

We're All Still Here, Aren't We?

The dire predictions for the transfer to the new century notwithstanding, no one I know got lost in the shuffle. Pretty good when you consider all the hype, but I guess the purveyors of doom have a whole year for the Y2K bug to undergo a thorough metamorphosis. No matter since I achieved the two great milestones I set for myself in the past: (1) the get to be 16 (I still feel that to be a worthwhile goal fourscore and some-odd years later) and (2) make it into the 21st Century. Those in the bank, I've been casting about for some new milestones, even considering such achievements as: (1) living an entire day without doing something patently dumb or (2) making it into the 22nd Century. "Probably not," you say, and I agree. So let's look for something a little more reasonable.

One of the best things about being an editor is getting to determine the topics for each issue. One of the worst things is not knowing whether I'm hitting the mark or not. Typically, unless something I've said is patently absurd or I've driven a normally mild-mannered reader into a blind rage, I don't get as much feedback as I would like...or need. I want to fix that, and I think I know how...our website at www.mswmanagement.net. Let me give an example of what I have in mind.

Dealing With Diversity

In our most recent issue (Elements 2000, mailed in late December 1999) we purposefully included several articles dealing with controversial topics. Now I'm willing to wager that except a few in totalitarian states the one-size-fits-all approach to waste management doesn't hack it. In the US, we've seen a continual seesaw in the public-versus-private debate for as long as I can remember, and you're not going to cross many jurisdictional boundaries before you find that people just don't seem to think the same way about how to handle trash, leaf-blowers, or skateboards on the sidewalk for that matter. The debate swirling around consolidation--we bearded that lion in its den with the article Endgame! Consolidation and Competition in the Solid Waste Industry, by Peter Anderson--is particularly hot right now and the issues are not nearly so clear as I at one time believed. About the only two things that are clear are: (1) the subject is worthy of lively and thorough debate by everyone with an interest in MSW, and (2) I know of no one who is absolutely impartial in the matter. We could easily have presented articles featuring any of a dozen different views on the subject, but the audience response would have been the same as we've seen so far...people with similar views; people with alternate views; people whose views are diametrically opposed to those presented. We knew that going in...just as we know that not everyone will agree with the this issue's presentations on such subjects as composting or landfill compaction.

There are many things that I (and I hope you) look for in *MSW Management*: timely and interesting article that is well-written and attractively presented; provocative editorial content that allows us to see the possibilities and consequences in our actions; and the presentation of issues that will help decisionmakers grapple with the MSW piece of complex puzzle. This magazine, like other serious publications in this or similar fields, plays an important role in setting drawing attention to important issues--a role that other media such as the internet are not as well suited. On the other hand, what no traditional publication can do is match the person-to-person dialog of the forum, whether it be that marbled wonder of Rome or our electronic meeting ground. But the amalgamation of the print medium with an electronic presence is altogether a different matter. It provides an unparalleled opportunity to bring to life the words and ideas heretofore held captive in cold type. Come to www.mswmanagement.net ready to give us your "two-cents worth." We'll all be the winners.

New Member of our Editorial Advisory Board: Michael D. Long

Michael D. Long is executive director of the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio, a position he has held since its founding in 1989. A graduate of Ohio University with degree in Industrial and Systems Engineering, Long is a Registered Professional Engineer in the State of Ohio. Prior to assuming his present post, Long spent 15 years in various engineering and management positions with the Ohio Department of Transportation, and five years as director of Public Utilities and Aviation for the City of Columbus.

Long was the founding president of the Organization of Solid Waste Districts of Ohio, a member of the Governor's Recycling and Litter Prevention Advisory Council for the last five years, and past president of the Ohio Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America.