May 17, 2012
Maryland Recycling Network will hold its annual conference entitled “Developing Your 20/20 Vision: Keeping a Sharp Eye on Recycling Opportunities in 2012 and Beyond” on Thursday, May 17 at the Maritime Institute in Linthicum, Maryland. The preliminary agenda can be found at www.marylandrecyclingnetwork.org/preliminary-program-2012.

August 14 - 16, 2012
WASTECON 2012 is coming to the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center at National Harbor in Washington, DC August 14 - 16, 2012. This year’s theme is “Renewable and Sustainable Resources Right in Your Back Yard!” This is WASTECON’s 50th Anniversary and it is shaping up to be a spectacular event.

Technical tracks include landfill management, organics management, recycling and collections, waste conversion technologies and communications. The Montgomery County Resource Recovery Facility will be featured in one of the WASTECON tours on Monday, August 13. Please visit www.wastecon.org/index.cfm for more details.

NORTH AMERICAN WASTE-TO-ENERGY CONFERENCE: NAWTEC 20

Over three days in April, hundreds of members of the waste-to-energy (WTE) community from around the world assembled in Portland, Maine for the 20th annual North American Waste-to-Energy Conference (NAWTEC). This conference is the event for public and private sector representatives to gather in one place and learn about technological advances in the industry and interact with technology vendors. It also gives participants a chance to discuss how the current and future regulatory and legislative atmosphere will impact the industry.

Authors presented papers in several tracks, including improving combustion technologies, changes in the waste stream, research and development and improving plant operations. Practitioners and consultants provided insight into the current state of the industry in the United States (expansions and new construction), as well as emerging conversion technologies here and around the world.

Portland Mayor Michael Brennan opened the conference with warm greetings and highlighted the city and the value of the WTE community in Maine and the United States. The keynote speakers addressed the current state of the industry and set the overall tone for the conference.

Mark Weidman, President of Wheelabrator Technologies, Inc., discussed the importance of committing to excellence in operations. He also spoke about the benefits WTE provides the communities that the facilities serve and how creative engineering and material sourcing is important for improving the cost profile of expanding current facilities and building new ones.

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Mike Wigmore of Bingham McCutchen provided a summary of the current regulatory climate and changes that may be coming to the WTE industry.

Kevin Roche of ecomaine highlighted the positive economic impact that the ecomaine facility and the three other WTE plants in Maine provide to the state. A recent study shows that the four plants contribute $137 million per year in positive economic impacts to the state.

One highlight of the conference was a tour of the ecomaine campus. ecomaine is a regional non-profit company comprised of twenty-one member communities. These member communities and twenty-three other communities under contract implement an integrated waste management program through a renewable energy park comprised of a 550 ton per day WTE facility and a single stream recycling material recovery facility. ecomaine also operates a landfill/ash landfill. The WTE facility opened in 1989 and processes approximately 175,000 tons of post recycled waste per year. Metals are collected at the end of the process and marketed for resale.

The material recovery facility (MRF) is located on the same campus as the WTE facility. Single stream recyclables are processed and separated at the plant through a series of mechanical and optical separators. Picking stations staffed by employees provide an additional level of processing. Two thousand pound bales of metals, plastics and paper are marketed for resale. The recovered glass is used as road base material at the landfill to offset the use of virgin material. The residuals from the single steam MRF are taken to the WTE facility to recover the energy.

The tour ended at the landfill/ash landfill that is two miles away from the main campus. ecomaine is currently contracting for the mining of the ash fill for processing the ash to remove additional metals. This process is permitted through the state regulatory body responsible for oversight of the landfill. ecomaine anticipates receiving roughly $500,000 in revenue for the three-year ash mining project.

Participants in the conference received a great deal of pertinent information that will be brought back and applied in their home communities and businesses. More information about NAWTEC can be found at www.nawtec.org.
Anne Arundel County will soon be joining other counties in Maryland and across the United States in their pursuit to produce renewable “green” energy. The landfill gas-to-energy facility, located at the Millersville Landfill and Resource Recovery Facility (MLFRRF), has been under construction since December 2011. LES Operations Services (owned by Landfill Energy Systems) is nearing the completion of this 3.2 megawatt facility.

Work completed on the facility since the last update includes installation of underground conduit, placement of major equipment on concrete foundations, and construction of a concrete block building. Facility construction items that remain to be completed include the final wiring, piping, paving and painting. Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE) is scheduled to provide power to the facility the week of May 8th, which will allow LES to run tests and program instruments in preparation for starting commercial operations and electricity export to the grid early this summer.
The Authority recently completed negotiations with Covanta Montgomery to extend its operations contract for the Montgomery County Transfer Station in Derwood, Maryland and the Montgomery County Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) in Dickerson, Maryland. Although the operating contract was not scheduled to expire until April 2016, the Authority and Montgomery County (the County) decided that an extension now under favorable terms would be advantageous for the County. Based on current tonnage projections, the negotiated five-year contract extension provides for $10 million savings through the original term of April 2016 and an additional $10 million in savings during the extension period through April 2021.

In addition to providing a $3 million cash payment and reducing fees to operate its newly installed Low NOx (LN) air emissions control system, Covanta agreed to several other initiatives, including:

- Installing a new ash reduction system that will significantly reduce the County’s cost for the disposal of residue from the RRF.
- Operating the RRF to maximize the generation of electricity during peak pricing periods, thus providing more electricity revenue for the County.
- Processing waste above Covanta’s guaranteed tonnage level at significantly lower cost to the County.

The Authority selected Covanta as the contractor to design, construct and operate the Transfer Station’s improvements and the RRF. Covanta began operations at the Transfer Station in 1993 and the RRF in 1995. Due to its excellent operational and safety record during this time, Covanta has been recognized for its efforts. Both the Transfer Station and RRF received the VPP Star Award for safety, the highest honor granted by Maryland’s Office of Safety and Health. The RRF won multiple awards for performance, including the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) Gold Award for Waste-to-Energy Excellence three times.

The Authority looks forward to continuing excellence from Covanta in providing this vital component of Montgomery County’s solid waste management system.

For more information on these facilities, please contact Steve Blake at sblake@nmwda.org.