

TIP OFF

NEWS, FACTS & FIGURES ■ BY STEPHEN URSERY

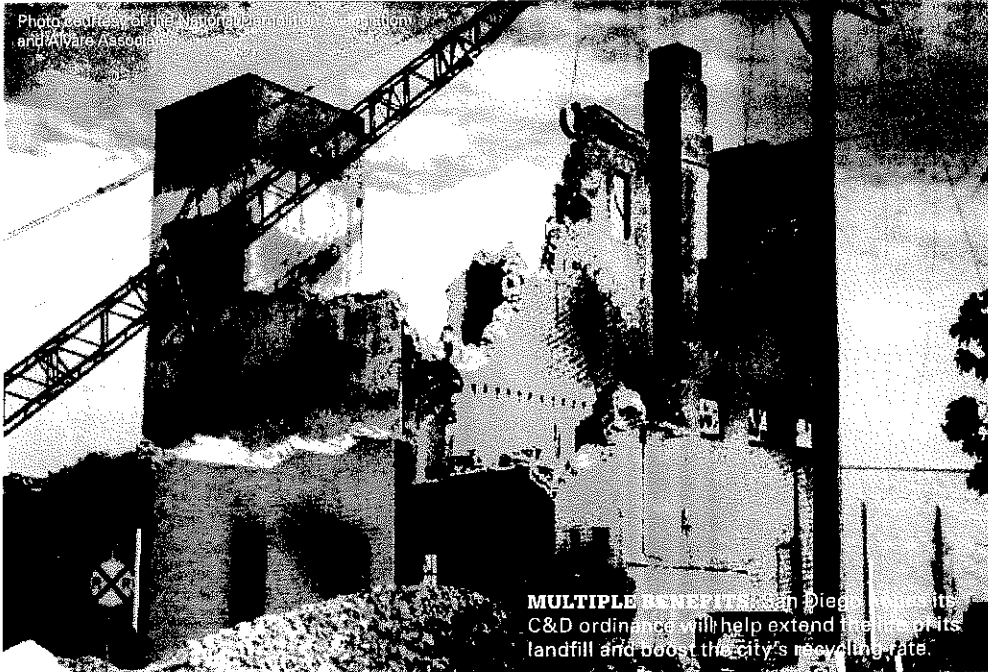


Photo courtesy of the National Demolition Association and AVIARE Associa

MULTIPLE BENEFITS San Diego's new C&D ordinance will help extend the life of its landfill and boost the city's recycling rate.

Tackling C&D Waste

San Diego ordinance encourages C&D debris recycling.

THE SAN DIEGO CITY COUNCIL has passed a construction and demolition (C&D) debris recycling ordinance. City officials have said the ordinance, which they expect to take effect in summer 2006, is intended to extend the life of San Diego's Miramar Landfill and to help the city meet state recycling mandates.

"C&D debris comprises about one-third of the trash buried in the Miramar Landfill — or about 400,000 tons yearly," said Elmer Heap Jr., director of the city's Environmental Services Department (ESD), in a press release announcing the ordinance. "With the Miramar Landfill scheduled to close in only seven years, the C&D recycling ordinance is extremely important to extend the life of the only city-run landfill in San Diego."

The C&D ordinance is multi-pronged. It will require a building and demolition permit applicant to pay a deposit based on the type

and size of the applicant's project. The deposit will then be refunded depending on how much C&D material the applicant recycles during construction or demolition.

The ordinance will take effect 45 days after the city certifies that a facility in San Diego that accepts mixed (i.e., non-sorted) C&D debris has achieved a 50 percent diversion rate. At that point, those with building and demolition permits will have to document that they have recycled at least 50 percent of their C&D debris to receive a full refund. Then, 30 days after the city certifies that a facility accepting mixed C&D material has achieved a 75 percent diversion rate, permit holders will have to show that they have recycled 75 percent of their C&D debris to receive a full refund. The ordinance exempts pool, fence and retaining wall projects.

The city is currently working with a contractor to build a transfer station at

Landfill Pros and Cons

Upholding a lower court ruling, the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court has determined that landfill operators must create a "harms and benefits" list when proposing new or expanded landfills, according to an article in *The Clarion News* newspaper. The test became mandatory for municipal solid waste landfills in 2000, the paper says.

The "harms and benefits" list must examine the impact a landfill project will have on surrounding communities as well as its environmental, social and economic benefits, the paper says.

"The Supreme Court's decision is a huge win for the people of Pennsylvania," said Kathleen McGinty, secretary of the state's Department of Environmental Protection, to *The Clarion News*. "The harms-benefits test gives residents a voice in the permitting process and ensures their communities will garner benefits when they host landfills."

— SU

One Man's Junk

Community finds art in reused materials.

The old adage says that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Abilene, Texas, recently proved that the saying applies to trash as well as matters of the heart. In November, the city's Solid Waste Services Division teamed up with the local educational organization Keep Abilene Beautiful to organize Junk-A-Do, a community art contest with just one stipulation: all entries must be made of reused materials.

"The reason that we really do it is, a lot of people think that recycling is [taking] a post-consumer product and [having] it recycled back into the same product," says recycling coordinator Bill Brock. "We've got a lot of other items that have a useful purpose if you reuse it in a different venue, and that's what Junk-A-Do does."

To coincide with this year's Texas Recycles Day, an event to inform the community about the importance of recycling, Junk-A-Do returned after a three-year hiatus with 35 participants, a much stronger showing than the 15 participants that entered the previous contest. This year's contestants competed in three categories — functional, crafts and scrap art — with separate divisions for students from kindergarten through high school and adults.

Participants in the Junk-A-Do contest were allowed to use any type of reusable material including material from around the house or the city's recycling center. Some materials were found in the most unlikely places. One contestant discovered a piece of melted plastic in the trunk of his car, tacked it onto a board and submitted it. Some contestants even used paint taken from the center's household hazardous recycling area.

The 55 entries were as diverse as the materials used. Memorable entries included a vessel schooner ship made of used soda cans; a robot made of radio tubes and water jugs, among other items; and a mini wind farm made with a soda bottle submitted by an elementary school student.

Awards went to a three-foot tall penguin made of Styrofoam from a highway paving project, a 300-pound podium composed of truck and tractor gears, and a chain made of 700 bottle caps.

After the contest, most participants reclaimed their art, but a few of the pieces remain on display at Abilene's recycling center, which Brock says is another way to promote the efforts and initiatives of Keep Abilene Beautiful. "We try to keep that message out in front of [the community]," he says. "[It's] not just saying that you've got to take [something] and recycle it back into its original [form]. There's always some other uses."

— Deanna Hart,
Assistant Editor



ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE: An art contest in Abilene, Texas, allows residents to use trash to indulge their artistic streaks.

the Miramar Landfill that will take in loads of mixed C&D waste, which will then be sorted and sold at the facility, according to ESD. Other, private facilities that will accept mixed C&D debris are pending, the department adds.

City officials have said they are planning to partner with building and demolition firms to launch an intensive education program to inform contractors about the ordinance before it takes effect. "We are committed to working together to prolong the life of the Miramar Landfill," said Gary Halbert, director of San Diego's Development Services Department, in a statement released by the city.

In addition to its potential to increase the lifespan of the Miramar Landfill, San Diego officials are hoping the C&D ordinance will help them achieve a so-far elusive goal: the 50 percent recycling rate mandated by California's Integrated Waste Management Act, which became law in 1989. The law required that local governments attain a 50 percent diversion rate by 2000 or face fines of up to \$10,000 a day. However, San Diego has received an extension to comply with the law.

According to ESD, the city currently has a 45 percent recycling rate.

San Diego is not the only city making C&D debris news. Responding to a development boom in the Windy City, Chicago will begin enforcing its own C&D recycling ordinance on Jan. 1.

Starting next year, general contractors must meet mandatory minimum recycling rates, or they will face fines. According to the regulations, a contractor that receives a building permit on or after Jan. 1, 2006, must recycle at least 25 percent by weight of the C&D waste produced by the C&D site. In January 2007, the mandatory minimum rate jumps to 50 percent.

If contractors fail to meet the requirements, the city will try to hurt them where their wallets are. For projects larger than 10,000 square feet, the Department of Streets and Sanitation will assess fines of \$5,000 for each percentage point of difference between the actual recycling rate and the required rate. For smaller projects, the fines will equal \$2,000 for each percentage point of difference. To prepare contractors for the upcoming requirements, Chicago has been conducting a series of free, two-hour seminars.

— SU