

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: NWRA ANNOUNCES 2017 AWARDEES AND HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Arlington, VA – March 27, 2017 – Today, during an event broadcasted via Facebook Live, the National Waste & Recycling Association (NWRA) announced this year’s recipients of the industry’s highest awards. Twenty-two industry professionals will be honored for their commitment to safety, contributions to the communities they serve, trailblazing efforts within the industry and the work they have achieved that has made waste and recycling safer, smarter and stronger. Awardees announced today will be honored at the annual NWRA Awards Breakfast at WasteExpo taking place Tuesday, May 9 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Individuals are being honored in the following categories: Drivers of the Year, Operator of the Year, Members of the Year, Chapter Leadership and Distinguished Service. Also, four industry legends are being inducted into the NWRA Hall of Fame.

The winners of the Driver of the Year award, sponsored by 3rd Eye and Heil Environmental, were evaluated based on their driving records, as well as their commitment to customers. This year’s class of honorees includes the first ever woman to win this recognition. The recipients are:

Javier Verduzco: Large Commercial, Republic Services, Huntington Beach, CA
Jesse Peña: Large Industrial, Republic Services, Phoenix, AZ
Mark Rutkowski: Large Industrial, Waste Management, Baltimore, MD
Rick Thomas: Large Residential, Waste Connections, Eugene, OR
Halsey “Lee” Wolford: Regional Commercial, Rumpke, Cincinnati, OH
Greg Figueroa: Regional Industrial, WCA, Tavares, FL
Terry Russell: Regional Residential, Rumpke, Circleville, OH
Derrick Belin: Medium, All Waste, Inc., Hartford, CT
Bill Kuhlman: Small, Walters Recycling and Refuse, Blaine, MN
Rhonda Kitchen: Public, Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling District, Midvale, UT

The Operator of the Year Award, sponsored by Volvo, recognizes the safest and most industrious heavy equipment operator in post-collection operations. This is a new award and its first recipient will be Bruce Russin of Casella Waste Solutions.

The Chapter Leadership Award recognizes outstanding contributions to advocacy and advancement of the industry through NWRA’s state chapters. This year’s recipient chairs the NWRA Florida chapter. His name is Charlie Latham with Waste Management.

Distinguished Service Award recipients are honored for their continuing contributions toward the advancement of the industry and for their community involvement. This year’s winners are:

Carmen Smothers – Environmental Solutions Group
James Thaxton – Rumpke Waste & Recycling
Robert Pfister – Advanced Disposal
Carl Hornberger – Republic Services

NWRA Member of the Year awards, sponsored by McNeilus, are given to individuals who make outstanding contributions to the advancement of the industry. This year's recipients are:

Michael McLaughlin – New Way Trucks
Garrett Trierweiler – Waste Management

Four industry leaders are being inducted into the NWRA Hall of Fame for lifetime contributions to the waste and recycling industry:

Ronald Mittelstaedt - Waste Connections, Inc.
John and Douglas Casella – Casella Waste Services, Inc.
Kenneth Burkett – American Waste Control, Inc.

“We are so proud of these men and women for their commitment to safety and excellence and for going above and beyond the call of duty to serve families and communities,” said Kevin Kraushaar, NWRA Interim CEO. “I look forward to celebrating them all in May at our annual Awards Breakfast at Waste Expo.”

Tickets to the Awards breakfast are available by visiting: [HTTPS://WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM/E/NWRA-AWARDS-BREAKFAST-AT-2017-WASTEEXPO-TICKETS-31235338739](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nwra-awards-breakfast-at-2017-wasteexpo-tickets-31235338739). Today's Facebook Live event recording can be found at: [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WASTERECYCLING](https://www.facebook.com/wasterecycling).

ABOUT NWRA

The National Waste and Recycling Association is the leading organization providing leadership, advocacy, research, education and safety expertise for the waste and recycling industries. NWRA advocates at the federal, state and local levels on all issues of importance to our member companies as they provide safe, economically sustainable and environmentally sound services to communities in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

For more information about NWRA and its members, please visit WWW.WASTERECYCLING.ORG.

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