

## MEMBERS

Antioch  
Beach Park  
Deer Park  
Deerfield  
Fox Lake  
Grayslake  
Great Lakes NTC  
Green Oaks  
Gurnee  
Hainesville  
Hawthorn Woods  
Highland Park  
Highwood  
Island Lake  
Kildeer  
Lake Barrington  
Lake Bluff  
Lake County  
Lake Forest  
Lake Villa  
Lake Zurich  
Libertyville  
Lincolnshire  
Lindenhurst  
Long Grove  
Mundelein  
North Barrington  
North Chicago  
Park City  
Port Barrington  
Riverwoods  
Round Lake  
Round Lake Beach  
Round Lake Heights  
Round Lake Park  
Third Lake  
Tower Lakes  
Vernon Hills  
Wadsworth  
Wauconda  
Waukegan  
Winthrop Harbor  
Zion



This report provides an overview of SWALCO's programs and highlights for 2007 and 2008. SWALCO (The Solid Waste Agency of Lake County) is a municipal joint action agency comprised of 41 municipal members, the County of Lake and the Great Lakes Naval Training Center. SWALCO has continued to expand its programs and the overall recycling rate in Lake County during this two year time period, as discussed in the following sections.

In July 2007 SWALCO appointed a new Executive Director, Walter Willis, to manage and lead the Agency. He has over 20 years of experience in the solid waste field, including working at both state (Illinois EPA) and local (Lee County Solid Waste Coordinator) levels, and as a private sector waste management consultant. He has prepared and helped implement solid waste management plans for dozens of counties and

solid waste districts throughout Illinois and the United States. He has also been involved in numerous facility development projects for recycling centers, transfer stations and landfills.

Two of the biggest challenges facing the Agency in the coming years are: 1) planning for Lake County's ultimate transition from relying on in-county landfills to a long-term and sustainable alternative disposal option, and 2) securing long-term funding for the continued operation of SWALCO as the current primary source of funding, landfill related fees, continues to decline.

### 2007/2008 Highlights

- SWALCO received permitting approval to expand its Household Chemical Waste (HCW) program to provide year round drop-off events at our permanent facility in Gurnee. In 2008 a record 31 HCW collection events were held in Lake County.
- Over the two year period,

SWALCO members received \$717,755 for the approximately 92,066 tons of recyclables sent to the Waste Management Recycle America facility in Grayslake. This agreement with WMRA was renegotiated and extended in 2008, and includes greater potential revenue for members' recyclables, depending on market conditions.

- Approximately 1.9 million pounds of electronic scrap was recycled at collection events held throughout Lake County in 2007 and 2008. By 2008 Lake County had the largest and most effective electronics collection program in Illinois.
- SWALCO's Reuse-A-Shoe program grew significantly as more local groups became involved in collecting athletic shoes in the County. Nearly 50,000 shoes were collected over the two year period demonstrating the interest and commitment of dozens of organizations in Lake County in improving the environment.

## *SWALCO's Mission*

- Implement the Lake County Solid Waste Management Plan.
- Facilitate an efficient, reliable and environmentally sound waste disposal system.
- Advise and assist members regarding solid waste management issues.
- Educate the public regarding implications of solid waste management options.
- Promote the 4 Rs. Identify, evaluate and disseminate information regarding techniques to reduce, reuse and recycle the amount of solid waste generated.



*Mobile HCW events are held at locations around Lake County. Year-round collections at the Gurnee facility.*

## *Household Chemical Waste*

SWALCO operates a year-round Household Chemical Waste (HCW) Collection Program which diverts household chemical waste from the municipal waste stream and places it into recycling/reuse programs.

The HCW Program is a hybrid consisting of mobile collection events and public drop-off events, the only one of its kind in the State of Illinois. It is supported by SWALCO's members and the IEPA (Illinois Environmental Protection Agency).

The program is not only important from an environmental perspective, but also serves as a great public safety program. Residents no longer have to stockpile their HCW, or pour them down the drain because "there is no other option".

### *2007 HCW Program*

#### *SWALCO launches new year-round service*

SWALCO provides technical assistance to supplemental programs: Partner for Paint Program (Ela Township Highway Department), which focuses on paint collection, and recycling and waste oil collection programs located at the Lake Zurich Public Works and the Lake Barrington Public Works Departments.

2007 marked a milestone for SWALCO's HCW Collection Program. A new expanded HCW Program was introduced that provides residents two ways to dispose of their household chemical wastes; through the traditional mobile collection events held at various locations throughout Lake County and, for the first time, through year-round public drop-off

events held at SWALCO's Gurnee facility. This hybrid program increased accessibility and allowed the opportunity to provide HCW collection services on a year-round basis.

Ten (10) mobile events were conducted throughout Lake County in 2007, from April through November. Site locations included various municipal centers, public works facilities, train

stations and high schools.

Additionally, ten (10) public drop-off events were conducted. Participant surveys indicate approximately 43% of the participants were first time visitors to the events. Approximately 7,020 households were served collecting approximately 650,000 pounds of waste.



*Residents from Lake County are assisted by Island Lake Public Works and SWALCO staff as they drop-off their HCW at a Mobile Collection Event.*

### *2008 HCW Program has record year*

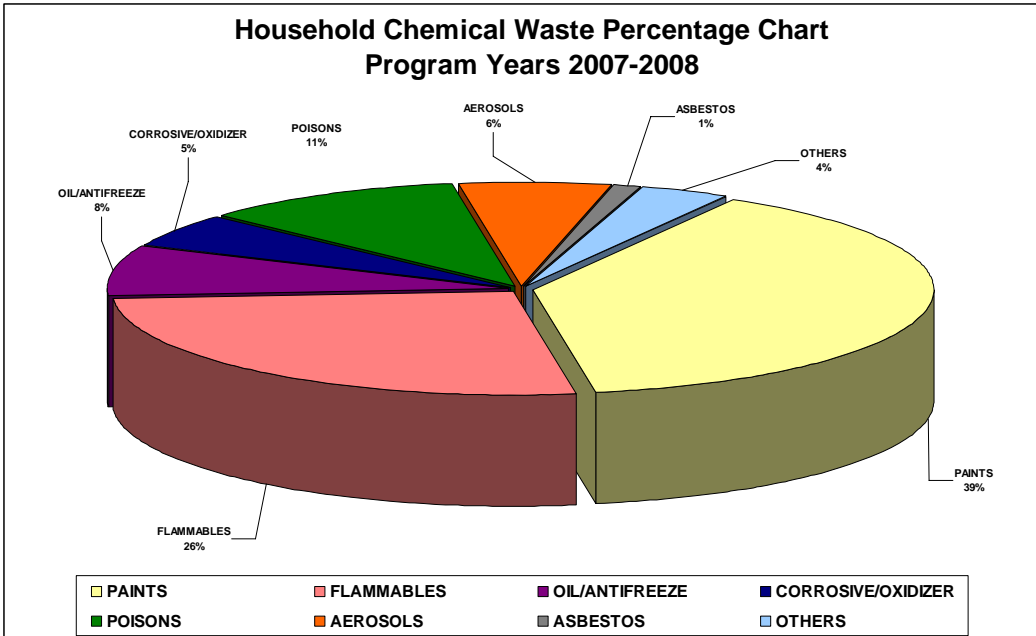
A record number of HCW collection events were conducted in 2008: 31 events (10 mobile/21 public drop-offs) in total. It was the eleventh year of operation for SWALCO's Household Chemical Waste (HCW) Collection Program and the first full year of

operation for its hybrid HCW program.

The events serviced approximately 6,757 households diverting an estimated 640,000 pounds of HCW from our municipal waste stream. Approximately 39% of the participants at the mobile events and 65% of

the participants at the public drop-offs (popular with participants due to its convenience and speed of service) were first time visitors. Attendance levels and percentage of "first timers" indicate a continuing demand for these types of programs.

## HCW Statistics



### 2007 – 2008 Waste Percentage Chart

The chart above provides a comprehensive breakdown of the types and percentages of waste collected through SWALCO’s Household Chemical Waste (HCW) program during the 2007 and 2008 years. Residents have access to a list of items they can bring to these collections on the SWALCO website.

## Tire & Oil Recycling Event

Tires and motor oil have been banned from Illinois landfills for years. Illinois citizens produce more than 12 million used tires annually. Tires can present a number of aesthetic, environmental, health and safety hazards when not in use or properly stored. SWALCO and The Lake County Farm Bureau, in conjunction with the IEPA, partnered to host a Tire and

Oil Recycling Event for Lake County residents on May 13, 2008 at the County Fairgrounds. It was a rare opportunity for residents to safely rid their property of unwanted tires and motor oil. Units of local government were also invited to participate. Approximately 1,850 gallons of used oil and over 13,000 tires (250 tons) were collected. Although the

program was free, the Farm Bureau received almost \$3,000 in donations from the day to aid agricultural education programs.

SWALCO partners with Farm Bureau and other local organizations on a variety of school education projects and programs.

In 2007/2008 approx. 1.2 million pounds of hazardous waste was collected that otherwise would have gone into the landfills or sanitary systems.



*SWALCO & Farm Bureau staff and volunteers collected over 13,000 tires and 1,850 gallons of used oil at a special recycling event.*



SWALCO launched a new hybrid HCW program in 2007 that allowed for year-round service for the first time ever.



*Administration and Educators from Grayslake North High School holding their Earth Flag, presented to them after their year-long efforts and achievements fulfilling the criteria for the SWALCO Program.*

In 2007 and 2008, SWALCO collected nearly 50,000 gym shoes for recycling and worked with local groups including State Rep. Kathy Ryg, Vernon Hills Park District and Public Works and United Partnership of Wauconda to offer year-round drop-off.

## Public Information & Education

One of SWALCO's main goals/purposes and part of its mission statement is to do outreach and educate the public about the importance of waste reduction and recycling. SWALCO's Public Information Officer coordinates a variety of projects and programs for the Agency, including: school education, Reuse-A-Shoe, America Recycles Day Recycle-O-Rama, Earth Day celebrations, community outreach and education, member services, marketing/PR and more. The office creates and compiles a wide variety of information and resources. It also maintains and updates SWALCO's website ([www.swalco.org](http://www.swalco.org)) and member e-lists. During 2007-2008 years, education and assistance was provided to schools, public libraries, community groups and organizations, corporations

and others in our member communities to help develop "green teams" and implement environmental programs and projects. Articles on waste, recycling and other topics were created and provided for various community newsletters and a special online website guide called "Green Days", with articles on a variety of topics was created. SWALCO's Public Information Officer gave presentation/talks to groups on a number of recycling and other environmental issues and topics including "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about SWALCO and the 4Rs...", "How to Make Your Office more Eco-Friendly", "How to Go Green at Home", "Composting 101", "Meet The 4<sup>th</sup> R" and a number of presentations on the environment, living a more environmentally friendly life

(going green), recycling, waste reduction and the importance of the 4 Rs. There were appearances made on local cable programs to talk about the agency and its programs. A number of village/city special events were attended to assist members, providing interesting displays, educational information and resources for the local community. Residents had many questions they wanted answered and were happy to have a resource in front of them that could answer questions knowledgeably on a variety of environmental and waste related topics. Some events included village/city celebrations, open houses, Public Works events, environmental health and safety fairs, as well as special Earth Day and eco festivities/events.

## Reuse-A-Shoe

SWALCO oversees the Reuse-A-Shoe gym shoe recycling program for Lake County. Every year, across the globe, millions of pairs of athletic shoes end up in landfills or disposed of in some other way. With the pursuit of sustainability in mind, SWALCO partners with Nike to recycle worn out athletic shoes and turn them into something new. Old athletic shoes of any

brand, are collected, processed and recycled into a material called "Nike Grind" that is used to create sports surfaces like basketball courts, tennis courts, athletic fields, running tracks and playgrounds. Scout troops, park districts, schools, libraries, City/Village Departments and administration, as well as other community organizations, corporate

groups and local legislators participate in the program. In 2007-2008 years, SWALCO collected nearly 50,000 shoes and worked with local groups including State Rep. Kathy Ryg, Vernon Hills Park District and Public Works and United Partnership of Wauconda to offer year-round drop. Turning old shoes into something new... Now that's creative recycling!



*State Rep. Kathy Ryg & staff member Teresa Loerb with Walter Willis, Merleanne Rampale, Pete Adrian & Board Member John Norris from SWALCO. Her office acts as a year-round drop for the Reuse-A-Shoe program SWALCO sponsors for Lake County groups. Much of what we dispose of contains valuable materials that, with a little bit of imagination and ingenuity, can be reused.*

## School Education: 2007-2008 Highlights

- 17 Schools earned Earth Flags during the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 school years. Activities included book swaps, mini recycling classes, waste free lunches, composting and participation in Reuse-A-Shoe. One school designed and sold reusable shopping bags w/school logo.
- 25 Schools earned Earth Flag Everyday certification & plaques during 2007 & 2008 school years. New and updated certificate designed by Public Information to reflect the global importance of their efforts.
- Conducted solid waste and environmental workshops and programs.
- Presented workshops for teachers
- Coordinated the “Picture a World with Less Waste” poster contest for students in Lake County.
- Hosted Earth Day Celebrations with WMRA in April of 2007 and 2008 with over 400 people attending each.
- Educational Assistance and resources were given to Lake County schools (K-12) to help establish recycling programs or assist with other projects/efforts.



*SWALCO's Earth Flag Program educates students, teachers, parents and administration about the impact that waste reduction, reuse, recycling and buying recycled has on the environment.*

## Special Programs and Projects

The PPCP (Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products) initiative was implemented in 2007. SWALCO, along with Lake County's Health Department, Public Works and North Shore Sanitary District, created and distributed an informational flyer about proper pharmaceutical disposal. It was distributed throughout Lake County to help inform

residents about this important topic.

In 2008 a new website was unveiled with updated text, new pages and a fresh new look. In addition to the numerous phone calls the agency receives, the website received approximately 70,000+ visitors per month during the 2007-2008 period. The number continues to grow. Two

e-lists, one for general announcements, and one for educators were also offered with notable news, information and notices of upcoming programs/events.

A special online website guide, “Green Days”, with articles on a number of solid waste and environmental topics was created and added to the website.

SWALCO instituted the first inaugural Recycle-O-Rama event to celebrate America Recycles Day in November, 2008. SWALCO partnered with Warren-Newport Library, who co-sponsored the event.

## America Recycles Day & 1st Recycle O-Rama

The first inaugural ARD event was held on November 15, 2008 to encourage people to recycle and buy products made from recycled materials. There were educational games and an opportunity to recycle items that could not go in curb-

side recycling bins including: CDs, eyeglasses, broken crayons (new recycled crayons were made in a separate program), batteries, cell phones, printer cartridges, athletic shoes and more. A book, DVD and music CD swap table was also

available. Attendees could purchase eco-friendly products/products made from recycled materials from local vendors. Prizes and reusable bags were handed out. The program was co-sponsored by Warren-Newport Library.



*Merleanne Rampale from SWALCO and Kruti Patel from Waste Management Recycle America co-sponsored a workshop to educate youth about the importance of the 4 Rs. SWALCO and WMRA also offered workshops for teachers.*



In 2007-2008 Lake County experienced its highest overall recycling rate, meeting or exceeding 50% recycling each year.

## Recycling in Lake County

Lake County experienced its highest overall recycling rate during the years 2007-2008, exceeding the goal set in the 2004 Solid Waste Management Plan Update.

The total volume of material recycled in 2007 and 2008 was 55% and 50%, respectively. These percentages exceed the

State's 25% recycling goal by a significant margin. The waste generation rate was based on a 7.5-pound per-capita per-day average, which was determined by the 2004 Lake County Solid Waste Plan Update.

The 2007 – 2008 Recycling Report for Lake County was compiled in accordance

with state law, which defines the types of materials that may be counted in determining the recycling rate: residentially generated recyclables, commercial and industrial recyclables (excluding manufacturing related volumes), landscape waste, and construction and demolition debris.



*SWALCO Recycling Coordinator, Pete Adrian, prepared TV's and other electronics for shipment from one of the many electronic collection locations in Lake County.*

## Electronics Recycling

During the 2007-2008 term a total of fourteen Agency members and three townships hosted various residential electronics collection events where Lake County residents were allowed to drop off broken or unwanted electronic equipment for recycling. Over the two year period a total of 19,600 participants delivered approximately 958

tons (1.9 million pounds) of electronics to the various host locations.

Since the inception of the Residential Electronics Collection Program in 2000, a total of 3.4 million pounds of electronics have been collected from 32,889 participants making SWALCO's Residential Electronics Collection

Program the largest and longest operating program collecting electronics from residential sources within the State of Illinois. This program is considered to be a model that other municipal, county and state officials will emulate upon the implementation of the Illinois Electronics Recycling Act that becomes effective in 2010.

## Per Ton Payment

The Per Ton Payment Agreement between SWALCO and Waste Management Recycle America (WMRA) has made recycling profitable for participating Lake County communities that direct their waste services provider to deliver their community's

recyclables to the WMRA facility in Grayslake.

During the 2007 – 2008 period thirty-two SWALCO members received a combined total of \$717,755 for the 92,066 tons of recycling collected from within their communities.

SWALCO receives funds from WMRA on a quarterly basis, and then distributes the money to the member communities based on volume of recycling that is collected from within their community. There is no financial risk for members.

Approximately 960 tons (1.9 million pounds) of electronics were collected in Lake County to be recycled during 2007 & 2008.

## Plastic Bag Recycling

On August 17, 2007 the Governor signed into law the Plastic Bag Recycling Act (PA 095-0268). The Act established a Task Force

made up of local Lake County legislators and businesses including representation by SWALCO. The Task Force

has developed a plan to execute a pilot collection program to be implemented in 2009.

On August 17, 2007 the Governor signed Plastic Bag Recycling Act PA 095-0268 into law. The Act established a Task Force made up of Lake County legislators and businesses including representation by SWALCO. The Task Force developed a plan to execute a pilot collection program in 2009.

## Public Recycling Pilots

Data has indicated that the vast majority of single-serve beverage containers that are consumed away from home are not being recycled. They are typically disposed of in trash receptacles located in parks, public walkways, retail business establishment entrances and gas stations.

Over the past two years SWALCO has maintained its support of two pilot

projects to assist members in collecting recyclable beverage containers at public recreation facilities, municipal special events and at gas station pumps.

In 2007 – 2008 SWALCO has continued to supplement the distribution of both portable and permanent recycling collection containers to both municipal members

and the original gas station pilot participants. In 2008 the Village of Vernon Hills initiated a beverage container recycling program at its Athletic Complex. With Agency assistance 20 “Pop Bottle” collection bins were placed adjacent to existing waste collection containers throughout the Athletic Complex.



*SWALCO subsidizes the cost of household compost bins for Lake County residents, so they can purchase them at a reduced price and compost food scraps and yard waste at home.*

## Compost Bin Sales

Since 1998 SWALCO has subsidized the cost of compost bins for county residents so they can compost food scraps and yard waste at home. SWALCO provides bins for sale at several locations in Lake County at a reduced price. A small amount of the sales benefit the non-profit organizations

that are housing and selling them. In addition to creating mulch for yards and gardens, composting at home means residents will dispose of less material in their waste. Composting has many benefits for the homeowner, including lower garbage bills. This program has been responsible for placing over 16,000

compost bins in households throughout Lake County and accounts for an estimated 5,000 tons of organic material being diverted from our landfills annually.

Residents can visit the SWALCO website to find out more about composting, how-to links and for sale locations.

SWALCO's Compost Bin program has been responsible for placing over 16,000 compost bins in Lake County households.

# Agency History

In 1989, Lake County became the first county in Illinois to adopt a solid waste management plan in compliance with the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act. The Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO) was formed in 1991 to implement the Lake County Solid Waste Management Plan, which is updated every five years. The Agency currently represents approximately 85%-90% of the county's population.

Since the Agency was formed 41

municipalities, Great Lakes Naval Training Center and Lake County have joined to participate in forming and maintaining the county solid waste management system. Agency staff provide members with assistance and advice on any and all solid waste management issues and educate the public on a number of environmental topics including recycling and waste reduction.

Each member community designates a representative and alternate(s) to serve

on the SWALCO Board of Directors.

During the 2007-2008 year Trustee Larry Mount of Round Lake Beach served as the Chairman of the SWALCO Board and Mayor Glenn Ryback of Wadsworth served as Vice-Chair.

## SWALCO Staff

Walter Willis, Executive Director

Peter Adrian, Recycling Coordinator

Barbara Amadei, Office Manager

Steve Nelson, Household Chemical Waste Engineer

Merleanne Rampale, Public Information Officer



SWALCO Office and HCW Facility  
in Gurnee, Illinois



## CONTACT SWALCO

For more information about SWALCO's programs and services, or for our event line, please call the SWALCO office at 847-336-9340.

Visit us on the web at [www.swalco.org](http://www.swalco.org) for:

- More information on programs and services

- Upcoming collections and events
- Disposal Guide
- Recycling Guidelines
- Information & articles on how to live a more environmentally friendly life.

You can also sign up for our general e-list service

announcements to receive occasional announcements and information on upcoming events and related information.

Educators can sign up for a separate e-list service for occasional information and announcements that may be helpful to them.

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