2010 COMMUNICATION EXCELLENCE AWARD
NOMINATION FORM

Program/Facility Nominated:
Bureau of Sanitation - Solid Resources Citywide Recycling Division

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Nomination submitted by (if different than information listed above):
Name: ___________________________ Phone #: ___________________________ Email: ___________________________

If selected for an award, how would you like the name of the organization to read on the award (limit of 50 characters)?
Bureau of Sanitation - Solid

2010 Applications must be submitted to SWANA no later than Friday, April 2, 2010

*** PLEASE NOTE THAT ENTRY REQUIREMENTS HAVE RECENTLY CHANGED***
See the attached Entry & Eligibility Requirements sheet for further information

Application Checklist (Please make sure the following items are included in your submittal packet):
- Completed nomination form with signed release statement (this page), to be scanned and included in digital submission
- 1 copy of your award submittal on a CD-ROM OR via the SWANANET FTP site.
- Executive Summary of your nomination (NO more than 200 words)
- At least 2 pictures of your operation (may be included in nomination text)
- Check or credit card payment (made payable to SWANA) for nomination fee (in U.S. dollars)

Please mail all application packages to:
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Signature: ___________________________ Date: 04/02/10

Kathleen Chavez-Morris
Electronic Outreach: Creating a Communication Circuit

City of Los Angeles
Bureau of Sanitation
Solid Resources Citywide Recycling Division

Solid Waste Association of North America
2010 Communication Excellence Award

Cathleen Chavez-Morris
City of Los Angeles - Bureau of Sanitation
4/2/2010
# Table of Contents

I. Table of Contents .................................................................................. 2

II. Executive Summary .......................................................................... 3

III. Statement of Intent .......................................................................... 3

IV. Research and Planning ....................................................................... 4

V. Types of Internet Platforms .............................................................. 6
   A. What is Facebook? .......................................................................... 6
   B. What is Twitter? ........................................................................... 6
   C. What is Google Maps? ................................................................. 6
   D. What is UStream? .......................................................................... 6

VI. Implementation .................................................................................. 7
   A. Timeline ....................................................................................... 7
   B. Budget ......................................................................................... 7
   C. Internet Presence on Facebook .................................................... 7
   D. Internet Presence on Twitter ......................................................... 8
   E. Internet Presence on Google Earth ............................................... 9
   F. Internet Presence on UStream ...................................................... 10

VII. Evaluations ...................................................................................... 11
   A. Quantifiable Results .................................................................... 11
   B. Qualifiable Results ...................................................................... 13
   C. Future Improvements ................................................................... 14
II. Executive Summary

Municipalities have an obligation to maintain a public presence in communities they serve. An extension of that obligation is fulfilled when municipalities maintain a virtual presence online. Social networking sites have spread the popularity of movies, music and videos on a pandemic "pop culture" scale. Solid waste managers should consider using the popularity of these sites to spread information about solid waste programs within their municipalities. These tools can be used to spread information about particular solid waste campaigns, beneficial public programs or general education about solid waste issues. Although there are many social networking sites that can be used for the purpose of promoting solid waste programs, this application will specifically discuss the use of the Facebook, Twitter, Google Maps and UStream in promoting solid waste programs in the City of Los Angeles.

Each of the online outreach tools discussed in this application serve to fill a communication gap that has developed as the public increasingly looks for information online. The following is a brief description of how each application is used by Bureau of Sanitation staff:

Facebook – Develops a fan base from solid waste programs within the City of Los Angeles and provides a system for that information to be shared easily with friends of fans

Twitter – Engages the public in quick conversation about solid waste issues that can be further forwarded to other users to read

Google Maps - Provides the public with the a visual perspective of how prolific program participation is within a geographic area

UStream – Provides an opportunity for the public to view live broadcasts of meetings or educational sessions over the internet, with the additional benefit of online participation

Social networking sites can be a helpful tool in invigorating a solid waste marketing program. It is not intended to fully replace the benefits associated with advertising on traditional media outlets like print, television and radio. However, it can compliment traditional marketing approaches by reaching audiences that prefer to receive information digitally. More importantly, it shows that municipalities are using the same viral marketing techniques that private industry has already found extremely successful.

III. Statement of Intent

The Bureau of Sanitation is paving the digital communication path to increased communication with the public. Although traditional communication techniques, such as printed material and speaking presentations, are prevalently used by solid resources
staff, the Bureau firmly believes that a holistic communication campaign in the 21st Century must include opportunities to engage the public through online communication applications. Our innovative use of social media applications and internet software/tools makes the Bureau of Sanitation a pioneer among municipalities in the virtual world. We hope the Evaluation Committee will be as impressed with our virtual presence as Los Angeles residents have been.

IV. Research and Planning

The Solid Resources Citywide Recycling Division (SRCD) manages a variety of programs that are targeted at various interest groups. Services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Free recycling to Los Angeles Unified School District schools
- Free recycling to apartments and condominiums
- Assistance to businesses in reducing waste through waste audits
- Opportunities to manage household hazardous waste at stationary and mobile locations

In addition to providing weekly services, we have long term and intermittent educational opportunities, such as our in-class recycling education programs and our Day without a Bag campaigns.

The Bureau of Sanitation has challenged staff to refine our organization's communication about programming with the public. The Bureau's Strategic Plan goals include refining the Bureau so it is purpose driven, outcome oriented, and committed to delivering value to our constituents. As the Bureau strives to become a “Full-Service Provider” by increasing the number and scope of services to meet the needs of our customers, we will further engage the public to provide solid waste program information and assess their satisfaction with our services and programs. This commitment is fulfilled by developing relationships and partnerships with our stakeholders, including environmental organizations and regulators. Implementation of systematic and structured communication in a variety of forms will ensure that we are reaching the public on all communication platforms. Additionally, it will provide the Bureau with additional means of customer feedback that assesses services, leadership and provides an alternative voice to the public.

Being one of the divisions that is slated with informing the public about our progressive programming, SRCD staff recognized that a holistic communication campaign would have to include reaching out to the growing number of residents that use the internet to gain information about their community. Traditional communication techniques such as

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printed material and face-to-face contact can be complimented through a virtual presence on the internet.

Figure 1: Samples of Traditional SRCRD Communication Outreach Material

SRCRD’s goals for expanding our communication campaign included the following:

- Develop a presence on four internet applications: Facebook, Twitter, Google Maps and Ustream
- Quantify the effectiveness of connecting to the public
- Qualify the Bureau’s virtual perception through public comments

Although these four internet applications offer a variety of opportunities for expanding SRCRDs communication potential, there are internal and external limitations associated with using each. These platforms are generally used by the public and only recently have businesses explored the benefits of using them to reach out customers. Therefore, all four of the platforms have limitations on how they track traffic on their applications for purposes of exploring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Furthermore, many offer subscriptions for additional features available for their platform. These subscriptions are offered to a select market of businesses or can only be purchased through means that are unfamiliar to municipalities (i.e. pay per click or pay per view accounting). Furthermore, municipalities generally dissuade government employees from frequenting these sites while at work. Therefore, encouraging the future use of these applications Bureau-wide would necessitate reassessing internal policies and broadening employees internet access. Therefore, SRCRD chose to use the initial use of these platforms as a way to test pilot how they could be useful to the Bureau and to assess how our own operational policies would need to be adapted.
V. Types of Internet Platforms

A. What is Facebook?
A Facebook Fan Page is a customizable presence for an organization, product, or public personality to join and have a conversation with Facebook users. The fan page focuses on the stream of content posted by the fan page administrator. By leveraging the real connections between friends on Facebook, a fan page allows fans to become brand advocates. Posts by the administrator of the fan page will appear in fans real time source of news information called a News Feed. These posts can then be sent between Facebook friends.

B. What is Twitter?
Twitter is a tool that helps connects businesses with the particular audience at the right time. Businesses and organizations of are able to stay connected to their customers by share information in under 140 characters with their followers. This information can be further broadcast to Twitter users that follow those individual followers. Customers can also use Twitter to tell a company or other Twitter users about their opinion of or experience with a business.

C. What is Google Maps?
Google Maps provides businesses with a range of tools that allow them to map any geographic area with features that are important to their customers. Businesses can create a map to share with customers that highlights a particular route or place and customers can use this map to view spatial information about their interests or community. Maps can be made public, are searchable on Google Maps and can be embedded on a website.

D. What is UStream?
Ustream is the live interactive broadcast platform that enables businesses with an Internet connection and a camera to engage their customers through webcasting technology. Ustream uses a one-to-many model, which means that the user can broadcast live events to an audience of unlimited size. The broadcasts can also be cataloged for viewing by customers at their convenience.
VI. Implementation

A. Timeline
The following timeline was used to develop an internet presence on each platform:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Implementation Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>August 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>October 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Maps</td>
<td>December 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UStream</td>
<td>April 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Budget
The four internet platforms chosen offer free software downloads or free access to their applications. The only costs associated with the pilot test were the costs associated with staff time. One SRCRD staff member was assigned to develop an internet presence and monitor the applications to quantify and qualify the usefulness of the applications. Within a few months of using the applications, the staff member suggested that it was necessary to access the applications after hours and on weekends to maintain communication with the public.

C. Internet Presence on Facebook
SRCRD established a fan page for the Multifamily Residential Recycling Program in August 2009. The initial intent was to use fan page to provide information specifically about recycling services offered to apartment and condominiums in Los Angeles. The popularity of the fan page among the public and other Bureau divisions has resulted in the fan page becoming a source of information on programming across the Bureau. The fan page currently has over 665 fans receiving weekly status updates on solid waste programs such as mobile hazardous waste drop-off events, composting education workshops and clarification on acceptable blue bin materials. Furthermore, environmental programs within the Board of Public Works and sponsored by other City departments are posted for fans to read.

Every time a fan logs on to their Facebook account they can view a list of status updates from friends and fan sites. Each day SRCRD’s 665 fans are able to view SRCRD’s status updates within their news feed. The news feed is a front page to all of their friend’s comments, including SRCRD’s updates on recycling programs. Additionally, when a member requests to be a fan of SRCRD’s fan page, their friends
are notified about the connection to the Program. Furthermore, fans are encouraged to leave their comments and suggestions on solid waste on the fan page. City staff answer submitted questions which can be viewed by the public on Facebook. The Program’s current fan base includes union representatives, local and state elected officials, media reporters and non-profit environmental organizations.

![Image of Facebook page](http://www.facebook.com/LARECYCLES)

**D. Internet Presence on Twitter**

Twitter allows users to post real-time short messages of 140 characters to individuals following their “tweets”. Although there is some overlap of users following Facebook and Twitter, SRCRD has synched the Facebook fan page to automatically copy status updates and submit them as tweets on SRCRD’s Twitter page. SRCRD followers on Twitter receive daily information on recycling programs but in shorter characters and with a link to the corresponding Facebook page. Similar to Facebook’s News Feed, this information shows up on their Twitter homepage along with the tweets from other people or organizations they are following.

Followers can also “retweet” or “RT” what was posted by City staff for their own followers. This allows a tweet to be viewed by potentially twice as many people through retweets. When the Los Angeles Times recently started following the Program’s tweets, the Program became one of 19,000 tweets the newspaper is currently following daily. When the Los Angeles Times retweets a tweet from SRCRD, it is viewed by the Los Angeles Times 57,000 followers. This allows the 140 characters to travel digitally to an exponential amount of people because of the intricate connection of followers on Twitter.

Followers can also submit tweeted questions to the City by starting their tweet with “@larecycles”. Followers can send public messages or questions regarding recycling
programs. SRCRD can also search for tweets on particular topics such as “recycling in LA” or “used oil in Hollywood” to find individuals who could best benefit from SRCRD's tweets. These individuals are then invited to follow SRCRD for more information about SRCRD programs. SRCRD’s Twitter page has 251 followers including Councilmember staff, CalRecyle, Los Angeles Times and non-profit environmental organizations.

Picture 2: SRCRD Twitter page and a snapshot of a Twitter homepage
http://twitter.com/larecycles

E. Internet Presence on Google Earth
The Multifamily Residential Recycling Program has embedded Google Maps into the "Participating Locations" page of the Program’s webpage. This webpage is an interactive webpage that allows an interested resident, owner or manager to view participating locations within their neighborhood. Since the Program offers valet service of blue bins, the blue bins are never taken to the street for service each week. Although this is convenient, it doesn't allow the public to see how prevalent program participation is in their neighborhood. A resident can zoom to their neighborhood and see all participating locations. They can also see a street view by clicking on the option to “View in a Larger Map”. This link directs them to the Google Maps website where they can view the street view of the property.
F. Internet Presence on UStream

SRCRD is in the process of developing a comprehensive broadcast schedule of events that can be accessed via the internet. All scheduled broadcasts are listed on the UStream SRCRD website. All previously broadcasted events can be viewed at the public convenience.

SRCRD is in the process of installing the software and procuring the web camera necessary to produce live broadcasts. SRCRD believes that this application has the most useful education potential among the four internet applications. Currently, SRCRD staff dedicates a significant amount of time providing on-site educational sessions or attending meetings in the public. Staff could use this application to provide one classroom presentation to a classroom at a school with internet capabilities. The presentation could be broadcast over the internet using UStream for viewing in the other classrooms. Other opportunities include:

- Allowing the public to view public meetings online
- Broadcasting composting classes live from our Griffith Park Composting Facility
- Providing tours of areas that the public has limited access to because of liability issues (i.e. recycling facilities)
- Providing educational sessions on how to perform waste audits

SRCRD has developed a prerecorded broadcast for the Evaluation Committee to view at their convenience. Please visit our webpage at http://www.ustream.tv/channel/srcrd.
Picture 4: SRCRD UStream webpage.  
http://www.ustream.tv/channel/srcrd

VII. Evaluations

SRCRD and Bureau management have been pleased with the results of the pilot test. Although only three of the four goals have been implemented, we are confident that the pilot tests will be useful information to other municipalities. Not only can this pilot test be replicated, but as emerging new applications are evolving, a municipality’s internet presence can be improved upon.

A. Quantifiable Results

Facebook is the only internet application that provides statistical information for analysis. Twitter, Google Maps and UStream do not presently offer any comparable analysis tools. The majority of this section will focus on a sample of the information that is available through the Facebook analysis features.

Facebook – SRCRD has garnered 665 fans since launching the Facebook fan page in August 2009. Although we had the largest group of fans connect with SRCRD within the first month of the Facebook page launch, Figure 2 illustrates the steady acquisition of fans over the last eight months. An analysis of demographic data reveals that our fan base is comprised largely of women between the age of 25-44 year old. Figure 3 illustrates the how fans typically interact with media that is paced on our website.
Figure 2: Facebook Graph of Total Fans over time.

Figure 3: Facebook Graph of Total Fans over time including demographics.

Figure 4: Facebook Graph of Total Fans media consumption.
Twitter - SRCRD has garnered 251 fans since launching the Facebook fan page in October 2009.

Google Maps: SRCRD has recorded 682 views since launching the Google Maps page in December 2009

UStream: Should SRCRD be selected for this award we look forward to providing an update on the success of the UStream broadcasting that was proposed in this application.

B. Qualifiable Results

We qualified the success of the program based on the response we received from the public regarding our programs and our increased internet presence. The following are a sample of quotes from the public regarding our Facebook and Twitter pages.

"Amazed LA has good good social media"

"Hi .. glad to be a part of your facebook!"

"This is a terrific program--so easy to find the information you need."

"This is wonderful!"

"I am a great fan of this program and all the people who help make it possible."

"It is programs like recycling that actually work and put dollars back into the budget and the system. We use in all our properties and recommend to all owners in LA"

"LA has one of the best recycling programs in the country!!! YEAH!!!"

"Great program!"

"Kudos to LARECYCLES"

"I just love spreading the word"

"I do like the zero waste art exhibition photos on your FB page!"

"Love what you guys are doing"

"Hope more cities follow your lead"

"I'm a HUGE supporter of E-waste & household hazardous waste events! Keep 'em coming!"
"WoW! Hey Los Angeles. Check out the free recycling services that @larecycles offers."

"We love to recycle as much as you do."

C. Future Improvements

SRCRD and the Bureau of Sanitation will continue to maintain their presence on all four internet applications. We are in the process of exploring advertising opportunities with Facebook and suggesting ways that they might better be able to work with government agencies. Lastly we are in the process of exploring other emerging social media, such as the newly release Four Square application that allows individuals to let their friends know there locations in the City of Los Angeles throughout the day.