

VPPSA Connections



Winter 2022

A Word from our Executive Director

Happy New Year!

I want to take this time to say thank you! Thank you for everything that you have done to make this organization successful. It has been a tough year in so many ways. We are still concerned about COVID and the subsequent variants that we have been subjected to. We have seen a loss of civility among some of our population. People are quick to temper, less patient, and in some cases, just rude. Fortunately, not all. Many are still kind and appreciative of all we do for them.

I want to say thank you to our Board as well. They agree that you are essential and have provided us an opportunity, through our compensation, to offset some of the increases we are experiencing in our daily lives. It was not easy as costs are going up in each of our communities and they are struggling to meet those significant increases, the same as we are.

We are funded by the communities we serve; they have significant increases in their costs. The communities have directed each department and any community partners, like VPPSA, to be mindful of expenses. We must double our efforts to reduce expenses and pay close attention to the trucks, compactors, wheel loaders, skid steers, and grinders.

Supply line related issues have created significant problems and increased costs in securing parts. A scheduled repair takes longer and more planning. Unscheduled repairs or repairs because we failed to notice an issue are very time consuming and expensive. If you see something in need of repair, please write it up. Please make sure that you grease the equipment, that you perform the pre and post trip inspections.

These issues will spill into your personal lives as well. Costs for home or vehicle repairs will cost you more of your hard-earned money. Make sure that you pay attention to your home and personal vehicles. Perform an inspection. Look to see if there will be needed repairs in your future. If you need to rely on someone other than yourself to complete the repairs, you may want to ask how long the repairs will take, availability of parts, and the cost.

Please be kind: kind to your family, your VPPSA family, and your customers. Remember, we serve at the pleasure of our communities.



Personnel Tidbits

Happy 2022!!! I hope that everyone had a wonderful and restful time over the holidays.

Here are some things to keep in mind as we enter into the new calendar year:

- W-2 forms for 2021 were mailed the week of January 10th. Please keep an eye out for these in your mailbox.
- If you need to update your W-4 (federal payroll tax form) or you VA-4 (state payroll tax form), please contact the admin office to have new forms mailed to you.
- As is the case at any time of the year, please notify the admin office of any changes that may affect your benefits. Such things as marriage, birth, or adoption may require changes to some or all your benefits and must be done within 30 days of the event.

Stay safe and Happy New Year to each of you.

Karen

Connection contributions by VPPSA Staff; prepared by Karen Plumley.
Do you have news to share? Ideas, suggestions, and articles are welcomed!

Safety News

As we begin 2022, we find ourselves still facing issues caused by the COVID virus. Thank you to each and every VPPSA employee for your dedicated commitment to work safely over the past year. Please continue to follow the VPPSA COVID policy to keep yourselves and others safe during this latest increase in cases. The Omicron variant of the virus has been found to be more transmissible than earlier variants so it is important to keep up with the safety precautions put into place to prevent the spread of the virus.

Please remember the basics of reducing the spread of the virus:

- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently
- Maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet, when outside
- Wear a mask when inside or when social distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your cough or sneeze
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects
- Common Symptoms: Fever, Cough, Congestion, Shortness of Breath, Fatigue, Nausea
- If you feel sick: Stay home and contact your doctor

Although VPPSA does not require employees to be vaccinated, it is highly recommended to avoid the more serious effects of the COVID virus. The following information from the CDC may be helpful:

Vaccines

According to the CDC, *"vaccines are still the most effective way to reduce the impact of the Omicron variant on the public. However, that doesn't mean they're perfectly effective."*

The CDC noted on its website that breakthrough infections — COVID-19 infections that occur in vaccinated people — are common with the Omicron variant. But infection isn't the only measure of the pandemic's impact. Public health officials are also worried about hospitalizations, severe illness and death — three things the CDC expects the COVID vaccines will protect against as Omicron spreads.

Booster Shots

"Because the Omicron variant appears to be able to bypass the currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines, the CDC has recommended booster shots to increase the effectiveness of vaccination. Boosters are simply an additional dose of the vaccine."

Those who received the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine should get their booster at least two months after the dose, and those who received the two-dose Pfizer or Moderna vaccines should get a booster at least six months after the second dose, according to the CDC. Boosters are expected to expand the vaccines' protection against severe illness and death as Omicron spreads."

If you have concerns about COVID-19, the Omicron variant, testing or vaccination, reach out to your doctor or health care provider.

Wishing everyone a Happy, Healthy, and Safe New Year !!!

Household Chemical Collection News

The 2022 Household Chemical Collection season is quickly coming our way.

We kickoff our first collection event on February 12, at Warhill High School.

It rained at three out of the five events in James City County last year, and we worked in sleet, snow, and ice at the first event. Weather wise, James City County was taxing on everyone, but we still got it done. Thanks to the entire team, including MXI, for your diligence and hard work!

An enormous thanks to York County for the use of their excavator, and operator, William. We had to bring in the big guns to scrape out years' worth of latex paint that was cemented to the floor of our 30 cu yd container. It's now clean and ready for us to start filling again.

Our constant is always safety and that will not change. Let's go into 2022 as safety conscious as we've always been so that we can continue to bring a much needed service to our customers and our environment.

Compost and Mulch Facility

Winter has brought a wide range of activities to our facility this year. It has been a very dry Autumn season. This is resulting in huge numbers of residents dropping off material at our site. Both leaves and brush, including old Christmas trees, are being brought in by residents all day, every day. Poor weather and low temperatures do not seem to reduce the amount of material being brought in. The result of this is lots of feedstock material – the material that we use to make our products for sale.

Another issue that increases with our dry autumn is the risk of fire. We have unfortunately experienced two fires this winter so far: one in once ground mulch and one in our leaf pile. Both were stubborn and difficult fires. We are most thankful to the York County Fire Department for their quick and efficient response, as well as the staff of the mulch and compost facility who work together to assist in putting out the fire as well as keeping our operations as normal as possible.



Another aspect of our winter operations is the production of material that will be used in the early Spring to assure its availability when needed. We are already beginning to color mulch to be used by localities in highway medians and around public buildings. Likewise, we are windrowing and curing compost for use by landscapers in early Spring.

Lastly, this our season of assessing our set up and arrangement of materials and equipment in our facility. Can work or product be rearranged to make our processing and sales more efficient? We are always on the lookout for a new or better way of doing things that will make the operation more streamlined or efficient, as well as encouraging more product sales with each resident or commercial customer visit.

Feel free to drop by and we'll give you the nickel tour. Doughnuts or barbecue are always welcome.

In the spirit of recycling,

Larry, John, Swamprat, Romie, Trista, Monte & Kim



So, What About Christmas Trees?

You might be asking about the Christmas trees that are dropped off at the Compost and Mulch Facility. Good question.

To begin with, there are fewer of them than what there used to be. Many households in recent years have decided that the over time savings of a reusable, artificial Christmas tree far outweighs the traditional aspects of a live tree. Many households, also, opt for a live tree with an intact root ball that can be planted in their yard after the holidays are over. BUT, there are still many, many traditional households which continue their holiday celebrations with a cut, live tree.

As the holidays end, the Compost and Mulch Facility usually receives these trees in three waves of drop off: the week following Christmas, the week following New Year's Day (the heaviest drop off of Christmas trees), and another rush of trees after January 6th (the end of the 12 days of Christmas and following Orthodox celebrations). These trees not only come to us from individual households, but also from tree retailers who were left with excess trees after the holidays.

Several years ago, we segregated these dropped off trees so that they could be ground separately, and their ground chips could be added to compost. What a sweet smell of balsam, pine, fir, spruce, and cedar while those trees piled up! However, it is no longer economical for us to grind these trees separately and they now are included in our brush grindings to make mulch.

Don't think that this is the only recycling of Christmas trees in our area. Many folks put them in their yards for small bird cover until Spring. Some lean them up and put bird feed or suet on the branches for birds to enjoy. Some are submerged at the edges of ponds and lakes to provide cover for small fish from predators. Some are collected and donated to goat farms in the area to supplement winter goat diets. Regardless of these second lives of these trees, we are pleased to be a part of the recycling of these traditional holiday symbols.

Middle Peninsula Solid Waste News



Condolences: To all whom have lost someone far or near - Hold tight and be strong knowing that faith, love and fond memories will carry you through.

Gone But Never Forgotten!

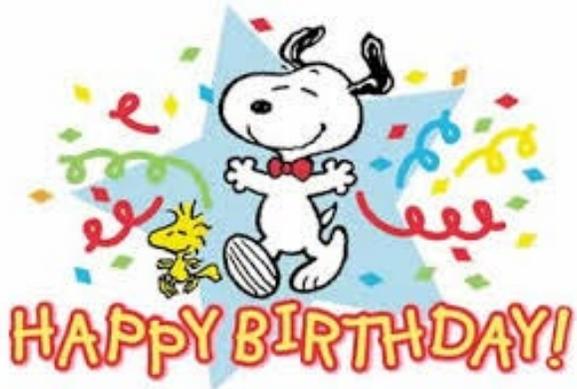
Get Better Soon: Kimberly Sadler
Melanie Howard

Welcome: Harold Robeson – WAE Attendant
Anthony Mondragon – Full Time Attendant
Deon Blake – Full Time Attendant
Michael Rollins – Full Time Driver

Congratulations: Mr. & Mrs. David & Andrea Magnant 

At the end of the day be thankful that our blessings are bigger than our problems!

VPPSA STRONG



Crystal Mardis.....01/04	Cindy Riemersma.....02/15
Renee' Rogers.....01/13	Kathy Osborne.....02/18
Rebecca Snyder.....01/18	W. Tick Taylor.....02/22
Pamela Braxton.....02/12	Patricia Jordan.....03/24
Jimmy Hence.....03/27	

Random VPPSA Reminders and FYI

- COVID is on the rise. Wear your face mask and sanitize as though your life or the life of someone you love depends on it.
- **NO smoking on VPPSA property or in any VPPSA vehicle**
- Random drug screens are computer generated
- Compactor rams are to remain closed when not in use
- Cold and frigid nights – leave the heat on in the attendant building
- Get your leave request in for 2022 – the calendar is filling up fast
- Drivers on the road by 7:30 am unless maintenance is required
- Give the dispatchers a heads up and call in your compactor reading(s) at the end of your shift
- Timesheets are picked up and supplies are delivered on the same week (**call in your supply list accordingly**)
- **Treat People How You Would Like to Be Treated. You Just Might Be Pleasantly Surprised!!!!**
- **I'm Just Saying!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Supervisor's Corner

Hello Everyone,

As we are in the midst of winter, we must all remember our safety protocol when it comes to ice and snow. Walk slowly and take the long way around the sites (especially the transfer stations – no shortcuts). Spread salt as needed and communicate with your supervisors and dispatchers when your supply is getting low.

We implore everyone to follow the safety guidelines in relation to COVID. Mask and sanitize. Sanitize and mask. Keep your distance and when in doubt lean toward the safe side of caution – if you are ill or showing signs of COVID. Take the proper precautions for your safety and ours. Stay away.

For those of you who have stuck it out these last months – short staffed and being moved all over creation to make sure the sites are opened when scheduled...

We Thank You! We Thank You! We Thank you!

VPPSA is more than just a place to pick up a paycheck every other week. There are bonds that have formed. You might even say there is a brotherhood and a sisterhood among some. Family is truly essential, and the dedication of this organization is living proof. VPPSA Family – VPPSA Strong!

Cecil Taylor
Transfer System Supervisor

