



2025 Winter Training

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

MCIT | 100 Empire Dr., St. Paul, MN, 55103

Accredited for 5.5 hours for Type II or Type III MPCA Solid Waste Landfill Operator Recertification

8:00 – 8:30 a.m.

Check-In for Registration & Social Time

Coffee and snacks will be provided!

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Welcome & CollectED Survey Results: Battery Disposal

Drew Hatzenbihler, President | Solid Waste Administrators Association

Maria Jensen, Co-Director | RECA



CollectED is a DOE funded project that aims to educate the public about the lifecycle of batteries. Our team surveyed 1000 attendees at the State Fair last year and at this time we have some results to share with waste professionals.

Maria Jensen is the Co-Director of RECA, an electronics recycling business association.

9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

SWA101: HHW Communications & New Programs

Kristi Otterson, HHW Program Manager | Dakota County

Mike Rogers, Senior Environmental Specialist | Stearns County

Maureen Mossak, Environmental Specialist & Jillian Carlson, Environmental Specialist | Sherburne County

Dakota: Update on the proposed new Recycling Zone Plus facility. Dakota County anticipates building a new regional HHW and recycling drop-off facility in Lakeville. The new facility will be a partnership with Scott County to provide additional services to residents in both counties.

Kristi Otterson is a Sr. Environmental Specialist at Dakota County Environmental Resources Department and has been the HHW program manager for 5 years. She has worked for Dakota County since 2012 and has over 23 years in public and private solid waste and hazardous waste management.

Stearns: Stearns HHW continues to evolve and is making radical changes. They discuss the considerations and decision making behind program expansions, staffing, mobile collections, and facility hours.

Mike Rogers graduated from SCSU in 2017 and began working for Stearns County that summer. He is now a Senior Environmental Specialist and is passionate about safety and exploring new ideas for the county.



(Session description continues on next page)

Sherburne: HHW mobile events have proven unsustainable for Sherburne County's growing population. Sherburne County contracted with HDR Inc. to complete a household hazardous waste feasibility study to assist the County in planning for the future of HHW management. As a result, Sherburne County is moving forward with plans to construct a permanent HHW facility to better manage this growing waste stream.



Maureen Mossak is an Environmental Specialist with Sherburne County. With a deep commitment to waste reduction, she works to develop strategies that minimize waste, promote recycling and foster sustainable practices. She is responsible for assisting in the development of County solid waste policies and programs, coordinating household hazardous waste collection events, working with schools to implement waste reduction and recycling programs, as well as, enforcing County ordinances. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from The University of Minnesota and has over six years of diverse experience in supporting waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

Jillian Carlson works as an Environmental Specialist for Sherburne County, working to provide robust recycling programs for county residents and local businesses. She has worked at the county for three years, during that time working to put her passion for environmental sustainability into action by researching, developing, and implementing solid waste strategies that focus on enhancing recycling waste reduction efforts, as well as, maximizing landfill abatement ultimately to protect the county's land, air, water and other natural resources and public health.



10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Break

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

What Got Passed: EPR for Packaging & Boat Wrap

John Gilkeson, Principal Planner | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Background and updates on Extended Producer Responsibility laws for packaging/paper products and boat wrap that were enacted by the 2024 MN Legislature.



John Gilkeson has worked for the MPCA for about 35 years on a range of policy issues connected to management and reduction of problem materials in the waste stream, with a focus on pollution prevention and product stewardship or producer responsibility approaches to toxic substances.

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Lunch

12:45 – 1:15 p.m.

Region Planning 101: A NW MN Perspective

Jon Steiner, Environmental Services Administrator | Polk County

Jon will provide a few examples of Solid Waste-related initiatives built through regional partnerships. Discussion of how the partnerships were formed, and considerations in forming them.

Jon Steiner has been blessed to have worked with a great group of people over the years within NW Minnesota - people who share the same values and commitment to trying to improve the services we deliver to improve and protect the local environment. The group of counties who we work closely with has grown over the years to include other counties, cities, Tribes and private businesses. Any successes realized by these partnerships are the result of the entire group - not an individual county or person.



1:15 – 2:00 p.m.

Plasma Blue Presentation

Tom Slunecka, CEO | Plasma Blue

Shaobo Deng, Researcher | University of Minnesota Southern Research & Outreach Center

Participants will learn about the benefits of Continuous Flow in-liquid Plasma Discharge for PFAS Destruction in Water. By learning more about the Plasma Blue technology, participants will better understand how the technology achieves results.



Tom Slunecka is chief executive officer for Plasma Blue. Through his leadership efforts, Tom has brought the Plasma Blue technology from conception to reality, creating impactful results for several industries, including the solid waste industry. Tom's entrepreneurial spirit pushes him to lead ideas across the valley of death of research and development and into commercialization.

Shaobo Deng is an experienced researcher for the University of Minnesota at the Southern Research and Outreach Center. His expertise is in biofuels, bioprocessing, waste treatment and utilization, and the applications of plasma and high-voltage technology. Shaobo holds seven plasma-related US patents and is the originator of continuous flow in-liquid plasma technology. Shaobo holds the following certifications: Researcher specialized; Biofuels; Bioprocessing; Waste Treatment and Utilization; and Applications of Plasma and high-voltage technology.



2:00 – 2:45 p.m.

Community Education & Tackling Misinformation

Andrea McKennan, Program Supervisor – Education, Communications, & Outreach | Ramsey/Washington/Recycling & Energy

Beth Carreno | Ramsey County

Alisa Reckinger | Hennepin County

This session will cover how six metro counties teamed up to develop the Recycling Exists campaign in response to messaging and news that had residents wondering, "does recycling work?" Topics covered will include how key messages and creative concepts were developed and how the campaign was implemented.



Andrea McKennan has been communicating about waste and recycling for the past six years, working for both Ramsey County and Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy. Prior to that, she helped the northeast states collaborate in addressing waste while working with the Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association. She has also served in communication and project management roles for public libraries.

Beth Carreño is an Environmental Health Supervisor overseeing the work of the Solid Waste Programs and Outreach and Engagement Units at Ramsey County Environmental Health. She has worked in natural resources for over 30 years and most recently worked for a metro watershed district before joining Ramsey County Environmental Health. She spent 16 years living in other parts of the Midwest and couldn't wait to return to Minnesota. She loves this state and loves her work helping residents discover the things they can do to keep our state great – especially when it comes to recycling, composting, and reducing the amount of "stuff" we send to landfills.



(Session description continues on next page)

Alisa Reckinger has more than 15 years of experience in environmental communications and education. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and a master's in environmental education from Hamline University. She is passionate about crafting messages and telling stories that are relevant and useful, capture attention and emotion, and motivate action.

2:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Break

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Legislative Update

Brian Martinson | Association of Minnesota Counties

Brian Martinson is the Environment & Natural Resources Policy Analyst for the Association of Minnesota Counties. In that role, he also serves as government relations staff to the Solid Waste Administrators Association, Minnesota Association of County Planning and Zoning Administrators, Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers and Minnesota Association of County Agriculture Inspectors. Brian has a strong background in state legislative and policy work with previous work as a Minnesota Senate staff member and Director of State Government Affairs for an agriculture cooperative.



3:30 p.m.

Adjourn

Save the Date!

SWAA Annual Conference

September 17 – 19, 2025

Arrowwood - Alexandria

Look for details and registration this summer!