., to install a system on its municipal landfill there earlier this year.

The scope of the Georgia project, said Carlisle's Arthur Mohr Jr., presented both challenges and opportunities.

"That's what makes this so special, the scope, the size of the program," he said.

Now that the project is completed, Carlisle points to the landfill as proof that a large-scale solar effort can take place at landfills.

"We feel bullish on this business. We think the business is an exceptional opportunity for our company," Mohr said. "It certainly is true that we're building momentum. We have a number of projects in the pipeline."

Republic Services received a $2 million federal stimulus money grant through the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority to expand the scope of the Hickory Ridge project, which was once envisioned to be half its eventual size. The $5 million project in Conley, Ga., took 14 months to complete.

Republic Services actually once owned the technology being used by Carlisle Energy Services, but transferred the business in 2010 to help expand its use beyond the company.

"Basically we wanted to share this with the industry," Walker said. "We thought it was a benefit not just to us, but for the entire solid waste group. We are a big believer that these kinds of projects work. Finding additional uses for landfill in the long term is ideal."

Not every landfill capping project will be a viable candidate for a solar-power cap. Locations with access to large amounts of dirt to help seal the disposal site probably still will use conventional methods, he said.

But in the case of Hickory Ridge landfill, the company would have had to truck in large amounts of dirt at great cost to adequately close the facility. That made the cost of installing the special membrane cover and solar panels more financially attractive, Walker said.

Along with solid waste disposal sites, Carlisle also is considering the potential of using its geomembrane cover and solar panels at fly ash and industrial waste landfills, Mohr said.

"It´s exciting; there´s no doubt about that," he said.

Electricity created by the solar panels is being sold on a wholesale basis to Georgia Power.

Mohr described Georgia as a laggard as far as solar power development is concerned, so the project will give the utility company and state officials familiarity with the technology as well as Carlisle´s landfill cover material, he said.

Republic Services´ future use of solar covers at other landfills will be determined on a case-by-case basis, Walker said. The company does not have specific plans in the works for any particular site.

Contact Waste & Recycling News senior reporter Jim Johnson at jpjohnson@crain.com or 937-964-1289.

WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Nyloboard decking gives new life to recycled carpet

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By Mike Verespej | PLASTICS NEWS STAFF

Nov. 17 -- After a year of transition, Nyloboard LLC hopes to roll out its decking that is made from 100% recycled carpet fibers into major distribution markets in 2012.

"We spent much of the year modifying our process to become much more efficient so that we could become more competitive and be able to produce much more volume," said Kevin Guthard, vice president of operations for the Covington, Ga., company, in an interview at Deck Expo in Chicago in mid-October.

He said the company -- which had originally expected to start that rollout this year -- decided to change the manufacturing process at its 200,000 square foot plant in Covington so that it could use loose fill carpet fibers because it significantly lowers manufacturing costs.

"The challenge has mostly been in manufacturing," Guthard said. "We had to travel across the globe to make sure we have right technology" and equipment for manufacturing. "We have added substantial equipment" that will allow the company to sell NyloDeck at a much more competitive price, he said.

The company is selling NyloDeck, NyloTrim and NyloSheet in "limited amounts" and only in Hawaii, California and the Southeast, Guthard said. The decking comes in three colors: caramel, cocoa and American gray.

Guthard expects a boost when the company receives AC 174 certification for deck boards, guards and handrails -- most likely by yearend -- from ICC Evaluation Services, a subsidiary of the International Code Council.

He expects NyloDeck to be "a niche product starting out," with particular appeal to coastal, water, and marine environments.

But Guthard believes NyloDeck has an advantage compared to other alternative decking products because it has a hardwood-like appearance, as well as a natural resistance to mildew and water because it is made from 100 percent carpet fiber and bonding resins that are free from volatile organic compounds.

"It will appeal to people in those environments and to anyone who appreciates the idea of diverting carpeting from a landfill," Guthard said. "It is impervious to moisture and water because there is no wood in the product."

He also argued that NyloDeck has an edge in installation because the mounting system is the structural system it will be attached to ù whether that is metal, steel, or wood. "The fiber itself has all the strength to hold the screw. You just put the screw in and you get the adhesion you need."

Guthard didn't make any projection for 2012 sales.

"We haven't set our goals for next year," he said. "But we want to create awareness of the product and get it into the hands of people."

The 7-year-old company shifted into decking products three years ago when there was a dramatic drop in demand of more than 90 percent for its marine products -- 8-by-20 foot sheets -- that were used for hulls and to make cabinets on yachts because of their water-resistance and lightweight nature.

NyloDeck comes with a 30-year limited warranty and uses a proprietary ultraviolet coating for fade-resistance. It can be installed with conventional building tools and performs much like wood products in finishing and fabrication,

In addition to decking, the company also offers exterior trim, soffit, fascia, and signs and sheathing that can be used for wall panels, flooring and roof applications, in trucks, trailers and recreational vehicles where rot-resistant is important, and in the marine industry as a core material for floors, covers, seats, and reinforcing points where compression and screw retention are critical.

WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Natures Composites using milk jugs in composite decking

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By Mike Verespej | PLASTICS NEWS STAFF

Nov. 17 -- A Wyoming company is betting that a product made from recycled milk jugs reinforced with wheat straw cellulose will help them gain a niche in the crowded composite decking market -- where the top 10 companies account for roughly 95% of sales.

"The market's been soft, but next year is looking much better," said Kim Boos, national sales and marketing manager for Natures Composites in Torrington, Wyo., in an interview at Deck Expo in Chicago in mid-October. "We are priced 15-20% less than traditional wood-plastic composites, and we have a green story that resonates with people."

TerraDeck decking has been on the market for about 18 months -- or ever since the investment group RRM Composites LLC, which does business as Natures Composites, bought the factory of Heartland BioComposites nine months after Heartland went bankrupt and closed its doors when it defaulted on loans of more than $5 million.

Natures Composites Vice President Heath Van Eaton was president and founder of Heartland BioComposites and developed the process for the composite lumber, decking and fencing products first made by Heartland.

Natures Composites decking products recently received ICC-ESR176 building certification from ICC Evaluation Services, a subsidiary of the International Code Council.

TerraDeck comes in three grades: standard, premium and ultimate. Ultimate is a coextruded product, with a capstock made from a blend of high density polyethylene and engineered polymers. All three grades of the decking are made from 94% recycled content and 6% non-toxic adhesive.

Mike Verespej is a reporter for Plastics News, a sister publication of Waste & Recycling News.

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WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Study: Energy from plastics going to waste in landfills

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Oct. 19 -- A study by Columbia University scientists found that plastic waste in landfills can power 5.2 million U.S. homes.

The study, titled "Energy and Economic Value of Non-Recycled Plastics (NRP) and Municipal Solid Wastes (MSW) That Are Currently Landfilled in the Fifty States," reports that 6.5% of the used plastics generated in the U.S. are recycled while 7.7% are "combusted with energy recovery."

Meanwhile, 85.8% of used plastics end up in a landfill.

About 28.8 million tons of NRP was landfilled in 2008, which is equivalent to 36.7 million tons of coal or 139 million barrels of oil, the study reported.

If all of the NRP landfilled each year was used as fuel in "specially designed power plants," the electricity generated could power 5.2 million homes and cut U.S. coal use by nearly 34 million tons, the study said.

Contact Waste & Recycling News reporter Vince Bond Jr. at vbond@crain.com or 313-446-1653.

WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Best Buy eliminates e-waste collection fee

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Nov. 11 -- Best Buy Co. Inc. announced that it has eliminated the $10 recycling fee for electronic items collected through its nationwide in-store recycling program.

Consumers can now drop off items with screens up to 32 inches for tube televisions and 60 inches for flat-panel televisions, free of charge. In addition to televisions, the in-store recycling program includes computer monitors, DVD players, audio and video cables, cell phones and other electronics.

The company collected 83 million pounds of electronics in 2010 and wants to collect more than 1 billion pounds of electronics by the end of 2014.

Best Buy said it only works with certified third-party electronics recyclers, which must carry either the R2 or eStewards certification. For more information on the company's recycling program, visit Best Buy **online.**

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WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

Bet on landfill near Las Vegas being No. 1 again

By John Campanelli | WRN editor

Nov. 21 -- About 30 miles northeast of the Las Vegas strip, tucked inside a desert valley far away from civilization, sits Republic Services Inc.'s Apex Regional Landfill. It is the Atlanta airport of the nation's municipal solid waste landfills: the busiest, by far.

At its peak, in 2006, with growth and the economy rolling sevens in Vegas, Apex took in almost 500 tons of waste an hour, every hour, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for an annual total of 4.15 million tons.

After a dip to 2.25 million tons annually and a drop to No. 3 in last year's installment of the Waste & Recycling News' list of largest landfills, the 2,200-acre behemoth is back atop the rankings, which are based on tonnage numbers for 2010.

Apex buried 3.34 million tons of municipal solid waste in 2010, more than a million tons more than the No. 2 landfill, in Newton County, Ind.

Apex General Manager Mark Clinker said he thinks the improving economy and clean-up projects around Las Vegas helped Apex retake the top spot.

"I guess we just quietly had a really decent year in 2010," said Clinker. "I can't put my finger on any one thing."

Numbers so far in 2011 are down slightly from 2010, and Apex is on track to landfill just less than 3 million tons this year, Clinker said. He says the dip is partly due to expanded recycling programs in the Las Vegas area. The years when the landfill brought in more than 4 million tons are over, at least for now, he added.

Whatever the volume, there's room for it. The facility, built in 1993, has room for another 250 years of garbage. It might be the perfect landfill, said Clinker.

"When they sited this facility, I think they gave a lot of forethought to locating in an area where it's really isolated," said Clinker. "We have 2,200 acres; it has its own exit on the highway. I think they sited it for the long term. It's good geologically. We'll never have neighbor impacts."

Being in the middle of the desert, groundwater is 700 feet below the Earth's surface. Couple that with minimal leachate (Vegas gets about 4 inches of rain a year) and "we'll never have an impact on the environment from that standpoint," said Clinker.

Still, the landfill isn't entirely perfect, Clinker added. Wind and dust are a chronic annoyance.

Apex's hot and unforgiving conditions have made it a favorite place for landfill-equipment manufacturers to test their new products.

"This is a pretty good proving ground," said Clinker. "We put a lot of hours on [equipment] pretty quickly if that's what your goal is."

Compactor manufacturers turn their prototypes loose in the heat and sun at Apex and then take the equipment apart to see how it performed.

Also, with more than 50 million tons of trash already buried, the landfill produces a lot of methane, and a new landfill-gas-to-energy plant is under construction, with completion set for as early as the first quarter of 2012. Once complete, the 10 megawatt plant will produce enough electricity to power about 9,000 homes, said Clinker.

Because Apex is the largest landfill in America, it's become an attraction, and Clinker's staff is happy to welcome school groups, rotary clubs, and visitors who have already hit the casinos, Hoover Dam and the Valley of Fire.

Converting waste into renewable resources

The Southern California Conversion Technology Demonstration Project

The County of Los Angeles is preparing to revolutionize the way we think of waste through the adoption of conversion technologies. These technologies encompass a variety of processes that convert normal household trash into renewable energy, biofuels and other useful products.

Approximately 135,000 tons of trash are sent to landfills in California every day. Los Angeles County is a leader in preserving the environment and protecting public health through a variety of innovative environmental programs. The County is involved in a diverse approach to waste management through our waste reduction, reuse, and recycling programs. In order to diversify our approach and assure the proper management of solid waste for over 10 million residents in Los Angeles County over the long term, the County is promoting the development of conversion technologies to turn post-recycled, residual solid waste into electricity, green fuel, and other useful products. With landfill space dwindling and the need for recovered energy, fuels and products, Southern California needs a variety of waste management solutions.

The County of Los Angeles recognizes these challenges and is working to address them head on. While this website focuses on the County's conversion technology project, for more information about the County's other environmental programs, please visit www.CleanLA.com and Green.LACounty.gov.

Through the Southern California Conversion Technology Demonstration Project, the County will strive to:

- Educate Californians about our solid waste challenges
- Support those organizations working toward a zero-waste future
- Evaluate and promote the development of the most promising conversion technologies to recover energy, products and other benefits from our waste
- Work with communities in Southern California to create a demonstration conversion technology facility

County Releases RFEI's for financial and technological services

Deadline for Responses Extended to August, 11, 2011.

As part of our information gathering efforts for Phase IV, the County released two Requests for Expression of Interest (RFEIs) to technology providers and financial firms. We encourage qualified firms to submit. Links are below:

- Los Angeles County RFEI Technology Providers
- Los Angeles County RFEI Financial Services
- RFEI Financial Supplemental Information (new)

Please click here for the Summary of Questions and Answers **(updated July 27, 2011)**

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