



US Composting Council Newsletter • Fall 2016

From the Top of the Compost Pile

Lorrie Loder-Rossiter, President, US Composting Council

The US Composting Council's *Compost Communicator* newsletter is published quarterly in *BioCycle*, the official magazine of the USCC.



I love the feeling I get when I run into an old friend whom I haven't seen for years, and we can pick up where we last left off. So it's really a pleasure for me to welcome back more than 100 of you who are returning to the US Composting Council through our ReConnect 2016 first Member-to-Member Drive!

We've had more than 50 team members calling folks who had a hiatus from the USCC. These dedicated volunteers have been telling you about our historic 25th Anniversary; our upcoming Conference in Los Angeles, CA

(which promises to be one of our most well-attended) and our new professional composter certification program.

But what they have been even more passionate about has been their belief in the USCC, which they feel so fervently that they gave their own time to share it with others. People all have their own "drivers" when it comes to rejoining year after year. Here are a few from longtime members:

"I knew I had to learn a whole lot about composting real quick, and the best place to go, the only place was to go to the US Composting Council," remembered Wayne King, EARTH Products, who found himself in charge of a mulch business coming out of bankruptcy in 1996. The USCC, he said, has

been his networking and information mainstay ever since.

"There just has to be a US Composting Council, because that is who agencies like the EPA look to for research and standards," says Sharon Barnes, remembering back to her first conference in 1992 and her brave act when she volunteered to take the records — and the reins — after Procter and Gamble pulled out of the organization a few years later.

We're excited to see so many of you returning — and if you're still thinking about it, you have until November 15th to use the RECONNECT2016 code to receive a 15% discount. I look forward to greeting every one of you at our Silver Anniversary Conference in Los Angeles, CA January 23-26, 2017.

Official Certified Compost Operations Manager (CCOM) Is Open!



The Certified Compost Operations Manager (CCOM) credential is now available for formal applications after official approval by the Certification Commission on October 19, 2016.

If you are committed to the knowledge and practice standards for the profession and want to demonstrate to every state in the U.S. and Canada what you have accomplished, then CCOM is for you.

CCOM Certification is open to all, without any restrictions or requirements for association membership. The Commission is extending price breaks and group discounts for fees to USCC Members.

Since its inception two years ago, USCC members and many other allied organizations in the organics recycling industry have asked for a certification of professionals which sets them apart with other colleagues, employers and the public which benefits.

The launch in October was effectively the grand opening, ribbon-cutting moment for those who have followed the development of the CCOM.

• For those who registered for the Beta Phase this summer and took the CCOM test (more than 200), you will receive an email

Continues below

25 Years and Growing: COMPOST2017

We're celebrating our 25th birthday in style this January — in Los Angeles, CA!

The keynote presentation will be by Chad Hymas, voted "Most Influential Safety Speaker in the World", who was inducted into the Speaker Hall of Fame and named "one of the world's most inspiring individuals" by the *Wall Street Journal*. The closing Awards Ceremony features unveiling of a special Hollywood-style film event, including an afternoon-long live entertainment revue of the Council's historical highlights and key players!

This year's topics include biochar, vermicomposting, cannabis and compost, food scrap collection best practices, and selling compost to the green infrastructure market. Tracks focus on facility operators, ReFED and food scrap compost, and complying with California AB 1826.

Registration, full schedule and programming are available at compostconference.com. Don't miss Equipment Demonstration day at the Lopez Canyon Compost Facility, Thursday, January 26th from 8:00 am—4:00 pm. Entrance is free but registration is required. Go to compostconference.com and click on demo day attendee.



Senate Meeting, Compostable Products Task Force, Compost Collaborative and New Regs On Table



USCC Executive Director Frank Franciosi met October 19th with the staff of U.S. Senator Cory Booker-NJ (left to right, Paloma Aguirre, Frank Franciosi, Adam Zipkin and Matt Thomson) to discuss the Food Recovery Act and the role of composting infrastructure and compost use in the legislation. Sen. Booker is a co-sponsor of the Act.

Compostable Products

The Compostable Products Task Force (CPTF) is moving forward with a new focus — the operational impacts of compostables at composting facilities. Separate workgroups will be consolidated within this new focus, along with a quest to understand why these products perform better in some facilities than others. The CPTF will also be working closely with the USCC's Food Scrap Composting Task Force.

The USCC is taking a more active role on other fronts of compostable packaging and products.

USCC is now an official member of the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM), and will be participating in meetings this month in Orlando, FL. Associate Director Cary Oshins also represented the USCC at the Sustainable Packaging Coalition's annual conference, Advance, in Portland this fall.

Compost Collaborative

USCC is joining GreenBlue and BioCycle to found the Compost Collaborative. The mission of the Collaborative is to bring together stakeholders from across the composting supply chain to increase effective composting. This means promoting best prac-

tices, forging solutions to barriers, and building cooperative relationships to improve soil health, divert compostables from landfills, and increase the value of food scrap diversion and compost manufacturing.

State Policy Changing?

Are your state's regulations, laws or other policies changing? The Legislative and Environmental Affairs Committee (LEAC) relies on our members to be our "eyes and ears" at the state level. We love to support positive changes, and work against negative ones. For example, when Massachusetts proposed revised regulations on Agricultural Composting (330 CMR 25.00 (Agricultural Composting Program regulation- <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/proposed-amendments-to-regulations.html>)), the LEAC invited some state members to participate in a robust discussion of the role that agricultural composting plays in that state. At the time of this writing, the LEAC and Food Scrap Task Force were still evaluating the USCC's position.

To Join LEAC or CPTF, submit a note of interest to Cary Oshins, Advocacy staff, cary.oshins@composting-council.org.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Atlas Organics, Greenville, South Carolina

CC: Tell us about the mission of your organization/facility.

Atlas: Our mission is to initiate public-private partnerships to divert food waste and green waste from area landfills, make high quality compost and redistribute the compost into the agricultural, landscaping and home gardening segment in areas where we operate.

CC: What are challenges to being successful in the compost industry, and are there special challenges in your region, market or feedstock mix? Are there ways that being involved in USCC is helping you meet those challenges?

Atlas: Challenges are around low/nonexistent green waste tipping fees in the Southeast. USCC is helping us by developing a Young Professionals network chaired by Gary Nihart, COO of Atlas Organics.

CC: What are some of the features that USCC offers that you find most useful?

Atlas: We utilize the annual conference, young professionals group, STA certification, and education/Informational pieces from the USCC.

CC: If you could sit down with another

member to discuss any issue, what would it be and why?

Atlas: We would want to talk policy, especially the feasibility of yard waste bans in the southeastern U.S. to make composting more economical throughout the region.

CC: What do you think is a key challenge to the successful future of the compost industry in the U.S.?

Atlas: Probably insuring that as the industry grows, the quality standards are adhered to and "policed."

CC: Introduce your fellow USCC members to your team!

Atlas: The Executive Team is led by Joseph McMillin, CEO, who has spent his entire career leading a movement to divert more food waste from landfills, and championed a funding round from the Venture South Capital group and the South Carolina Community Loan Fund. He led Atlas Organics to recycle more than

1,000,000 pounds of organic waste per month. Gary Nihart, COO, began as a student employee at Clemson University Recycling Services and took over management of its composting program, which grew and eventually won the Carolina Recycling Association's



Atlas Organics (left to right): Joseph McMillin, CEO; Jim Davis, VP Business Development and Gary Nihart, COO. This photo was taken on the first day of the first compost delivery!

Outstanding Organics Recycling Program for 2013. Gary has worked for Vision Recycling in the San Francisco Bay Area, and returned to the Southeast to help form Atlas Organics, Inc., a public/private partnership composting model. Jim Davis, VP Business Development, has recycling experience in the shavings industry, where he sourced recycled shavings for repackaging, primarily

for the equine market, and managed negotiations and volume pricing contracts with buyers at national retail supply stores. Robby Hayes, Josh Hayes and Alston Sandzen are operations specialists.

\$300,000 Compost Challenge Announced

The Rathmann Challenge has announced “Mitigating Climate Change by Expanding the Use of Compost” as its 2017 funding focus.

The Challenge is an opportunity for innovative thinkers who know how to implement a successful program. The first \$100,000 is awarded for past outstanding work and includes an exclusive opportunity to apply for an additional \$200,000 in support of an Even Bigger Idea®. Should an organization choose to put them together, they’ll have \$300,000 to turn their vision into a reality.

The 2017 Rathmann Challenge seeks ideas on how to significantly expand the use of compost in the United States. Examples include, but are not limited to: compost operator training, infrastructure development, market development, organic waste mate-



rial management practices, practice adoption, professionalization of compost science, public education and marketing, scientific research and soil management practices.

Launched in 2014, the Rathmann Challenge engages with those who have forward thinking ideas and are willing to challenge themselves and their professional colleagues to come up with a better solution. Providing opportunities for Even Bigger Ideas® is the primary objective of the

Rathmann Challenge, which encourages those possessing the creativity, entrepreneurial ethos, and innovative spirit to make a positive difference in the world through their directed passion, new ideas, and energy to submit an application.

The guidelines and application open for review in November 2016. Learn more at www.RathmannChallenge.org.

MEMBER NEWS

Wayne King Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

The Georgia Recycling Coalition (GRC) bestowed the inaugural Lifetime Achievement award on Wayne King, Sr. of EARTH Products, LLC at its 25th annual conference in St. Simon’s Island, Georgia on September 20, 2016. Wayne has represented the organics recycling industry on both the state and national level. He is a true champion for healthy soils, organics diversion and storm water management.



(l-r) Stephanie Busch, GRC Board Secretary; Gloria Hardegree, GRC Executive Director; Wayne King Sr.; Kevin Barkley, GRC Board President.

Laurel Valley Soils’ OMRI Certification



Laurel Valley Soils, a division of mushroom substrate manufacturer Laurel Valley Farms, is the first U.S. composter of post-harvest mushroom substrate to receive an OMRI Listing, and was recently recognized for that achievement by Pennsylvania State Senator Andy Dinniman. Laurel Valley’s Premium Compost is derived from steam-treated mushroom substrate, created from recycled and locally sourced by-products including cocoa shells, poultry litter, and horse bedding. Finished compost is screened and may be blended into a whole menu of products for the horticultural and construction industry, including gardens, bioretention basins, sports fields, lawns and green roofs.

USCC New Members, Q3

9Waste, A-Del Construction, ACME Materials & Recycling, Arizona Correctional Industries, Matt Bertucci, Brome Composting Systems, City of San Antonio, Country Oaks Landscape Supply, DK Organics, LLC, Maura Dougherty, FOR Solutions, LLC, Marcia Holtz, JBF Co., Li-ongate Farms, IPL Inc., Cooper Loder-Rossiter, Michael Lohman, Louis McDonald, McEnroe Organic Farm, Julie Muir, The Nature Institute, Neustarr Equipment LLC, Novedades Agricolas Dasa Sa De Cv, Renew Packaging, Torxx Kinetic Pulverizer, UNIScrap, Volvo Construction Equipment

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USCC Members Elect Board of Directors For 2017

The annual Board of Directors election in October resulted in the re-election to the Board of Joe DiNorscia of Laurel Valley Soils and Bob Yost, A1 Organics, who stepped in early this year for the late Chuck Wilson; and the election of John Janes, Caterpillar.

They rejoin Lorrie Loder-Rossiter; Sarah Martinez, Eco-Products; Greg Gelewski, Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency; Susan Thoman, Cedar Grove Composting; Clayton Leonard, New Earth Inc.; Tim Goodman, Natureworks; Wayne King, Sr., EARTH Products; Matt Cotton, Integrated Waste Management Consulting; and Jeff Ziegenbein, Inland Empire Regional Compost Authority.

John Janes retained an affiliate seat he filled after the 2015 election upon the departure of Rod Tyler, Filtrex, who left the Board in 2016. Joe DiNorscia competed also in the 2015 election and took the seat of Frank Franciosi, who left the Board in late 2015 to become executive director of USCC.

“It’s an honor to have these talented and energetic directors on the Board, who bring diversity and new ideas,” said Loder-Rossiter, USCC Board President. “We are eager to introduce the new board and officers at the Silver Anniversary Conference in January in Los Angeles, CA.”

The Board is meeting in November to elect the Executive Committee and Board officers.



Education/Research Projects: Library, Climate Change And Young Investigators Fill the Plate

It's been an extremely busy time for the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation (CCREF), the USCC's sister organization. Familiar programs formerly run by the USCC — International Compost Awareness Week and the Compost Operations Training Courses — are now being run by CCREF, and new projects have been added. Since the Foundation is a nonprofit, all of these programs and projects are helped by generous donations from USCC members, businesses and other foundations.

One foundation that has made a huge difference over the past few years is the 11th Hour Project, part of The Schmidt Family Foundation. A grant that was just completed allowed the CCREF to develop a certification test that will complement the Compost Operator Training course. The CCREF Board of



Composting Council®
Research & Education Foundation

The CCREF Board in October approved a new logo to better represent the foundation's mission focused on education and scientific research.

Directors recently turned the program over to the USCC's Certification Commission.

The CCREF has received another 11th Hour grant to update and strengthen its Compost Operator Training programs and to develop an on-line library. The goal is a one-stop resource library for anyone looking for information on compost and organics recycling. We'll let you know when the library

is ready — we know a lot of people will find it helpful to have one source for information.

Also underway is a new publication similar to the popular *Soil & Water Connection*. It will be called *The Compost & Climate Connection* and will be ready by the USCC's Annual Conference in January 2017. Let us know if you are interested in being a sponsor of this publication, which will explore the positive benefits to the climate of diverting organics from landfills to composting.

The CCREF Trustees have also chosen the winner of this year's Young Investigator Scholarship. Thank you to all the college students who submitted interesting and worthwhile projects.

To find out more about these programs and other activities of CCREF, go to the Foundation's website: compostfoundation.org.

Website Unveiled Targeting Landscape Architects



COMPOSTforLAs.com

Landscape architects are one of the most logical user groups for certified compost. With that in mind, the USCC launched a new website in time for the American Society of Landscape Architects' (ASLA) Conference in October: COMPOSTforLAs.com.

This new site is targeted exclusively to landscape architects. Science-based specifications for the use of compost in a variety of landscape applications are available for download, as well as links to research papers and a form for ASLA members to submit to schedule a "lunch and learn" opportunity at their office or at a state chapter meeting via our network of USCC members.

All this content is FREE of any costs or copyright approval requirements. It was created in a user-friendly format with the goal of increasing compost specification by landscape architects. The research and expertise derives from more than 35 years of university research and actual compost field applications.

For USCC members who are targeting landscape architects, you can add the new site as a hyperlink to your websites to expand your content targeting landscape architects.

CCOM Is Open!

(continued from above)

from the Certification Commission letting you know whether you passed the test.

- If you passed, then you may complete the application and the steps and requirements to be in the first class of CCOM Certified Professionals; you'll be notified in December of your status.

- All who have completed the application, qualified, taken the test and passed prior to December 20 will be honored and recognized in a ceremony at the USCC Annual Conference in Los Angeles, CA on Wednesday, January 26.

For anyone who did not register or pass the Beta Phase, you may now complete the application on the website, wait for notice of the official CCOM test, then return to your online CCOM account and schedule a day and place to take the test. Anyone in composting operations with at least one training program of three days or more may apply on the Certification Commission website at <http://certificationsuscc.org>.

Top 6 reasons why compost operations managers choose to get the CCOM Certification:

1. Professional certification is required for promotions or salary increases.
2. Certification is essential for career development.
3. Certified professionals ensure public safety.
4. Certification is required or preferred by the employer.
5. Certification shows professionalism and improves the public's view of us as professionals.
6. Certification may now be, or eventually will be, required for regulatory compliance.