

NEWSLETTER



April - May 2009

www.sw-asse.org

Protecting North Texas and the Dallas Metroplex since 1937

President: Phil Bunker pb2720@att.com 214-464-6511

Vice President: Lori Siegelman LSiegelman@sbcglobal.net (469) 222-8680

Treasurer: Brady Steel brady@kjenvironmental.com (940) 387-0830

Secretary: Michael Pierce mpierc@parknet.pmh.org (214) 590 8606

Past President: Luke Chisenhall chisenhall@dart.org (214) 749-3618

Member Communications: Jim Johnstone jimj@contekllc.com (469) 467-8296

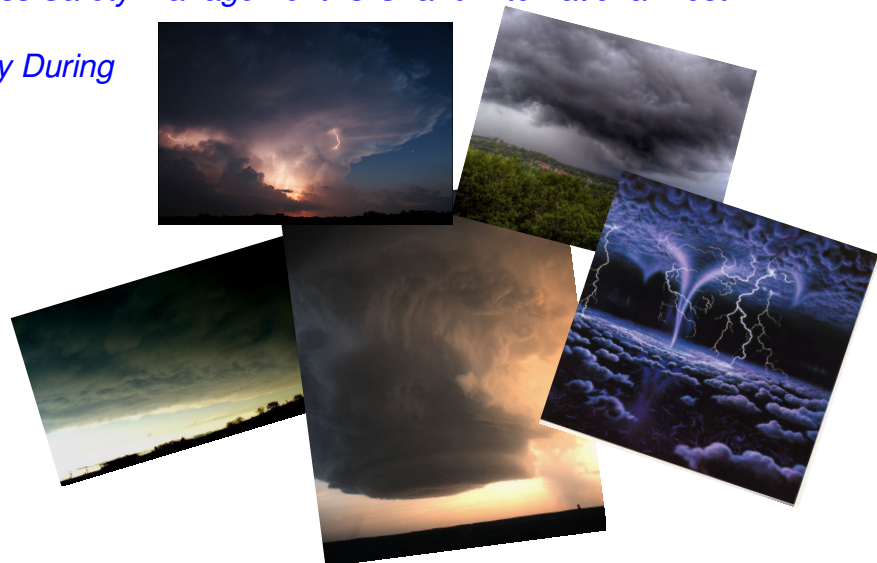
Newsletter: Shannon Mitchum smitchum@contekllc.com (469) 467-8296, ext: 103

May 11, 2009 - Monday	11:30 am Lunch Meeting
May 13, 2009 - Wednesday	ASSE Night at The Ballpark, Arlington
June 9 - Monday	11:30 am Lunch Meeting, Installation of 2009-2010 Chapter Officers

All meetings (except QUOIN) are located at the Crowne Plaza Hotel – 14315 Midway Rd, Addison except when stated otherwise.

In this Issue:

- *May Meeting: Luncheon: "Comprehensive Risk Assessment," with Larry Perkinson, HSE Performance*
- *Southwest Chapter's Annual Nite at The Ballpark*
- *Arthur "Skip" Thomas*
- *Southwest Chapter Updates*
- *Congratulations to the students recipients of the ASSE Foundation 2009*
- *Chapter Assignment*
- *25 Internships Sought for SOSU*
- *Safety 2009 Professional Development Conference & Expo*
- *ASSE Programs & Events: Best-in-Class Safety Management: U.S. and International Best Practices, Virtual Symposium*
- *Reducing or Ignoring Workplace Safety During Business Downturns*
- *ASSE Member Benefit News*
- *Government Affairs Updates*
- *Article: A Trashed Economy Foretold*
- *Notes from the President*
- *ASSE 2009 Safety Professional Development Conference & Exposition*
- *From the Editor*

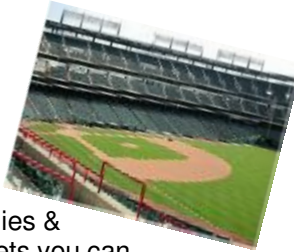


It is here! Spring! Closely followed by Summer

**Southwest Chapter's Annual
Nite at the Ballpark
Wednesday, May 13, 7:05 pm
\$10 per Ticket**

**Rangers vs. Seattle Mariners
\$1 Hot Dog Night
Autograph Night**

View from the Lexus Club Terrace where 100 tickets are reserved for ASSE members, families & friends. No limit on number of tickets you can



order. *Orders must be received by May 1st.*

Contact Steve Gray via email:

sgray@dallascowboys.net/.

Any questions, cell: (972) 922-7110.

Payment is preferred at the time of order. Make checks payable to Steve Gray and mail to 6823 Lagoon Drive, Grand Prairie, TX, 75054.

Tickets will be left at the 'Will Call' window. If you want your tickets mailed to you, provide a self addressed stamped envelope with payment. Tickets will be mailed no later than one week prior to the game.

Thomas, Arthur "Skip" Thomas, 62, of Plano, originally from Fort Worth, passed away December, 2008.

Skip was ASSE Southwest Chapter, Vice President – Governmental Affairs.

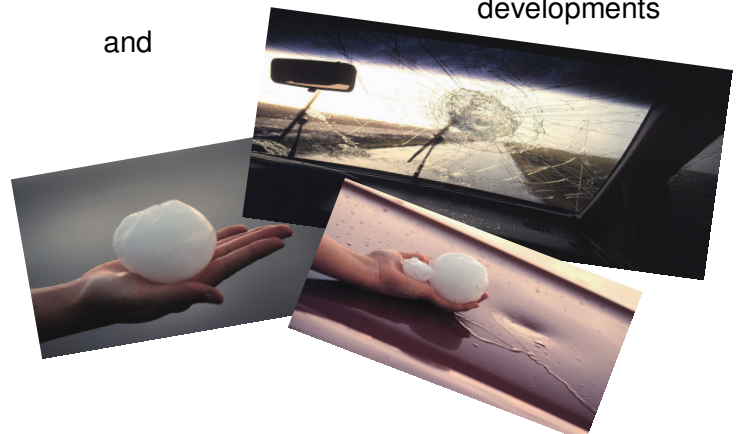
He also attended the 2008 ASSE PDC in Las Vegas in June of 2008 as an alternate Delegate to the House of Delegates, representing the Southwest Chapter. Skip is missed.

The Southwest Chapter

- By Laws Review Committee (will be submitted to members for approval)
- Finance Committee (audit completed; no issues)
- SOSU info... is seeing a larger number of applications for Master of Science in Occupational Safety & Health program. The program is almost entirely online and safety professionals can take it and still maintain their jobs (or, if they're in-between jobs they could better market themselves with an MS degree).
- CNN has said, that due to the current economy, graduate schools are seeing a 50% increase in applications.
- SOSU info... desperately need more internship opportunities for their program with hope of getting at least 40 new occupational safety internships.

- March 22-25, Jim Johnson, Southwest Chapter Chairman - Communication, participated in Americas Exploration & Production Environmental and Safety Conference, sponsored by the Society of Petroleum Engineers and support from ASSE. The conference is the premier is a forum for oil and gas industry professionals to discuss the ever-growing challenges in safety and environmental performance. The conference explored the latest technological developments

and



regulations driving current practices through keynote speeches, technical sessions, panel discussions, and exhibits.

- Tim Hayden, CSP, CPCU, ARM, Associate Director - John L. Wortham & Son, L.P., has

been appointed Chapter Vice President – Governmental Affairs.

Phil Bunker (Southwest Chapter President 2008-2009)

Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Degree Program: Occupational Safety & Health, Amount: \$1000.

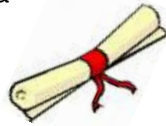
Graduate Awards:

BCSP - Michael Orn Scholarship, Recipient: Jon R. Hamill, University: Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Degree Program: Occupational Safety & Health, Amount: \$1000.

Professional Development Grant Recipient Medina Professional Development Grant, Recipient: Dr. Nick Nichols, Employer: Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Awarded For: PDC Registration Fee, Amount: \$650

Phil Bunker (ASSE Southwest Chapter - President 2008-2009)

Dr. Jones, Congratulations to the student's recipients of the ASSE Foundation 2009 Scholarships and Dr. Nichols for the Professional Development Grant. As I have said previously, I am honored to be associated with you, the students and staff of Southeastern Oklahoma State University. The "Best of Luck" to the students in their future endeavors.



Undergraduate Awards:

CCHEST - Patrick J. Conroy Scholarship

Recipient: Joshua B. Ball, University: Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Degree Program: Occupational Safety & Health / Psychology, Amount: \$1000.

Southwest Chapter Roy Kinslow Scholarship,

Recipient: Shawn D. Rowland, University:

Chapter Assignment

The chapter that each member belongs to is automatically assigned by zip code in the ASSE database. If you move but wish to stay in your original Chapter, please let us know and we can over-ride the zip code assignment to keep you in your old chapter until you notify us otherwise.

Updating Your Personal Information

To update your mailing address, phone, fax or most importantly, your e-mail address, please use this address:

<<http://www.asse.org/about/addresschange.php>>

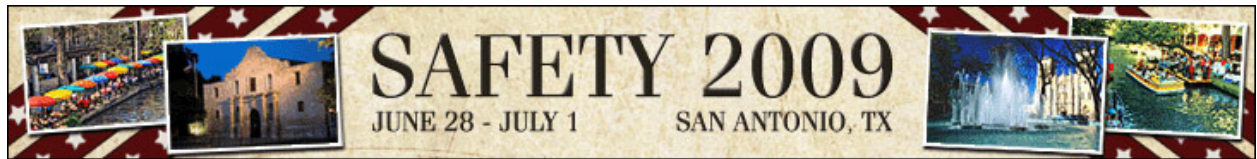
Log-in using your member number and your last name.



25 Internships Sought for SOSU

Dr. Wayne Jones, Chair and Associate Professor of Southeastern Oklahoma State University's Dept. of Occupational Safety & Health, is seeking 25 internships over the next year to help 25 junior and senior students complete their practicum. The SOSU program is one of the largest in the U.S., with over 300 students in the BS and MS safety & health programs. Durant, OK, is only an hour north of the DFW Metroplex, which is a prime position to supply companies who can use extra support in their occupational safety departments. Click [here](#) to learn more and for Dr. Jones' contact information.





focusing on business skills.

Safety 2009 Professional Development Conference & Exposition June 28th -July 1st

The Conference is the #1 source in professional development and continuing education.

For more information: www.SAFETY2009.org.

The Conference will be held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, TX, featuring more than 225 educational sessions, key speakers, safety issue roundtables, an executive summit and additional learning opportunities.

The sessions at Safety 2009 includes presentations on organization success, the latest safety methodologies and provide business examples and strategies aimed at increasing job safety that attendees can apply immediately in their workplace. Sessions are presented by experts in their field and will cover topics on construction, international safety and health, environment, fire protection, healthcare, industrial hygiene, safety management, manufacturing, mining, oil & gas, risk management and insurance, transportation, regulatory issues, technical and engineering standards, and a new track

Key speakers at Safety 2009 will include Fox News Business and Financial Journalist Stuart Varney and Former Yahoo! Chief Solutions Officer Tim Sanders. Varney will address the state of global business and the economy and Sanders will discuss the increasing concern about corporate social responsibility and green business practices. The conference will also include a panel discussion featuring occupational safety and health leaders invited from the new Administration.

There will be a large number of exhibitors. A record for the number of exhibitors and organizations are expected with many Fortune 500 companies represented and federal agencies, non-profit organizations such as the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association, universities, colleges and more.

In addition, the ASSE Foundation will be host to a pre-conference golf outing with funds raised going to scholarship for students pursuing degrees in occupational safety and health along with research. The outing will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Golf Club in San Antonio.

For more information or to register for the conference visit www.safety2009.org.

ASSE PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Best-in-Class Safety Management: U.S. and International Best Practices, A Virtual Symposium – April 20th through 24th

As SH&E professionals, we operate in a globally connected world. Our suppliers, our customers and our employees know no time-zone and know no borders. So what to do then about the safety of our workers? How can we implement and manage safety programs in a borderless business environment?

To help answer these questions join colleagues from around the world in ASSEs first "Virtual" Symposium! In it, you'll be able to attend live webcasts delivered by noted experts while interacting with companies and colleagues from across the globe - as you learn to implement Best-in-Class safety management systems within your organization!

Session Highlights:

- Take part in a week of live learning events and networking activities – on your schedule, without having to travel any further than your home or office!



- Engage in over 15 live learning events on Best-in-Class Safety. Miss a session? Not a problem. Catch the recording of the session later on in the day.
- Network and share ideas with an international audience of speakers and attendees.
- Earn CEUs.



Reducing or Ignoring Workplace Safety During Business Downturns Could Be Costly, American Society of Safety Engineers Note

DES PLAINES, IL

“Workplace safety processes must be in place at all times,” American Society of Safety Engineers’ (ASSE) President Warren K. Brown, CSP, ARM, CSHMM, of Fairborn, Ohio, has said. “They are even more critical during business downturns.”

Brown is referring to recent reports of some companies cutting safety processes hoping to reduce costs.

“If companies believe they will save money by reducing or ignoring safety for their workers, customers and communities they do business in, they are mistaken,” Brown said. “The ongoing positive results are in and have been for companies that have a strong safety culture and continually invest in and implement effective safety processes. Not only does their bottom line benefit positively, but their company reputation stays intact, employees stay safe and healthy reducing health care, workers comp, training and turnover costs not to mention keeping customers,

the communities they do business in, vendors and employees happy. Safety is good business.”

Members of the 97-year-old ASSE - occupational safety, health and environmental professionals located worldwide -- caution employers against cutting back on workplace safety in time of economic difficulty.

President-Elect of the ASSE South Carolina Chapter Laura Comstock said, “Some safety related purchases and testing can be deferred, but other purchases, such as those for employee personal protective equipment (PPE) like hardhats, safety glasses and respirators, are critical to operations.”

It is especially important for companies to show support for their employee safety during challenging economic times, she notes. “Employee morale may be low and employees may be carrying additional workloads, such as working additional hours or doing unfamiliar tasks due to cutbacks,” she notes.

Comstock added, “In order to remain viable long-term, a company must maintain a solid safety process even through difficult times. The most successful companies in the long term also have the strongest safety performance.”

“We realize these are tough times, but during economic down-turns, employers seeking to cut expenses may target variable operating costs

such as travel, training and safety,” Brown said. “Money cut from safety processes now could have an enormous cost later; this can be from injury and health care costs, fines, lost production time, employee morale, or worst of all, employee injury or even death. There are better and smarter ways to protect the bottom line.”

ASSE suggests employees can also take measures to help companies save money such as by: following safe working procedures and practices to prevent injuries, related downtime and expenses such as costly fines; by properly using, cleaning and caring for protective equipment such as hardhats and respirators; reusing gloves whenever possible for as long as possible; and by keeping track of safety glasses and reusable hearing protection.

Investing in safety pays and contributes positively to a company’s bottom line. Businesses spend about \$170 billion a year on costs associated with workplace injuries and illnesses and pay almost \$1 billion every week to injured employees and their medical providers. In addition, a recent investment firm study in Australia showed valuation links between workplace safety and health factors

and investment performance. It found that companies who did not adequately manage workplace safety issues underperformed those that did.

Comstock also reminds employers, "When considering training reductions, some

safety related training is driven by regulation, is time sensitive and cannot be delayed. Safety training related savings can be generated by streamlining and implementing simple solutions including using online or electronic safety training services, rather than face-to-face classroom safety training."

"We need to work together during these difficult times, but reducing or ignoring workplace safety should not be a strategic or budget option," Brown said. "The costs – both tangible and intangible – are far too high and hard to recoup."

ASSE Member Benefit News

Earn CoC's by writing for Professional Safety!

The [Board of Certified Safety Professionals](#) awards [Continuance of Certification points](#) for articles published in peer-reviewed journals like ASSE's [Professional Safety](#). Visit <http://www.asse.org/professionalsafety/submit.php> to learn more about writing for the journal.

Government Affairs Updates

Obama Wants Increased OSH Funding in Presidential Budget

The following is what the Obama FY2010 budget proposal says about the Department of Labor as a whole:

Restores Labor Standards. For the past eight years, the Department's labor law enforcement agencies have struggled with growing workloads and shrinking staff. The President's Budget seeks to reverse this trend, restoring the Department's ability to meet its responsibilities to working Americans under the more than 180 worker protection laws it enforces. The Budget will: increase funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, enabling it to vigorously enforce workplace safety laws and whistleblower protections, and ensure the safety and health of American workers; increase enforcement resources for the Wage and Hour Division to ensure that workers are paid the wages that are due them; and boost funding for the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, which is charged with pursuing equal employment opportunity and a fair and diverse Federal contract workforce.

Also at play now is the appropriations bill for FY 2009, which the following article at <http://www.kansascity.com/444/story/1056844.html> does a nice job of explaining

Obama's proposed budget increases workplace safety funding

By **LISA ZAGROLI AND AMES ALEXANDER**,
McClatchy Newspapers

Asserting that mounting workloads and dwindling staff have hindered the government's ability to protect workers, President Barack Obama is pledging to increase the enforcement of workplace safety. Obama's budget blueprint, seeks to increase funding to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. More precise funding details for the job safety agency and other federal programs won't be released until April.

The funding increase would enable OSHA to "vigorously enforce workplace safety laws and whistleblower protections, and ensure the safety and health of American workers," the budget proposal says. The extra money also would be used to increase enforcement of wage and hour rules, and enforce equal opportunity in federal contracting.

Though both houses of Congress will be able to write their own appropriations bills in coming months, lawmakers have shown signs that they will make OSHA a bigger priority. A 2009 appropriations bill now before Congress boosts spending and requires the agency to do a better job tracking injuries and illnesses.



In a \$410 billion appropriations bill now before Congress to fund the current fiscal year through September, there is a \$27 million increase to the agency's budget, for a total of \$513 million.

That bill, passed by the House and expected to be approved by the Senate, dictates that the increase be used to rebuild OSHA's enforcement capacity and increase the pace at which the agency writes new safety standards.

The Obama budget proposal is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/fy2010_new_era/A_New_Era_of_Responsibility2.pdf and the Department of Labor at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/fy2010_new_era/Department_of_Labor.pdf

Obama EPA Budget Announced, from the EPA

Administrator Jackson: 'With these proposed resources, and the president's strong environmental agenda, it should be overwhelmingly clear that EPA is back on the job.'

The Obama administration today proposed a budget of \$10.5 billion for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the largest in the agency's 39-year history. The increase of \$3 billion from 2008 funding levels will further ensure the protection of public health and the environment for all Americans.

"The president's budget proposes critical resources to protect the American people and the places where they live, work and play," said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson. "We are no longer faced with the false choice of a strong economy or a clean environment. The president's budget shows that making critical and responsible investments in protecting the health and environment of all Americans will also lead to a more vibrant and stable economy. With these proposed resources, and the president's strong environmental agenda, it should be overwhelmingly clear that EPA is back on the job."

President Obama has announced the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which

includes \$7.22 billion for EPA-administered projects and programs to protect human health and the environment.

Some key highlights of 2010 budget initiatives include:

- \$3.9 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund grants to support approximately 1,000 clean water projects and 700 drinking water projects - this year's largest single investment. In addition to the funds recently invested through the ARRA, this funding is a critical step in addressing the water infrastructure needs in thousands of communities across the country. EPA will work with state and local partners to develop a sustainability policy, including management and pricing, conservation, security and a plan for adequate long-term state and municipal funding for future capital needs.
- A new \$475 million, multi-agency Great Lakes Initiative to protect the world's largest fresh water resource. EPA will coordinate with federal partners, states, tribes, localities and other entities to protect, maintain and restore the chemical, biological and physical integrity of the lakes. EPA and its partners will address invasive species, non-point source pollution, habitat restoration, contaminated sediment and other critical issues.

- A \$19 million increase for the greenhouse gas emissions inventory and related activities that will provide data critical for implementing a comprehensive climate change bill. EPA's funding for climate change investments is the foundation for working with key stakeholders and Congress to develop an economy-wide cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions approximately 83 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

- Strengthening EPA's core research, enforcement and regulatory capabilities. The budget request also proposes reinstating the Superfund excise taxes that expired. Reinstating the Superfund taxes would collect over \$1 billion annually to fund the cleanup of the nation's most contaminated sites.

More information on EPA's FY 2010 budget request: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>



ASSE Launches New Government Affairs Website

On February 20, ASSE launched an updated Government Affairs website with new

resources to help members become more involved in Government Affairs on the state level. The website contains new resources designed to break-down the advocacy process step-by-step and make it as approachable as possible. One of these new tools is an online guide, called Tools for Advocacy, which describes what actions our members need to take when they want to contact a state or federal legislator about a safety-related issue as an OSH professional and a member of ASSE. New features will be added that allows members to search our past federal comments through a keyword and topic search. With these kinds of new resources, ASSE is hoping that it can continue to build action on the state level and inspire members to be advocates for occupational safety and health in their legislative communities. Check it out at www.asse.org/professionalaaffairs_new/

NAOSH, North American Occupational Safety & Health (NAOSH) Week takes place May 3-9, 2009. Occupational Safety & Health Professional's Day is May 6, 2009.

'Safety Means Always Coming Home' is the theme for the May 3-9, 2009 North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week and Occupational Safety and Health Professional Day on Wednesday, May 6. Please join the thousands of ASSE members in celebrating NAOSH Week as we work to reach everyone on how important it is to be safe on the job. Over the years many of ASSE's kids' 'Safety-on-the-Job' poster contest entrants have said in their posters, 'Safety Always Means Coming Home' for their moms, dads, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and friends.

Throughout NAOSH Week, thousands of ASSE members, their families, businesses,

What is NAOSH Week and what you can do. The link:

<http://www.asse.org/newsroom/naosh09/what-is-naosh-week.php>

ASSE Comments on BLS' Preliminary Census of Fatal OCCUPATION Injuries of 5,488 for 2007. The link:

<http://www.asse.org/newsroom/naosh09/docs/blsstats07brownstatement82008.doc>

BLS Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Report for 2007. The link:

<http://www.asse.org/newsroom/naosh09/docs/blsfatalstatsfor0782008.doc>

government organizations reach out to people worldwide on the importance of job safety and provide information on workplace safety risks and solutions. ASSE provides tools you can use from this web page to support these efforts such as:

- Overview of NAOSH Week
- Activities
- NAOSH Poster Contest (7th annual ASSE kids' "Safety-on-the-Job" poster contest)
- Brochures
- Draft Proclamations/letters
- Statistics
- Chapter Contact Information
- NAOSH Champion Award Winners/Entry Form

Help us make a difference. As millions of people go to and return home from work safely every day, due, in part, to the commitment and work of occupational safety, health and environmental professionals committed to protecting people, property and the environment.

However, in 2007 5,488 people did not make it home. Through NAOSH Week and the efforts of ASSE members, businesses and hundreds of other organizations such as hospitals, software manufacturers, small businesses, government organizations and more, we will reach out to those businesses without a safety system in place, without a safety culture where safety is a top priority – to enable everyone to return home from work safely.

Go to Click on the links on this web page to take you to the tools you can use, request posters, download and order brochures and to see what was done in years past.

Designating the week of May 4 through May 10, 2008, as "North American Occupational Safety and Health Week" and May 7, 2008, as "Occupational Safety and Health Professionals Day". (Agreed to by Senate)

Questions: customerservice@asse.org or call 847-699-2929. In the meantime please note the following Congressional Resolution – SRES 547 passed last spring recognizing NAOSH Week, Occupational Safety and Health Professional Day and the occupational safety, health and environmental profession:

A Trashed Economy Foretold

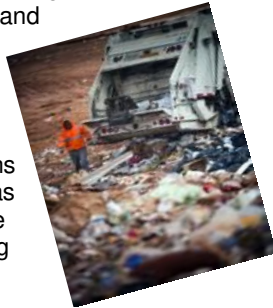
From: *Washington Post* |
By [Brigid Schulte](#)

Along with the stock market and the foreclosure rate, a less-heralded barometer has signaled the arrival of hard times: the landfill.

In an extravagantly wasteful society that typically puts 254 million tons of unwanted stuff at the curb to be thrown away each year, landfill managers say they knew something was amiss in the economy when they saw trash levels start steadily dropping last year. Now, some are reporting declines as sharp as 30 percent.

"The trash man is the first one to know about a recession because we see it first," said Richard S. Weber, manager of the

Loudoun County landfill. "Circuit City's closing, so people aren't going there and buying those big boxes of stuff and throwing away all that Styrofoam and shrink-wrap . . . and whatever they were replacing."



Landfills and trash transfer stations across the country are reporting as much as a 30 percent drop in the amount of garbage they're getting for the first time in years.

Trash volume has dropped so much, Weber said, that instead of running out of space in 2012, as had been projected, the Loudoun landfill will gain a year and a half or so of use. "That's huge," he said.

In Prince William County, which has been particularly hard hit with foreclosures, the amount of discarded refrigerators, washers, dryers and other appliances that are usually sent



to the landfill has fallen by 20 percent since the recession started. "People aren't buying new," said Tom Smith, solid waste program manager. "They're making do with what they have."

It's all part of the cycle of stuff that people in the trash business say they've seen in every economic downturn since the end of World War II. People don't buy stuff, so there's less packaging — which typically makes up one-third of all landfill trash — to toss. With a drop in demand, manufacturers make less, creating less waste. More vacant homes and fewer people in a community mean less trash. A stagnant housing market means less construction debris. On tight budgets, people eat out less, so restaurants order less, so there's less to throw away. Landscapers are out of work, so there's less yard debris.

At the Montgomery County transfer station, it wasn't unusual to see as many as 40 garbage trucks waiting in a line that snaked nearly one mile back to the entrance gate



Machines compress the trash at the Loudoun County Landfill in Leesburg.

on Shady Grove Road to dump their loads. "Now, there's virtually no line,"

manager Peter Karasik said. "Ever."

Even in Virginia, which takes in more out-of-state garbage than any state save one, trash men began noticing declines in late 2007 of 10 to 20 percent. "And normally garbage is a pretty steady business because everybody wants to get rid of it," said Richard Doucette, a waste program manager with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Now, he said, some landfills are laying off workers.

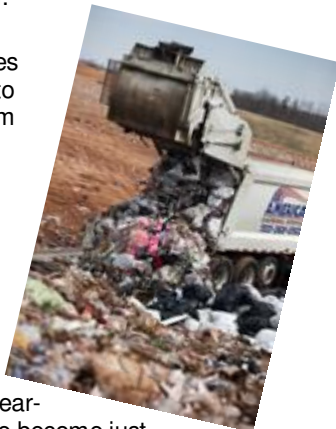
Finally, said Ben Boxer, spokesman for Fairfax County's solid waste management program, the economy is forcing people to heed the environmentalists' mantra: Reduce! Reuse! Recycle! Repair! "A lot of these things that people throw away do have a valuable second life," he said, "especially for those who, now more than ever, are going to be facing difficult times."

In better times, Boxer has seen perfectly usable sofas crammed into dumpsters. But now, instead of ending up at the dump, stuff is being repaired and kept or traded on Web sites such as Freecycle.org, where up to 70,000 people a week have been registering to swap stuff since the recession officially began in the fall.



Americans might not be saving string and rubber bands like their grandparents did during the Great Depression. But as the recession drags on, they are clearly rethinking the way they use their plentiful stuff.

These are the kinds of times that compel Paul Zehfuss to drive about 15 minutes from Springfield to Alexandria during his lunch hour to a new store that sells only batteries to get an electric toothbrush on the fritz repaired.



In other times, Zehfuss would have "absolutely" tossed the thing. His two-year-old silver Braun would have become just another ounce in what some environmental groups calculate as the 25,000 tons of toothbrushes Americans throw away every year.

"I realize this is kind of stupid," Zehfuss said. "But I'd rather replace the battery right now than buy new."

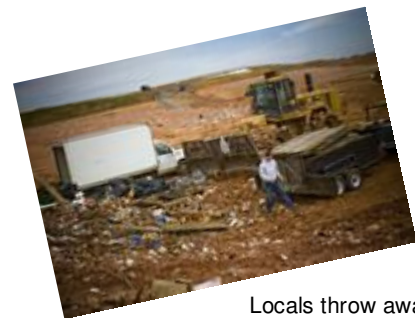
The saga of the broken toothbrush is telling: Batteries Plus is one of the few stores in this economy that is doing such brisk business that it's expanding. Its whole reason for being is to help people preserve their stuff — power tools, cameras, appliances, alarms, sump pumps,

cellphone chargers — rather than send it to the landfill.

Auto repair. Appliance repair. Computer repair. Many such providers in the region are reporting steady, if not increasing, business. "Right now, I have broken machinery everywhere," said Brian McElroy, a shop manager at Friendly Computers in Herndon. "Some machines are on the verge of being boat anchors — they should throw them away instead of fix them." In better times, Americans do toss them. The Environmental Protection Agency says 2 million tons of tech trash winds up in landfills each year, as do 100 million cellphones. "There are laptops that I would personally shoot if I walked in here with one," McElroy said. "But people are weighing replacing an operating system for \$500 or buying new for \$600 and opting to save the \$100."

It comes as no surprise to economists that during recessions, consumers — whose spending drives 70 percent of the U.S. economy — choose to repair their stuff instead of throw it away.

Louis Johnston, an economist at the College of St. Benedict in Collegeville, Minn., combed through Commerce Department data and found that during recessions, people tend to spend 5 percent of their household budgets on repairs. In good times, repair spending falls — in recent years to below 1 percent. "People need to know what the future's going to look like in order to plan for it," Johnston said. "The more uncertain it is, the more likely people are to just stop or walk in place."



Locals throw away trash at the Loudoun County Landfill in Leesburg.

That dictum might be seen most clearly with the stuff we wear. Retail sales have fallen or remained flat for the past



Landfills and trash transfer stations across the country are reporting as much as a 30 percent drop in the amount of garbage they're getting for the first time in years, including the Loudoun County landfill in Leesburg.

five months. People aren't buying new clothes or donating their old ones. Sales are up at Goodwill's nine Washington area thrift stores — 52 percent in January alone — but donations have fallen so

much that the charity has been forced to advertise for them

for the first time. "If we're not able to increase the donations coming in, we run the risk of not being able to meet the increasing shopper demand," said Brendan Hurley, vice president for marketing and communications at Goodwill.

People aren't throwing clothes away, either. The EPA says Americans discarded 7 million tons of clothing and footwear in 2007. But this year, more people are following Cathy Willis's example. Willis had a trunk of old sweaters and chose to "update" them instead of tossing them, donating them or buying something new. She found Elinor Coleman, an expert "rebuttoner," and on a recent day the two huddled over a pile of sweaters and scads of vintage buttons to reimagine her wardrobe. "If I knew my job was more stable," said Willis, who works for a nonprofit group. "I'd probably be out buying new clothes."

But will the reuse and repair trend last in our throwaway society?

Julia Bovey, spokeswoman for the Natural Resources Defense Council, says yes. "I think we're seeing a change in culture."

However, Chaz Miller, director of state programs for the National Solid Wastes Management Association, predicts that once good times roll again, so will the garbage. "We as

individuals tend to be very acquisitive," he said. "We call people saints who get by on very little voluntarily. We say we'd like to emulate that, but in reality, very few of us do."

The most lasting change to the waste stream — manufacturers cutting down on packaging — was well underway before the recession, he said, and will stick because it saves companies money. Wal-Mart has promised to cut packaging by 5 percent. Amazon, McDonald's, Heinz, Coca-Cola — all have redesigned products and packaging to reduce waste. Cadbury has come out with chocolate eco-eggs to reduce the amount of plastic used in packaging every year by more than 200 tons.

So whatever became of Paul Zehfuss's broken toothbrush?

Sadly, electric toothbrushes, like electric razors, exemplify the principal of "planned obsolescence." With their battery cases soldered shut, neither can be easily fixed. "They did absolutely everything they could," Zehfuss sighed.

He bought a new one at Costco. And, much to his chagrin, his old toothbrush, after spending awhile on a Batteries Plus shelf as a "teaching tool," will indeed be on its way to the trash.

Job Postings

We can help with the current economic downturn:

Network with colleagues

Pass on jobs leads

Post positions to chapter website.

Job openings should be passed to:

Bill Ward, Placement Coordinator, rwward2007@yahoo.com.

Spring is here with summer fast on its heels

We all know what that means: outdoor fun, food, family, grilling, weekend warriors and sun, bugs and the list goes on!

We need to remember the basics: all things in moderation including the weekend
If you would like to article worth sharing, drop me a line.

Send your info to: ahead of time.

warriors!

Wash raw foods thoroughly, watch foods left outside (un-refrigerated, the mayo issue), wash your hands, remind the little ones not to drink after anyone . . .

And have some fun!

contribute to the newsletter, run across an interesting found an interesting blog related to EHS, feel free to

smitchum@contekllc and I will try to get it in. Thanks Shannon