

CRA Annual Recycling Conference Coming to Charleston



The annual CRA conference is just a few short weeks away and there is a full agenda of sessions, workshops, tours and receptions waiting for attendees. This year's conference at the North Charleston Convention Center runs March 29 through April 1 and will bring the recycling communities of North and South Carolina to the Charleston area for the first time.

The conference kicks off Tuesday, March 29th with morning and afternoon tours of area of residential and commercial material recovery facilities, Charleston County's new pilot food and yard waste composting facility, as well as tours of local college recycling programs at the Medical University of South Carolina and the Citadel. Those looking to mix some networking and time out on the Green are encouraged to sign up for the 5th annual CRA Golf Classic at the Patriots Point Links on Charleston Harbor. The day will end with the annual CRA business meeting followed by the opening reception with exhibitors.

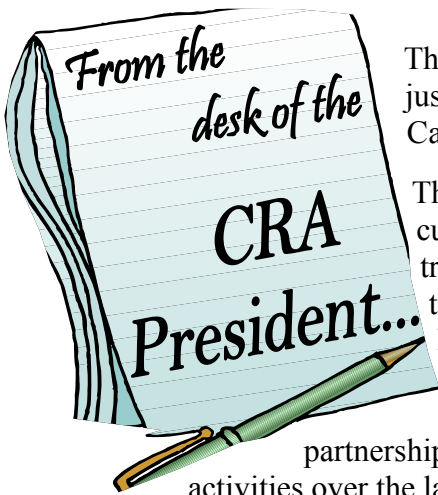
Wednesday, Thursday and Friday morning will include a full program of technical sessions. In between Wednesday's opening and closing sessions ("Recycling: Looking Forward" in the morning, "State and Local Perspectives" in the afternoon), will be two sets of breakout sessions covering commercial sector recycling, composting, collegiate recycling, C&D recovery, and glass recycling among other topics. Following Thursday's opening plenary on "Recycling Markets", breakout sessions will focus on electronics, education tools to increase participation, food scraps from campus dining facilities and linking participation to collection services. Thursday's program ends with a closing session on "What's New in Packaging". The conference will close out Friday morning with two general sessions back to back on plastics recycling and recycling beyond the Carolina's.

Of course there is a full slate of activities outside of the session halls as well. The expo hall will invite attendees to visit over 70 exhibitors during session breaks and evening receptions on Tuesday and Wednesday. A silent auction will be held Wednesday and Thursday in the expo hall. Following the CRA Town Hall meeting and exhibitor reception on Wednesday evening downtown Charleston beckons with a host of restaurants offering special discounts for conference attendees. Thursday evening will again draw folks downtown for an offsite party on the waterfront at the City of Charleston's Maritime Center. Finally those sticking around through Friday afternoon are encouraged to join us out Kiawah Island for a special CRA tour of the resort's sustainability initiatives and a scenic kayak paddle around the island's natural areas.

For full the conference schedule and to register visit <http://www.cra2011.org/>.

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The Carolina Recycling Association's 21st Annual Conference and Trade Show is just around the corner. The CRA is pleased to bring our conference to the South Carolina Lowcountry for the first time.

The CRA Conference Planning Committee worked diligently to prepare a vibrant curriculum covering recycling successes, obstacles, opportunities and more. Our trade show will once again feature the latest in products, services and technologies that help our industry become more effective and efficient. We hope that our conference serves our members well by highlighting the significant economic impact of our industry in the Carolinas, opportunities for growth and continuous improvement, and the need for ongoing dialogue and partnerships between the public and private sectors. To celebrate the success of the CRA activities over the last year and looking forward to the next, please plan on coming to the CRA Party on the Harbor Thursday evening. This is a first time, special event for CRA that you won't want to miss.

Even as we celebrate our successes, there are challenges facing us in the year ahead. Last year Florida repealed the ban on the disposal of yard trimmings in landfills. Currently Georgia is considering similar legislation. There seems to be an argument that the creation of methane is an alternative energy source. We have long developed methodology and practice for the capture and beneficial use of landfill gas. I have installed and operated a landfill gas system myself. But the intentional addition of material to create more landfill gas? I thought we were managing it because of its threat to our environment. Our long established hierarchy could be threatened by such thinking.

There also seems to be a resurgence of the promotion of plasma arc, waste to diesel, RTF, and other methods to turn garbage into gold. Our supply of fiber and plastic is seriously threatened by these technologies seeking the potential energy content. This may be a reasonable approach for materials at the end of life, but if an item can be recycled, it has another life. If we burn or gasify for energy; that is the last time we will take advantage of the material. And the CO₂ will be released to the atmosphere. Doesn't seem to be a sound practice to me. This could become a larger threat to our industry than the recent recession driven budget cuts.

In recycling, as in life, we should always strive to bring the important lessons of history to our future plans and activities. Hence, Everything Old is New Again. I look forward to seeing all of you at the conference as we network, learn, plan and influence issues affecting recycling in both states.

Will Sagar
Will Sagar, CRA President



"CRA Connections"...coming soon to a facility near you!

CRA is pleased to announce that, thanks to grant support from the International Paper Foundation, this summer's round of **CRA Connections** will be held at paper recovery facilities across the Carolinas. The purpose of the grant is to enable CRA members to help build relationships and foster the advancement of paper recovery in the Carolinas. Meetings will be held during the afternoon, and will include facility tours followed by networking receptions.

Stay tuned to CRA's weekly newsletter for upcoming dates and locations.





BMW Manufacturing Co.



Perspectives

On the Ground

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Carolina Recycling Association.

Is it for real?

A lot of things, people, companies and causes are taking on a 'green sheen' these days and it's not easy to know who's telling the truth and who is just in it for that other green. One arena that has to concern all recyclers is the re-appearance (not a typo) of the black box salesmen or, as I put it to President Will, those who are selling an elixir designed to cure our ills. In this case it's primarily the illness of solid waste, which is actually a symptom of the disease of overconsumption.

Like a lot of elixirs, it's not obvious that these black boxes will work but the high volume of intoxicant often contained in elixirs to mask the bitter taste of the medicine can lead one to believe that one is truly being cured. The intoxicant in this case is the excitement of possibly getting something for nothing, or at least for less than the cost of the current solutions. Anyone working in local or state government knows that the budget axe, sharp or not is swinging wildly this season and many of the programs we've worked hard to build over years may be in jeopardy.

Over the past year I have reviewed up close and personally the sales pitches of two black box makers. One is the plasma arc from Dr. Lou Circeo of the Georgia Institute of Technology, known in these parts as Georgia Tech. Dr. Circeo has been working on this plasma arc for converting waste to energy for 38 years, since 1973. In another two years he will have been working for as long as Moses led the children of Israel towards the Promised Land. His promising technology has been showing promise but no results

for converting regular old MSW to a net output of energy and an inert slag at any kind of reasonable cost and any net energy output. A delegation from my County visited his lab in 1995 and in 2010, he showed essentially the same work again to the County's Solid Waste Advisory Board. We'll see if a 1,000 ton a day plant in Florida breaks ground this

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year as promised. In the meantime, a number of local officials in our area have gotten very excited about this technology and suddenly there is less emphasis on traditional solutions and less money for good ole' recycling. Last summer I endured a heated pitch from the fervid salespeople of Energy Inc. a company trying to gasify waste and make a combustible gas and a char that they claim has market value. After seeing them in Greensboro I hear they went on east and have been working hard to establish what I believe would be their first full scale plant somewhere in NC. I read in November 2010 in the Indiana Economic Journal they were set to break ground on a plant in Elkhart, Indiana to build the equipment for plants in NC, but then I heard nothing further.

A little ways southeast of here, in Wilmington, NC, another group, R-3, brought their version of the modern cure for solid waste ills to New Hanover County's Board. Build a dirty MRF that picks recyclables out of the waste making a boiler fuel product on the back end and that will end the need for source separated recycling, eliminate dependence on landfills and do all at a lower cost than using the current waste to energy plant. After the County signed the papers, R-3, which has no prior experience in solid waste, seems to be moving away from their commitment to build a facility. We will know by the time of the CRA Conference if they are going to make good on their promise to the County. The City of Wilmington wisely hedged its bet, saying it would

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not give up curbside recycling until at least two years after R-3 had proven itself. The State issued a letter last fall stating its concerns about a few pesky details like asking for evidence of financial assurance, financial qualifications, environmental compliance and a facilities and operations plan. The County agreed to take on financial surety for the R-3 project's first phase based on their full faith and credit while the RDF plant is a second phase that has not yet been assured. The County can't transfer its liability for the landfill or the WTE anyway. So much for risk-taking developers.

At another end of the State in Charlotte/Mecklenburg, a rather large project entitled ReVenture is just about supposed to be about to get underway, undergirded by triple renewable energy credits that were negotiated with the State. Triple the credits that one should get for a single renewable energy project have been supposed to have helped this one over the top, not that there is any apparent reason to award three times the credit for a single project. Without these credits, my source says, this project would not fly financially.

For almost 30 years Charlotte and Mecklenburg County have been building up their recycling programs using innovative partnerships like the one with FCR (their MRF operators), been at the cutting edge of developing new services at convenience centers to enable citizens to recycle more items, enacting the first ban in NC on landfilling office paper, and in the midst of this comes a gigantic project that may upend the whole future of waste reduction and recycling in that region. At its heart is a solid waste gassifier with a dirty MRF on the front end that promises to extract 10% to 15% of recyclable metal and plastic before making a combustible gas for burning to make heat and electricity. The project has changed direction and scope since it began, reducing its size 60% to 20 megawatts from the initial 49, and changing the technology from making a pellet fuel to a gasification method which even one of its key technical advisors states has been 'piloted but not proven'.

It seems that every five to ten years, a slew of these type projects and operators appear on the solid waste scene, get everyone excited about a new approach to making garbage disappear and then leave in a puff of smoke with no new facilities getting built. Each time these black boxers show up, there is one unfortunate result -- recycling and waste reduction programs suffering neglect in the rush to embrace these ultimate solutions. We know some truths after twenty plus years into the modern era of recycling and we, as committed recyclers, have to continue to raise these truths and make the public, elected officials and businesses aware of them. They will continue to be true as long as there is stuff that needs to get recycled. A big stack of black boxes cannot make them disappear.

1. Recycling and waste reduction are sound business practices that will improve a company's bottom line.
2. Recycling is good for the planet: it reduces energy use, water use, and pressure on natural resources of all kinds.
3. Recycled feedstocks are cost effective, in high demand, and their procurement creates jobs. The recent spate of plastics recycling facilities need a lot more material than they're getting right now. Far too much is being landfilled while these plants seek other sources of materials.

One cannot readily say those things about any other waste management technique. We don't say it publicly loud enough and clearly enough. Come to the CRA's Town Hall on Wednesday March 30 from 5 to 7 pm and let's figure out together how to talk productively with our communities about these new and unproven waste management techniques and how the fate of recycling programs will be affected by them.

Blair Pollock is a Solid Waste Planner with Orange County (NC) Solid Waste Management.

Grant Opportunities

It's Never "Bin" Easier...To Recycle!

The Coca-Cola/KAB Recycling Bin Grant Program supports local community recycling programs by providing bins to selected grant recipients for the collection of beverage container recyclables in public settings. Grants will be provided to a limited number of applicants who can demonstrate how their proposals will lead to sustainable recycling opportunities. The grant program is open to governments, civic organizations, schools, non-profit groups. Applications are available on-line at www.bingrant.org. The application period runs through March 18, 2011.

To learn more about Keep America Beautiful, The Coca-Cola Company, or Coca-Cola Recycling, please visit their websites:

Keep America Beautiful: www.kab.org

The Coca-Cola Company: www.thecoca-colacompany.com

Coca-Cola Recycling LLC: www.cokerecycling.com



EPA Environmental Education Grant Funding

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is accepting grant applications for \$1.9 million in funding for environmental education projects and programs. The purpose of the grants is to promote environmental stewardship and help develop knowledgeable and responsible students, teachers and citizens. EPA expects to award at least 20 grants nationwide ranging from a minimum of \$15,000 to a maximum of \$100,000 and will accept applications until May 2, 2011.

The grants provide financial support for innovative projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Projects should involve environmental education activities that go beyond disseminating information.

EPA will be hosting two conference calls for potential applicants interested in additional information about the application process. The conference calls will take place on March 21, 2011

at 11 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) and April 6 at 2 p.m. (EDT). To participate in the conference calls, dial: 1-866-379-5082, and use conference ID number: 48699133 for the call on March 21. Use conference ID number: 48696117 for the call on April 6.

The Environmental Education Grant Program provides funding to local education agencies, state education or environmental agencies, colleges or universities, not-for-profit organizations, or noncommercial educational broadcasting entities. Tribal education agencies, which are controlled by an Indian tribe, band or nation, may also apply, including a school or community college.

Since the program began, EPA has provided more than \$50 million in funding to more than 3,000 agencies and organizations.

More information on eligibility and application materials can be found at

<http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html>

NC Study Shows Strong Growth in Recycling Jobs

Recycling businesses continue to show strong growth in recycling jobs in the state despite the effects of the recent recession according to a newly-released study by the North Carolina Recycling Business Assistance Center.

The study's major findings include:

- There are currently almost 15,200 private sector recycling-related jobs in North Carolina.
- Private sector recycling jobs have increased 4.8 percent since 2008.
- The total annual payroll for North Carolina recycling businesses is \$395 million.
- Forty-eight percent of recycling businesses surveyed anticipate creating more jobs during the next two years.
- Twenty-five percent of businesses surveyed report

- manufacturing a product using recycled materials.
- Recycling businesses target a wide variety of recyclables for collection, processing or use in manufacturing. No single recycling commodity dominates the market.

This study is a follow-up to previous studies conducted by RBAC in 1994, 2000, 2004 and 2008 demonstrating the ongoing contribution of recycling to the state's economic growth.

A complete copy of the 2010 Employment Trends in N.C.'s Recycling Industry study can be found online at <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/53/52107.pdf>

For more information about the study, contact Sherry Yarkosky by [email](#) or at 919.542.4722.



SC Legislative Day Update

Over 330 participants, representing South Carolina's recycling businesses and industry, manufacturers, haulers, non-profits, and local government attended the 4th Annual Recycling Industry Legislative Day event at the SC Statehouse on March 9, 2011. The day began with a press conference outlining the extensive impact of South Carolina's recycling industry, after which attendees were able to meet one-on-one with their legislators and speak with them about the importance of recycling as an economic driver, job creator, and source of feedstock for local businesses. In addition the Southeast Recycling Development Council presented the findings of a two-year study that maps the demand for recycled feedstock and the growth potential of the industry on a state-by-state basis.

Thank you to the hosting and sponsoring organizations for helping make the event a success:

Carolina Recycling Association

Coca-Cola Consolidated

Ever-Green Recycling

Leigh Fibers

Mumford Industries

OmniSource

Recycling Market Development Advisory Council (RMDAC)

SC Recycling Industry Group (RIG)

Carolina Waste Solutions, Inc.

D&W Fine Pack

Horry County Solid Waste Authority

Michelin

New Carolina

Pratt Industries

Sonoco Recycling

Southeastern Paper Recovery, Inc.

NC Solid Waste Management Report Update

The North Carolina Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach (DEAO) has completed work on the state's Solid Waste and Materials Management Report for Fiscal Year 2009-10. Data from this period reveals that important progress is being made in improving the recovery of recyclable materials from North Carolina's waste stream. Local government recycling programs are responding to the economics of disposal and to state disposal bans by starting and expanding recovery programs and by delivering more recovered materials into the state's growing materials economy. The following are some of the key findings and highlights from the information compiled by DEAO in this year's report:

- During FY2009-10 the recovery of traditional recyclable materials increased compared to previous years, and the proportion of materials recovered and returned to the economy compared to disposal was the highest on record. The ratio of recycling to disposal jumped to an all-time high of 0.14 during FY09-10. This ratio is used to examine the success of materials recovery from year to year when compared to disposal, and is determined by comparing the amount of materials recovered by local governments to the amount of total waste disposal during any one year.
- The disposal bans on plastic bottles, oil filters, and wooden pallets that became effective on October 1, 2009 contributed significantly to the implementation of recovery programs and led to the highest recovery of oil filters and plastic bottles on record. Plastic bottle recovery increased by 22% over the previous year, resulting in the sharpest gain in plastics recovery measured during the last ten years. Oil filter

recovery and the number of local government operated oil filter recovery programs both increased dramatically, with a 65% increase in the number of programs and a 160% increase in the tons of oil filters collected.

- Publically operated curbside recycling programs experienced significant growth for the second year in a row, climbing to 259 programs from 214 the previous year. This continues last year's reversal of a decreasing trend in the number of units served that ran from 1998 to 2007. The number of households served by curbside recycling in North Carolina grew to 1.62 million, up from 1.52 million during FY 08-09. Over a third or 37.9% of households in the state have access to curbside recycling service.
- Market prices for recyclable materials were strong through FY2009-10, and have thoroughly rebounded from the dramatic drop experienced in late 2008 that was brought on by onset of the economic recession. Prices rose for most commodities through the course of FY10 before declining slightly toward the end of the fiscal year. Spring 2010 was a high water mark for the whole range of materials with a doubling or greater of prices for steel cans, PET, newsprint, and mixed paper from the beginning of the year.

For more information on recycling in North Carolina please see the [Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach](#) web site. For more information on the findings in the Solid Waste and Materials Management Report for Fiscal Year 2009-10, please contact DEAO employees [Scott Mouw](#) or [Rob Taylor](#).



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