WASTECON 2003
Awards Luncheon
Mid-Atlantic Honors

At WASTECON 2003, several SWANA Mid-Atlantic Chapter members/organizations were recognized:

Anne Germain, Delaware Solid Waste Authority – for service as the Landfill Management Division Director

Newland Park Landfill, Department of Public Works, Salisbury, Maryland – Bronze Award for Landfill Management Excellence

Shady Grove Transfer Station Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, Derwood, Maryland— Silver Award for Transfer Station Excellence

In addition to these awards, two Mid-Atlantic members were presented with individual achievement awards:

Lanny Hickman, “Solid Waste Guru”— Professional Achievement Award for Life Member

N.C. Yasski, CEO & General Manager, Delaware Solid Waste Authority—Robert Lawrence Lecturer Award

Congratulations!
Tropical Storm 2003

By John O’Hare

This month marks a notable milestone for the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. It was on November 29, 1983 that the Chapter held its first Board of Directors’ meeting. As SWANA has grown, so has the Mid-Atlantic Chapter. The fledgling chapter started out with 18 members from 6 counties, Baltimore City, 2 private firms and Johns Hopkins University. Compare that to a current membership of 210 representing 27 jurisdictions (counties, cities, and towns), 32 private firms, 8 organizations, and 2 universities.

It all started back in April 1983 when Lanny Hickman, the Executive Director of the Governmental Refuse Collection and Disposal Association (GRDCA), which we now know as SWANA, sent a letter to the GRDCA’s at-large members in Maryland soliciting interest in forming a local chapter. Eight GRDCA members responded, and the first organizational meeting was held on June 10, 1983 at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in New Carrollton. A follow-up meeting on July 7 chaired by Lanny Hickman resulted in the formation of organizational and membership committees. It was at this meeting that the decision was made to establish a mid-Atlantic chapter with geographic boundaries encompassing Maryland, Delaware, and Washington D.C. The first order of business was to prepare a chapter constitution and bylaws, and to begin a membership drive.

One more chapter formation meeting was held on October 20 after GRDCA’s regional “Solid Waste ’83 Expo” held at the New Carrollton Sheraton, at which the first slate of chapter officers was approved, including Steve Lippy, President (Baltimore County); George Winfield, Vice President (Baltimore City); and Bradley Hilton, Secretary/Treasurer (Montgomery County). Membership on the newly formed Board of Directors included George Dickens, Prince George’s County; Parker Andrews, Anne Arundel County; Ellen Bogardus, SCS Engineers; and Lee Steiner, EMCON Associates.

Steve reminisced how Lanny worked to persuade the at-large members present to volunteer for officer positions in the new chapter. “People quickly volunteered to lead up committees, and take on other jobs, but no one was volunteering to be President or Vice President. I looked at George Winfield, and he looked at me, and I said I’ll be President if you’ll be vice president.” And the rest is history, as the reluctant first president went on to become a Charter Life Member, International Director, and most recently recipient of SWANA’s Professional Achievement Award in 2002.

The Chapter was formally established at the first Board of Directors’ Meeting held on November 29 with new chapter president Steve Lippy presiding. At this meeting, the constitution, bylaws, and petition for chapter status were signed and given to Lanny Hickman. Committees were formed and the format of the first chapter technical session was decided. The new chapter was granted “provisional” status by GRDCA International Headquarters in December 1983, followed a year later with acceptance of the Chapter Constitution and Affiliation Agreement.

Board of Directors’ meetings were held monthly during early 1984, as the new officers worked hard to accomplish a number of “firsts.” Steve prepared and distributed a “State of the Chapter Address” in January and prepared the first Chapter newsletter in April. The Chapter’s first technical meeting was held on April 19, 1984. The program was “Safety in Solid Waste – Making it Work” and was attended by over 60 people. As of May, Chapter membership had increased to 66. The Chapter held its first annual business meeting on August 10, 1984 and later that month 8 chapter members attended GRDCA’s International Convention in Orlando, Florida. It was at this convention that the Chapter’s three flags (one each for Maryland, Delaware, and the District of Columbia) were presented and paraded in the convention banquet.

The chapter is presently on a solid financial footing, but that wasn’t always the case. Steve Lippy, noting his reputation as the Chapter’s spending watchdog, recalled a much different time when he shaped his fiscal conservatism. “In the early days of the chapter, money was tight. The dues structure was different and we had not benefited from profit sharing from a Baltimore-based WASTECON,” Steve noted.

The chapter continued to grow. By mid-1985, membership had increased to 90, and attendance at the Chapter’s April 1985 technical seminar in College Park on “Groundwater Protection at Sanitary Landfills” exceeded 100. Ten companies participated with vendor displays and the Chapter banner was displayed for the first time. In June of that year, the Chapter scheduled a luncheon and its first tour of a solid waste facility, the new Montgomery County Transfer Station. Numerous new programs have been implemented since those early days (the scholarship program, equipment rodeo, the Operator of the Year Award, and annual crab feast to name a few). With support and active participation of the Chapter membership, we can look forward to many more years as the region’s premier organization for solid waste professionals.

Anticipating the demands which would be placed on local solid waste facilities, MDE issued a blanket approval on September 16, prior to Isabel’s arrival, allowing solid waste facilities to remain open for extended hours during the following weekend. On September 23, MDE extended this authorization through September 30. Many local facilities took advantage of this authorization, staying open from early morning until 6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., 7 days a week for 2 to 3 weeks after the storm. Some facilities waived tip fees which would otherwise be charged for storm related debris delivered by residents or their contractors. Fortunately, solid waste facilities survived the storm with only minor damage to recently stabilized areas. Temporary power failures affected some facilities, such as Baltimore County’s Western Acceptance Facility.

Jurisdictions implemented a variety of emergency measures for waste collection and disposal. Anne Arundel County temporarily suspended regular community clean up and bulk item collections to concentrate on operating 22 roll off container drop off sites located throughout the County. Baltimore County established 5 drop off sites, primarily in the southeastern portion of the County, to support debris removal from flood impacted areas. In cases where residents had already contracted with a private hauler to remove debris, the County established a procedure to reimburse those homeowners for the rental of a roll off container. Harford County, which had planned prior to Isabel to close several waste drop off sites, decided to temporarily leave those sites open to receive storm debris. Highways operations in several jurisdictions were pressed into service to remove wood waste and other debris brought to the road right of way by County residents. Collected waste was delivered to temporary staging areas, including County maintenance yards, where it could be segregated by type to facilitate recycling, including natural wood waste and metal. In Howard County, wood waste was chipped and offered to the homeowner by Highways personnel at the point of collection.

Grinding of stockpiled wood waste for recycling, which generally requires the use of high capacity tub grinders, is the preferred management option. However, given the huge quantities generated over a short time period, this approach requires the long-term storage of large quantities of unprocessed wood waste. For jurisdictions which own a tub grinder, greatly increased personnel, fuel, and repair costs will be incurred to process the backlog. Jurisdictions relying on contract services will likewise realize substantial processing costs. As might be expected, the market for wood chips and mulch is now saturated with supply outstripping demand and driving down prices. Several eastern shore and southern Maryland Counties have opted for burning wood waste. Local health departments have issued burn permits for natural wood waste at generation and designated collection sites.

Some experts are predicting that the east coast will see an increased number of hurricanes as global weather patterns change. Given Isabel’s impact, let’s hope that they are wrong.

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