

## Editor's Comments March April MSW

### Bioreactive Landfill Gassings

First off, let me direct your attention to SWANA executive director, John Skinner's, [treatise-discussion](#) *New Momentum for Landfill Gas Tax-Credit Legislation* on p\*\*, which summarizes some of the very positive events of the past several months regarding LFG and particularly LFGTE issues. Of special interest is the recently introduced HR 3466 that provides tax credits to users of LFG. This is an extraordinary opportunity for landfill owners and operators and one we must not let fall by the wayside. Please take the time to read the article carefully and consider what actions you might take to support not only HR 3466 but the other initiatives as well. [For more information on HR 3466 go to http://thomas.loc.gov and enter HR3466 in the "Search" block.](#)

Field Code Changed

### Doing it in the Desert

Next let me tell you about my visit to Mine Reclamation Corporation's (MRC) Eagle Mountain and Recycling Center (<http://www.eaglemountainrailhaul.com>) located near aptly named Desert Center CA, one of two mega-fills planning to handle Southern California trash for the next century or so. Once a low-grade iron ore mine owned by Kaiser Steel that provided much of the raw materials that went into the World War II-vintage Liberty Ships, Eagle Mountain is now a series of colossal canyons and dry tailing ponds, sorely in need of a garbage fix. With major permitting and legal challenges behind, MRC is finally ready to break ground to meet a 2001 grand opening. [This is a massive site, permitted to handle 18,000 tpd for more than 100 years.](#)

Field Code Changed

What does Eagle Mountain have to do with LFG, you ask, when ~~with 3.5 in. of rain and 150 in. of 40:1 evaporation-to-rainfall rate per year it's pretty hard to imagine~~ [keeps](#) bioreactivity and its byproducts ~~from climbing to~~ the top of the chart of concerns? Well [consider it begins with the possibility to the waste associated with dumping sending a perfectly good fuel source energy to be dumped](#) into a hole in the ground ~~without the potential for recovery and asking it to do no good~~. But it's also the attractiveness of such a system--an open and hard-to-fight invitation to local officials to "load the trash on the train and say "adios, baby"--that makes stewardship an even more difficult task than it already is. Finally, similar to the impact of regional landfills elsewhere throughout the country, it virtually drops from consideration the value of [a number of smaller, special-purpose facilities--distributed resources--in dealing with waste](#). Purposefully or not ~~the reliance on one large facility~~ effectively eliminates from consideration waste management options that many feel are important--both for their own sake and because of the opportunity they provide for local determination and innovation. While it's hard to argue against the competitive advantages afforded by regionalization and consolidation [relative to the costs of operating a number of smaller facilities, this cost](#) may not be the only or the most important issue we face. [For more information on bioreactive landfills, go to http://www.forester.net/msw\\_9909\\_bioreactive\\_landfill.html.](#)

### Musical Landfill Cells?

~~A question we have to face is whether a mega-landfill is sending the organic portion down the tracks to a final solution the best we can do with it or does it makes more sense to than investigate~~ [ing](#) options [for treating a significant portion of the wastestream as a throw-away, capable of returning it to the world as useful soil after stripping out the energy content by any of several means?](#)

Appropriate means for recapturing [the value of](#) such resources depend on a number of site-specific conditions. At a colloquy on waste conversion technologies co-hosted by *MSW Management* this past Fall, government and industry representatives discussed a variety of approaches to the production of chemicals and fuels (ethanol for instance) and gases (methane) employing primarily industrial processes and techniques. Edging into the discussions, however, was the idea that a properly designed and constructed bioreactive landfill might be a superior means of salvaging energy and soil. A process envisioned more than a dozen years ago--and amounting in many respects to a series of in-vessel landfill composting vault/cells--would subject organics on a cell-by-cell basis first to anaerobic and then aerobic conditions, ending with the sequential recovery of the airspace. Far-fetched, you ask? Maybe. Economically out of the question? Perhaps. But if you look at the tremendous strides that have been taken in waste management over the past decade, then look at the remaining--and in many cases resulting--challenges we face today, you may wish to temper your skepticism and consider both the value of [retaining such](#) options and [the](#) magnificence of a system that allows us to make great strides against seemingly impossible odds.

### Nancy W. Nevil, Newest Member of Our Editorial Advisory Board

Nancy W. Nevil has served as solid waste manager for the city of Plano, TX from 1987 to Present. Her responsibilities include planning, organizing, and directing administrative and operational functions of residential solid waste collections for 60,000 households and monitoring commercial collection franchise. Her achievements, well noted among her peers include the creation of her department's Self-Directed Work Team for management of daily operations, initiation of the first municipal yardwaste composting operation in Texas, and the implementation of the state's first household hazardous waste reuse program. Plano was one of the first cities in Texas to implement citywide curbside recycling and the first to automate the effort. Nevil serves as International Secretary for SWANA, as well as a variety of boards and committees for SWANA and the state of Texas.

MSW Management is particularly pleased to welcome Nancy to our advisory board where her knowledge and expertise in organizational and operations matters will be of great benefit.