

Colorado SWANA News 1st Quarter 2021



Contents

President’s Corner.....	1
Thank You Colorado SWANA!	2
Colorado SWANA’s Webinar Wednesday	4
Save the Date! The 2021 Annual Colorado SWANA Annual Conference Heads to Boulder!	4
Colorado SWANA SAFETY Corner.....	5
<i>Colorado SWANA - Working for You</i>	8
National Solid Waste and Recycling Survey.....	8



President’s Corner

By Cathy Hall

March marks the one-year anniversary of COVID, and what a year it has been!

It’s been a year since COVID turned our worlds upside down. Most people learned going into the office isn’t all that necessary, and meetings and conferences could be held virtually through modern technology. One thing that did remain the same was solid waste.

While most people shifted to working from home, solid waste workers continued to show up and collect the trash and recycling. While I haven’t seen good statewide data yet, I can attest there was some noticeable shifts in the type and amount of garbage and recycling that came into the Pitkin County Landfill.



Photo Credit: Adam Niesciuruk Unsplash

to

Spring cleaning that went on well into the summer: With the sudden stay-at-home orders, people found the opportunity to clean out their basements, garages, and closets. Self-haulers to the landfill nearly tripled with old TVs, mattresses, clothing, and other odd assortments of junk and stuff they no longer wanted. Switch in where the trash was coming from: According to the haulers, commercial trash dropped about 20% and residential increased about 20%. Cardboard also increased, quite noticeably in the form of Amazon boxes.

Voluntary food waste collection took a hit, but gardening and green waste grew: In Pitkin County collection of food waste for composting is voluntary, as budgets got tighter, food waste collection was deemed an unnecessary expense, and restaurant closures didn't help either. We saw about a 20% decrease in food coming in for composting. But on the bright side, apparently people got into improving their personal outdoor spaces. Sales of Pitkin County Compost and soils grew over 50%, and incoming green waste (leaves, grass, and brush) increased as well.

While we are not out of the COVID woods yet, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Vaccinations are rolling out. CO SWANA, along with SWANA National, sent a letter to Governor Polis encouraging him to make solid waste workers a priority to receive the vaccine. A copy of the letter can be found [here](#). While solid waste workers haven't been deemed a vaccination priority yet, I encourage you to reach out to State and local officials to get solid waste workers recognized as an essential and made a priority for the vaccine.

Thank You Colorado SWANA!

By Dana D'Souza



Photo Credit: Element5 Digital on Unsplash

WASTECON 2020 was a virtual event, allowing Colorado SWANA to “send” two scholarship recipients. The Scholarship committee selected two students who are currently enrolled in industry related fields. Their registration was paid for and they received a year membership to Colorado SWANA. Below are comments from our two recipients, Clara Lietz and Shelby Tillema. If you interested in learning about our scholarships and grants, please go to our [website](#) and click on programs.

Reflections on WASTECON:

My name is Clara Lietz, and as I approach graduation, in the midst of a pandemic, I am asked to choose my trajectory within the environmental realm. While my academic career has prepared me on intellectual terms, I am often left wondering what tangible movements are happening on the ground floor.

This year, I had the privilege of attending WASTECON through a student scholarship gifted by COSWANA. Thanks to the conference, I was able to not only discover the complexity of the waste management industry, but the multifaceted nature of the response to modern problems, whether it be creating a more circular economy, or accommodating essential operations within a disrupted atmosphere. I was excited to learn about progress in the industry, most notably recycling programs that implement modern technology to reduce contamination or proposals to increase efficiency with on-demand pickup.

Professionals in the waste management industry, from all parts of the country and even world, are committed to adapting and transforming their strategies to meet both meet individual demands and pressing environmental concerns. I was also interested in the open dialogue between panelists on making recycling more accessible in order to reach the EPA's 50% recycling goal: I was intrigued by talk of buildings that make recycling accessible in their outset or shifting focus to reusables. In a changing world, those I heard from demonstrated themselves to be resilient and forward thinking

while performing an essential function. Left with a general excitement, I am eager to continue to watch as these creative ideas are pursued and meet more interesting people along the way! I am grateful to those who made this valuable experience possible.

From Shelby Tillema:

I am incredibly grateful to Colorado SWANA for giving me the opportunity to attend Virtual WASTECON 2021! It was an excellent chance to connect with the solid waste industry from outside of my university classes, and I learned quite a bit about the industry today.

I think the largest message conveyed to me during the convention was how connected and unified solid waste professionals from all

around North America are. Solid waste is often seen as a very local issue, even though it is very global in nature. One person's solid waste does indeed affect other people all around the globe, and it only makes sense that we all speak with one another to determine how the industry should progress. Panels such as "Big Cities Talking Trash" and "Improving Solid Waste Management in Latin America" really showcased how professionals are discussing similar issues across great distances.

The focus on development of industry professionals and technologies was also at the forefront of all discussions. Products made for solid waste professionals, such as CAT equipment and Rubicon software, have the best interests of the solid waste industry in mind, and their companies really take the time to engage with solid waste professionals to meet their best interests. Talks about being a future-focused leader and media training really showcase how SWANA invests in its members and the industry professionals, showing how the industry is only as strong as its people. These investments in the improvement of the industry tell us a lot about the values of SWANA and the industry itself.

Of course, the conference also spoke on the current issues in solid waste management, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and achieving goals such as the EPA's 50% recycling goal and bringing about a circular economy. It is important that an industry acknowledge current problems and how we can learn from them. It is also important that an industry not grow static by never thinking of ways it can improve itself. Thus, the dynamic, driven nature of SWANA was really showcased in these panels.

My main reason for wishing to attend WASTECON was to better understand the current state of the solid waste industry and how solid waste professionals are thinking about their field. The networking sessions provided me with great insight into just those things – being able to hear from professionals across the continent on issues of great relevance to the field and our current society was enlightening, and the optimistic and driven nature of these professionals showed me that this is a field that I could be a part of. While I am soon graduating with my bachelor's degree in environmental engineering and can take my career in many different directions, the solid waste industry and its practices will be a main consideration in my career.

Thank you again to Colorado SWANA for sponsoring my attendance to this convention – it was an experience I will never forget.



Photo Credit: Alfonso Navarro on Unsplash

Colorado SWANA's Webinar Wednesday

by Cathy Hall



The CO SWANA Chapter introduced Webinar Wednesdays last fall to make up for the cancelling of the 2020 annual conference.

Presentations vary from waste diversion to landfill technology. The webinars are free for SWANA members and provide CEUs for SWANA certifications.

The Webinars are winding down so don't miss out. There's still time to register for the next one:

- **March 31, 2021 - How AI is Reimagining Recycling in Colorado and Beyond**

The CO SWANA Chapter will send out an email or use the registration link available through the website at www.coloradoswana.org/programs/webinars/

SWANA CEUs will be issued automatically following the presentation. If you watch the recorded presentation contact SWANA National at certification@SWANA.org for credit.

You can also view past/recorded webinars here>>. <https://coloradoswana.org/programs/webinars/>

Save the Date! The 2021 Colorado SWANA Annual Conference Heads to Boulder!

By Cathy Hall

Colorado SWANA Annual Conference, *November 1-3, 2021*

CO SWANA is moving forward with 2021 Annual "in-person" conference planning. A Call for Presentations will be released soon. The Annual conference is scheduled for November 1-3, 2021...

Hope to see all of you there!

Mark your calendars for Colorado's premier solid waste conference event. Colorado SWANA's annual conference is heading to Boulder, Colorado, November 1-3, 2021.

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear about the latest solid waste topics ranging from recycling to landfill operations. Also, the speakers will be giving updates on what is happening in Colorado solid waste and how it could affect you.

The conference is an ideal opportunity to meet and network with your peers and see the latest technology in the exhibit area. The Boulder Embassy Suites is located in the heart of Boulder, walkable to the many restaurants and shops Boulder has to offer. A block of rooms has been

reserved for conference attendees. Hotel, conference and sponsorship information will be updated soon on the Colorado SWANA webpage.

Call for Presentations

Interested in presenting? Presenters (one per presentation) will receive complimentary conference registration, including full conference attendance, food and beverage. Travel and lodging are not included.

Information on how to submit a presentation abstract will be available soon. Watch for an email highlighting the abstract submittal process, coming soon.

For more information regarding the 2021 Annual Conference and Call for Presentations, please contact Cathy Hall at 970-429-2882 or Cathy.Hall@PitkinCounty.com, or visit <https://coloradoswana.org/annual-conference/> for the latest information.

Colorado SWANA SAFETY Corner

By Chris Anderson

For the first time since 2012, recently published 2019 data show the solid waste industry (*Refuse & Recyclable Material Collectors*) dropped from No.5 to No.6 on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) list of occupations with the highest fatal work injury rates. The 2019 rate was 35.2 fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers. The last time our industry was at No.6 on the top 10 list of fatal occupations was in 2012, with 27.1 fatalities. Has our industry improved its safety record, or have other industries become less safe?

In 2018 the solid waste industry hit a high of 44 fatalities (No.5 on the top 10 list) versus a low in 2010 of 29.8 fatalities, which ranked No.7 at the time. Since the BLS has been tracking fatalities by occupation, the solid waste industry generally remains in the range of 30-40 fatalities per year. Thus, while the latest drop in fatality equivalents and ranking is good news, it should be a call to double-down on our safety focus and effort to further reduce incidents, injuries and fatalities and ultimately, get off the list of the top ten most fatal occupations.

Recently, SWANA issued a [press release](#) about its 2020 solid waste industry fatality data, which is copied below. This information was also discussed at the virtual Safety Summit last week, which is now available to purchase as a [recording](#). You can view the slides from that particular session [here](#).

The 2020 report is a reminder of the work that still needs to be done to protect workers and the public. Now is a great time to promote taking the [SWANA Safety Pledge](#) (and to take it yourself if you haven't already). We also recommend planning [Hauler Safety Outreach](#) events in the spring or summer.

SWANA REPORTS 52 SOLID WASTE INDUSTRY WORKER FATALITIES IN 2020.

Note: The metric used by the BLS for comparison between occupations is fatalities per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers

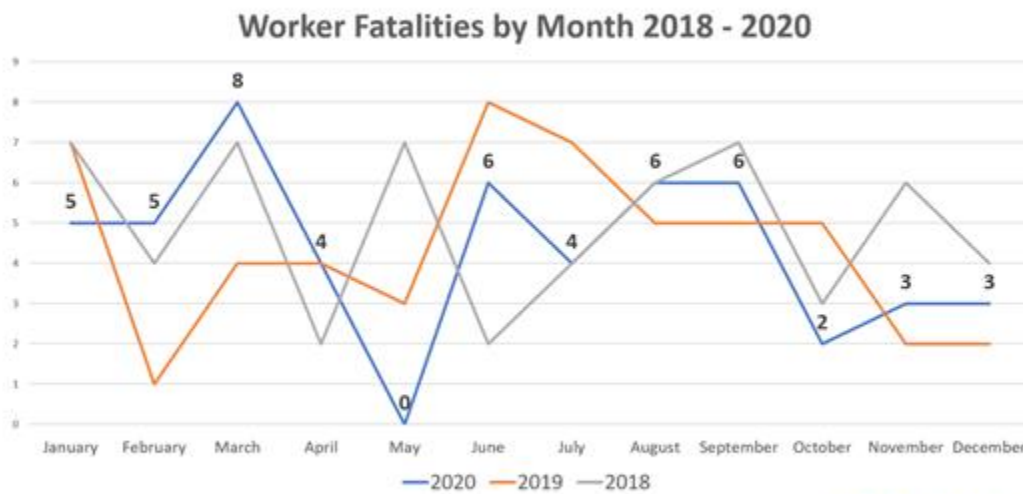
SWANA encourages increase in safety training, with focus on collection hazards at Safety Summit



Silver Spring, MD – The [Solid Waste Association of North America](#) (SWANA) reported 52 municipal solid waste industry workers were killed in 2020 in the United States and Canada, with nearly 70 percent occurring during collection. This data was shared by Jesse Maxwell, SWANA Advocacy & Safety Senior Manager, at SWANA’s [virtual Safety Summit](#) on February 25.

The most common type of fatal event was a single vehicle accident in which only a waste collection vehicle was involved. The second most common fatality was being struck by a waste collection vehicle, either as a helper or when a driver was out of the cab. This suggests that rushing may be contributing to these tragic incidents, and that reminding collection crews of best practices for safety is needed.

“There continues to be too many avoidable fatal incidents in and involving the solid waste industry,” stated David Biderman, SWANA Executive Director & CEO. “This trend has continued into 2021, with 17 fatal incidents recorded in the first two months of the year. We can and must do better.”



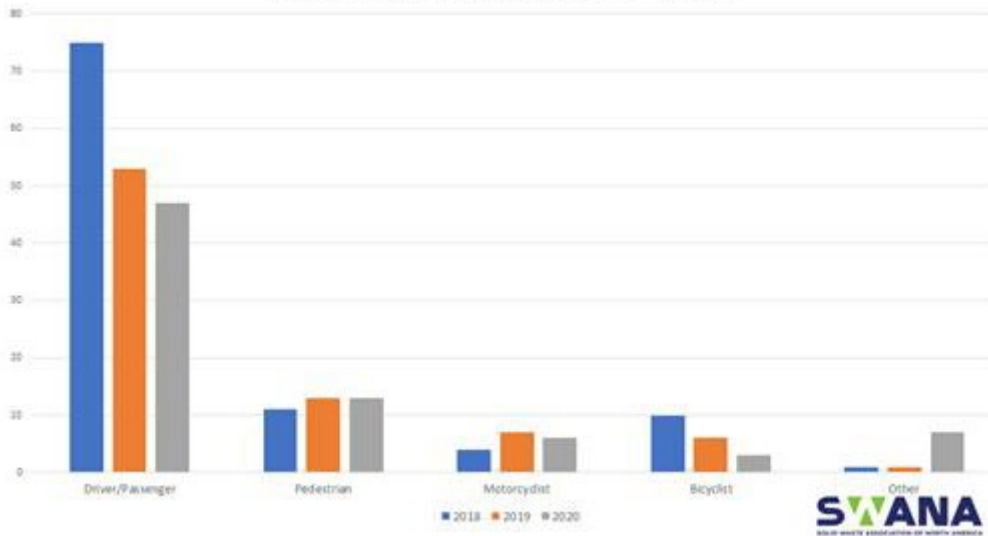
Collection fatalities remained steady in 2020 compared to 2019 and were down from 2018 when 42 occurred. Fatal incidents at landfills fell from 11 in 2019 to 4 in 2020, and material recovery facilities (MRFs) similarly saw a drop in worker deaths from 4 in 2019 to 1 last year. Fatalities at transfer stations increased from 1 in 2019 to 3 in 2020.

2020 Worker Fatalities by Worksite



In addition to worker fatalities, SWANA also tracks events in which a member of the public is killed in a solid waste related incident. In 2020, 76 members of the public in the United States and Canada were killed in collisions with a solid waste collection vehicle, with about 62 percent being vehicle collisions. The past year saw slightly fewer fatalities than 2019 when there were 80 and continues the decline from 2018 when 101 members of the public died.

3rd Party Fatalities 2018 - 2020



At the state level, New York had the most fatal incidents with 15, followed by California with 12, Texas with 11, Pennsylvania with 9, and Florida with 8. New York and California have both been in the top five states in number of fatalities for the past three years.



In addition to presenting the 2020 fatality data, SWANA’s [virtual Safety Summit](https://swana.org/safety-summit/) brought together safety leaders from Waste Management, Republic, Waste Connections, Rumpke, Caterpillar, and other employers who provided attendees with useful information on how to reduce collisions, injuries, and accidents. Recordings of the Safety Summit are available for sale at <https://swana.org/safety-summit/>.

View interactive Google Map [here](#).

To reduce fatal and non-fatal incidents across the solid waste industry, SWANA has developed a growing variety of safety resources. SWANA’s latest addition is a new, weekly newsletter, [Safety Matters](#), which makes relevant safety guidance easily accessible to front-line employees and workers at all levels. SWANA encourages members to use it at safety meetings and toolbox talks to remind workers of safety hazards associated with solid waste management and how to avoid them.

Thank you for your efforts to make Safety a Core Value and lead your teams to a safer future in the waste industry!
Chris Anderson - SWANA CO Safety Ambassador

Colorado SWANA - Working for You

LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH: In February this year, Colorado SWANA reached out to Governor Polis on behalf of Colorado's solid waste and recycling front line workers. The request was for them to be considered as critical workers and be given higher priority in the vaccination process. While not of our advocacy attempts are successful, this is just one of the ways we are looking out for you.

National Solid Waste and Recycling Survey

by Lisa Skumatz

A National Trash and Recycling Survey update is being conducted by Skumatz Economic Research Associates (SERA) for 2021. The data are used to track trends and latest methods in Solid Waste Management, conduct quantitative analyses to guide program refinements, and other studies, many of which are published in aggregate form (no name / individual data) in *Resource Recycling*. This year's special topic includes a drill-down on contamination strategies.

As advocates in the industry, we are hoping you can help us with a survey and be entered for a drawing if you wish. Previous results were presented in a free- Colorado SWANA webinar last fall and the results of this national study will also be shared with its members.

Please click [HERE](#), or use the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NationalSW2021>

Feel free to call if you have questions or would rather complete it by phone (303/494-1178; dsouza@serainc.com). Thank you very much!

This email news update is a service provided to members of the Colorado Rocky Mountain Chapter of SWANA. If you would like to share information with chapter members in future updates, please email your information to Dana D'Souza at dsouza@serainc.com.

Photo credits: [Sign vector created by freepik - \[www.freepik.com\]\(https://www.freepik.com\)](https://www.freepik.com/vectors/sign); Icons made by [Those Icons](https://www.flaticon.com/authors/those-icons) from www.flaticon.com

Also, don't forget to visit us online at www.coloradoswana.org.

 facebook.com/ColoradoSWANA

 twitter.com/COSWANA