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Waste-To-Energy Research and Technology Council

NAWTEC Academic Partner:
Headquartered at Columbia University in the City of New York

WTERT May 2006-May 2007 Highlights

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Summary

The Waste-To-Energy Research and Technology Council (WTERT) was co-founded in May 2002 by the Earth Engineering Center of Columbia University (EEC) and Integrated Waste Services Association (IWSA). Its mission is to direct academic research on various aspects of energy and materials recovery from municipal and other solid wastes and disseminate the findings of its research to professionals and the public. WTERT is a non-profit organization that relies heavily on faculty and graduate students who are studying various aspects of integrated waste management and waste-to-energy. The main products of WTERT research are the theses, technical publications and presentations made during the year. In all there were 14 publications, 22 presentations, and 12 posters presented by WTERT faculty and graduate students at different technical meetings and public forums. This report presents the highlights of the WTERT activities since NAWTEC 14.

National developments

The Global Roundtable on Climate Change (www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/grocc), convened by the Earth Institute of Columbia University and bringing together over 100 major companies, included WTE in the means by which the threat of global warming must be addressed. As of November 2006, EPA has started to differentiate in their annual reports between WTE and landfilling *(www.epa.gov/msw/pubs/ex-sum05.pdf)*, instead of grouping them together under "disposal", as in the past.

National Survey of Waste Generation and Management in the U.S.

WTERT faculty and graduate students completed the 2005 survey of MSW management in the U.S. (*State of the Garbage in America*) and the results were published in the BioCycle issue of April 2006. The survey showed that the MSW generation in the U.S. increased to 388 million tons in 2004. Landfilling amounted to 249 million tons in contrast to the 136 million tons reported by EPA in 2003. Some units of EPA are now using the EEC/BioCycle data for estimating the potential for landfilll gas generation and the Earth Engineering Center (EEC) was engaged in 2006 by EPA Region 3 (PA, etc.) to re-examine their recycling data. Also, EPA Region 9 (CA, HI, etc.) has awarded a grant to EEC for developing in 2007 a reliable database of