



US Composting Council Newsletter • Spring 2018

From the Top of the Compost Pile

Frank Franciosi, Executive Director



Lets get talking about compost use.

Every spring that's my first thought, whether it's a Saturday at home or when I'm talking to people about expanding our industry.

The USCC's Market Development Committee (MDC) does a great job of getting the word out through the tools it has put together, like the certified-compost.com and compostforlas.com (for

landscape architects) websites; adding compost specifications to state and local highway regulations; or the work the MDC has done the past few years with Joe Lamp'l of *Growing a Greener World*. If you haven't checked these out, take a look and be sure to share compost use videos from the US Composting Council YouTube channel. The newest one

shows Joe talking with Scott Jenkins of Mercedes-Benz Stadium — home of the Atlanta Falcons — about use of compost in the construction of the new stadium.

We urge you, our members, to help us tell the story of compost use this spring. It's

Continues below

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

COMPOST2018 CCREF Research Fund Drive Tops Goal

The Composting Council Research & Education Foundation (CCREF) received tremendous support at COMPOST2018 to help the Foundation increase its research projects. What started as a challenge to match \$20,000 that had already been pledged by four organizations (Compost Manufacturing Alliance, Filtrexx, Harvest Quest/Life Soils and Scotts Miracle-Gro) grew rapidly to a total of \$50,000, with an additional match donation added by Kellogg Garden Products!

The tremendous response means the Foundation received more than \$60,000 to go directly towards new compost-related research. The Board of Trustees met to review possible projects and, during its April meeting, chose projects to begin in 2018. "This is an incredible opportunity for CCREF," noted trustee chair, Ginny Black. "We are so thankful for the generosity of so many that raised their hands to make a donation at the conference. Patrick Geraty, a former CCREF Trustee and now board president of the USCC, came to us with this idea and, as you can imagine, we were thrilled. Supporting scientific research is part of our mission and it's very exciting that we can make a greater impact this year because of all the support we received."

CCREF is always open to suggestions for new research projects; send them to info@compostfoundation.org.



USCC's 2018 Board of Directors at COMPOST2018

Back, left to right: Tim Goodman, Joe DiNorscia, Brian Fleury, Bob Schanz, Jeff Bradley, Bob Yos, Greg Gelewski
Front: Patrick Geraty, Lorrie Loder-Rossiter, Susan Thoman, Sarah Martinez, Pierce Louise (not pictured), Eileen Banyra, John James, Robert Michitsch

New STA, Compost Use Coordinator Hired by USCC

Hilary Nichols comes to the USCC with a collaborative, community building background, working for gardens like SEEDS in North Carolina (NC), the Atlanta Botanical Garden in Georgia, Royal Botanic Garden at Kew in England, and Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania, as well as for nurseries and Bland Landscaping in NC. Finding skilled or passionate volunteers and delegating to them is one of her specialties that USCC will be glad to have.

In the last garden she managed, Hilary utilized 60 cubic yards of compost a year to grow healthy plants, so she knows the value of good compost. She has 16 years of experience learning the value and then teaching about end uses of compost. "I am excited to use my degree in Horticulture from North Carolina State University to work on innovative ways for the world to more easily divert bulky organics away from wasteful landfills and into useful black gold compost needed for thriving plants," Hilary says.

She will seek input from USCC members and STA participants to help improve the USCC's compost marketing services. Bringing the composting community together to support each other through our challenges is a large part of the task ahead, she adds.

MEMBER NEWS

Filtrexx/EcoPractices Collaboration

Filtrexx's announcement of its environmental footprint in March is a great example of two USCC members working together to tell the story of compost use.

USCC Member EcoPractices has been working with Filtrexx since June 2017 on third-party verification so that Filtrexx can provide verified metrics to its customers about the environmental benefits created by utilizing a superior sustainable management practice. Filtrexx clients can share the information on their websites, social media, and Corporate Social Responsibility Reports to show their commitment to environmental stewardship.

The EcoPractices report detailed Filtrexx's footprint:

- 388,000 cubic yards of compost used
- 775,731 tons of organic waste recycled/diverted from landfills
- 150,106 tons of sediment prevented from going into waterways
- 1,616,547 tons of CO₂ prevented from entering the atmosphere
- 343,946 cars removed from highways/roadways (equivalence to CO₂ prevented)

"It is clear that Filtrexx is proud of the environmental advancements it makes every day and EcoPractices is proud to be a partner," said Jennifer Jensen, EcoPractices' Manager of Sustainable Practices and Environmental Analytics. Find Filtrexx at www.filtrexx.com; and EcoPractices at www.ecopractices.com.

Recycling Education Method from Rubicon

Rubicon created the RUBICONMethod, a universal tool for running a successful recycling and waste reduction program, after realizing that sites of all sizes were missing basic recycling and composting best practices. The RUBICONMethod utilizes an easy-to-remember acronym, DIVERT (Determine-Initiate-Vocalize-Eliminate-Roll-out-Track) and focuses on simple steps to affect behavior at the bin. The ultimate goal of the RUBICONMethod is to help businesses, organizations, and governments around the world reduce their waste generation, decrease recycling contamination, and keep valuable materials out of landfills. For those who want to dive deeper, Rubicon created a free, downloadable RUBICONMethod guide with checklists, tips, and training material (link in online edition of Compost Communicator).

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

SCS Engineers, Long Beach, CA

Platinum Member



SCS Engineers provided design, permitting and operations services for the compost facility located at Sam White and Sons Inc. in Middleboro, MA, which accepts food and yard waste and uses the open-window method of composting.

Compost Communicator spoke with Diane Samuels, Communications Director, about what is new with SCS Engineers.

CC: Tell us about the mission of your organization.

SCS: SCS Engineers, an employee-owned company, has a proactive mission: to adopt our clients' environmental challenges as our own; to foster a culture of success for employees by sharing equity ownership and rewarding employees when our clients and company succeed; and to promote a sustainable environment through innovation and the creative application of technology and management strategies and to grow our business profitably.

CC: What are challenges to being successful in the compost industry? Are there ways that being involved in USCC is helping you meet those challenges?

SCS: There is high interest in organic materials management, driven by state regulations. SCS evaluates and analyzes the approaches and technologies, along with the financial and market models, to help determine the most sustainable technologies to use. Our reputation is supported by our association with USCC. The USCC provides valuable information, networking, and resources on every aspect of composting for large and smaller projects.

CC: Tell us about how you have seen the industry — and your company — change in the 48 years you have been in business.

SCS: In recent years, many communities are evaluating options for handling organics beyond the traditional approach of supplying information about the benefits of yard waste and leaf composting. State and local governments promulgate policies and regulations that target the recycling of organics. Both are drivers prompting the development of curbside collection programs and composting facilities.

SCS sees a move toward decentralized

composting systems, consisting of small and large systems that use different technologies. Composting can be successful at many scales.

CC: If you could sit down with another member to discuss any issue, what would it be and why?

SCS: Odor is always a big issue. Odor control is paramount to a successful operation. Unfortunately, some composting projects are not consistent when it comes to odor control. Some operations are shut down because of odors, which impacts the industry negatively.

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

SCS: Compost specifications and contaminants are becoming a key challenge. USCC and firms like SCS are educating suppliers, businesses, the public, and the producers to keep physical and chemical contaminants (e.g., herbicides) out of feedstocks while screening and depackaging technologies are improving. Compost operators need to plan for handling contaminated feedstocks as more states impose regulations on organics diversion.

CC: Introduce your fellow members to your team! What do you do to build company spirit?

SCS: SCS has more than 70 professionals dedicated to our composting and organics clients across the nation. Greg McCarron, PE, a Vice President of SCS Engineers and our National Expert on Organics, leads our composting practice. Will Conrad and Leslie Lukacs are USCC Certified Compost Operations Managers.

Delivering the best value possible to our clients and sharing best practices with the industry helps build our spirit. The SCS team meets regularly to discuss new and proven technologies, and economically sustainable programs. We write articles and whitepapers, and attend USCC events.

One-Stop Renewal Coming on July 1, 2018

USCC is building our membership program to be stronger and simpler for you — by bringing all members and STA participants to an easy-to-remember due date: July 1!

This policy, a best practice of associations, will make your electronic renewal process much more predictable, easier to budget, and — in the case of Seal of Testing Assurance program participants — even easier because you can pay both your STA fee and your USCC dues at one time. Just hit the button, pay, and go on with your core business!

You should have received a letter and follow-up communications about how this will work for each of you, including your specific pro-rated payments and how to make them before July 1, 2018. For information, contact Linda Norris-Waldt at membership@compostingcouncil.org.

Rathmann Challenge Runner Ups

A state-of-the-art biosolids composting facility, a student-run composting operation serving a mid-size city, and a massive project using compost to grow potatoes, beans and peas in the sandy soils of the Midwest — all USCC member projects — received Honorable Mention in the 2017



Students take part in a W.L.S.T. training

Rathmann Challenge: Mitigating Climate Change by Expanding the Use of Compost.

We spoke with these USCC members about the grants process (which was quite unusual) and how the \$10,000 in funding will help each of them on the road to the even bigger project they had hoped would be funded. We also spoke with a member of the Rathmann family about the Foundation's excitement for these finalists.

In mid-2016, the Rathmann Family Foundation's Innovation Center, which seeks to provide competitive grants to best in class, high-performing individuals, teams or nonprofits with interesting, clever and forward-thinking ideas via an online process with both competitive and collaborative components, announced it was targeting the issue of addressing cli-

mate change through compost with a potential \$300,000 grant to the Top Honor and Even Bigger Idea recipient. Throughout the winter and 2017, the Foundations' Challenge Committee evaluated approximately 60 applications, narrowing them down to five, which they visited over the summer of 2017. The Challenge Committee is up front about understanding the risk and time put into applications, as well as its mission to engage committed applicants (link to blog post by Executive Director Rick Rathmann in the online edition of the Compost Communicator).

"Compost is becoming more prominent in the conversation about climate change," said Emma Rathmann, Grants Management Assistant, of the decision about where to focus the Rathmann Challenge and Even Bigger Idea Opportunity for 2017. A Foundation board member had advocated for the topic. The Rathmann Family Foundation has spent years funding research into the capacity for compost to sequester carbon in the soil. "We are dedicated to helping someone make a lot of difference to the world," noted Rathmann.

Three USCC member companies were runners-up. The top Big Idea winner was Center for EcoTechnology in Massachusetts.

Read more about the grant process from our members that received the Honorable Mentions — Spotsylvania County, University of Arizona Compost Cats and University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point/WIST — in the new USCC blog on your Member portal.

MEMBER NEWS

Composting at the Big Game!

Two USCC members — SET/The Mulch Store and Eco-Products — were key players in the 91 percent waste diversion at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minnesota at the NFL's "Super Bowl", its biggest game of the year, on February 4, 2018. The event's metrics are complete: 63 tons of the 69 tons of game day waste were recovered through recycling or donation for reuse (62%) and composting (29%), according to a report from the NFL to the *Environmental Leader*.

Sarah Martinez is Director of Marketing for Eco-Products, the company that makes the compostable packaging used inside US Bank Stadium. "We worked very hard with Aramark (the stadium concessionaire) to convert the packaging assortment to all compostable," Martinez noted. "Because all of the packaging was compostable, football fans did not have to sort their plate from their uneaten fries. The one-bin approach to capturing foodservice packaging and food scraps makes waste diversion easy for game attendees, and minimizes contamination for the composter."

SET Inc./The Mulch Store is very happy with the low contamination rates seen in the material from the "Super Bowl" game being composted at one of its organics facilities in the Twin Cities. Chuck Joswiak of SET said the company is also providing many of the soil blends being used during construction of the new Minnesota Vikings training facility less than 15 miles from the composting site. "It is great to see an event be so successful in implementing a complete compostable packaging approach and achieving a high diversion rate so that this material can be captured and reused eventually by the originator of the initial waste," Joswiak says. "This is a huge win for everyone, showing that we can get to sustainable systems of waste diversion and reuse!"

Q1 New USCC Members

Welcome, New Members! ARI'EL Equestrian Center; Compost Nashville, LLC; Compost Rangers; Dan Collins; Econopia/GOZero; GiveLove; Greencare Recycling/Coastline Tree; Hamilton Ranches; Henderson County, NC; Jersey Mulch Products, LLC; Landscape Management Systems Inc. dba: LMS Guam; Longwood Gardens; Panorama Paydirt LLC; Santa Ynez Topsoil; Soil Health Technologies, LLC; Soilsmith; Solana Center; Southern Oregon Compost; Spurt Industries, LLC dba Compost Soil Technologies; SYNAPTIC Packaging; TA Equipment Finance, Inc.; Treecycle Land Clearing Inc.; Tri-County Organics; Trner By Kooima Company; Worm Wrangler.



USCC/NYSAR Young Professionals Meet at Organics Summit



More than 25 “Young Professionals” gathered to swap information at a networking session that was part of the New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling’s (NYSAR) 4th Annual Organics Summit held in Poughkeepsie, NY on March 27. A special thanks goes to Milton Caterpillar for sponsoring the event and to Melissa Young, Assistant Director of the Syracuse University Center for Sustainable Community Solutions, for putting the Young Professionals (YP) event together with YP steering committee members.

From The Top Of The Compost Pile

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compelling: the benefits to water conservation and water quality; climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration; and buffering soil pH and feeding necessary nutrients to the microbes in the soil.

Many of our members tell this story well. You can create your own customized materials, such as Cedar Grove Compost’s new educational video (it’s on our YouTube channel); McGill Compost’s articles and presentations about compost use on sports turf project’s frequent social media posts about compost use. Or, if time or resources are short, share USCC materials instead. (If you’re a Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) participant there are additional resources available to customize to your business.)

Also, get to know our new Market Development Coordinator, Hilary Nichols, who comes to the USCC with lots of new ideas about spreading the gospel of compost use. Email Hilary at hnichols@compostingcouncil.org.

However you do it, invest some time this spring in telling your audience about our product: black gold!

Compost Training Courses Selling Out

The CCREF kicked off the 2018 training cycle with a sold out Compost Operations Training Course (COTC) in Davis, California! An unprecedented level of demand meant creating a waiting list before the Early Bird registration period even ended. The training attracted not only a large number of California composting industry professionals, but also some eager East Coast trainees as well as a contingent from Guam. In total, 41 students traveled to a cloudy and rainy Davis to receive instruction and hands-on experience. The group also visited four composting facilities in the area.

This summer, for the first time, CCREF,

along with Michigan State University, Michigan Recycling Coalition (MRC) and the Michigan Organics Council (MOC), are hosting a COTC in East Lansing, Michigan. The training will be held July 30-August 3. Register by June 30 to receive \$100 off. USCC and MRC/MOC members can also receive an additional \$100 off the standard registration rate. The CCREF and North Carolina Composting Council will return to Raleigh (NC) for the fall COTC, September 10-14. Early Bird registration for the fall training ends August 10. For more details or to register visit, <http://www.compostfoundation.org/Education/COTC>

Is Your ICAW 2018 Event Ready for Prime Time?



Make your plans *now* for International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW), May 6-12 2018!

This year’s theme is **Compost! Building a Better Future**. The poster, designed by high school student Talia Mitre, has been mailed to thousands of people across the country. It is also available for sale: <http://www.compostfoundation.org/ICAW-Store>.

Your event can be put on our ICAW website: <http://www.compostfoundation.org/icaw-get-involved-events>. You can also find the *Celebrate ICAW Manual*, which gives step-by-step suggestions on how to promote ICAW, as well as a sample press release, a sample Proclamation that can be used to encourage your city or state officials to recognize ICAW, and other materials related to this special annual celebration of all things compost.

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Member submissions for Compost Communicator can be emailed to Linda Norris-Waldt at the USCC: lnorriswaldt@compostingcouncil.org