Disaster Diversion, Part II

Zero Waste Lessons from the North Bay Wildfires

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2017 North Bay Wildfires

- Started Oct 8th, burned over 245,000 acres
- 44 fatalities
- Thousands of structures destroyed (including 5000+ homes in Sonoma County, 600+ homes in Napa County)
- Costliest fires on record (surpassed Oakland Hills, 1991)
- Over 1 million tons of debris so far
- 7000+ tons of organics received at Napa facility
Customer outreach

- Learned from quake – proactive about customer outreach to avoid contamination issues
- Prolonged disaster several weeks long
- Service and operational interruptions – evacuated areas with no access, in town office w/o power, had to suspend MRF operations due to smoke
- When evacuees returned home - food waste
- Even though we couldn’t haul burn debris, customers looked to us for info
Social Media

- This is when people pay attention to you on FB & Twitter (20x impressions as non-disaster posts)
- Boost!
- Coordinate with City/County’s Nixle & social media
- Combine messaging w/ other outreach – local radio, newspapers, etc.
Fire Debris Management

• Hazardous waste crews first remove hazardous waste and certify site
• Debris then removed by federal/state contractor or by owner
• Our facilities can take fire debris only after certified clear of haz waste by County
Massive influx of green waste

• Over 7000 tons to Napa Composting Facility

• Some burned, some not

• Record tonnage, received emergency waiver

• “WoodAGeddon” – biomass markets are still bad

• Used trees & stumps from fires for biofilter projects
The Donation Flood

- Flood of donated goods
- Lots of waste at shelters and response camps
- Gently urge people to give $, not stuff
- Free Pop Up Shop Opened in Napa
Related Outreach for an Attentive Audience

- General fire safety messaging
- Think about fire prevention in your organics programs – create defensible space AND divert this yard debris to composting
- Compost your spoiled food
Grocery Stores = food waste in both earthquake and fires

• Need to provide service to them immediately
• Lost power during fires for several days
• Difficult to divert material, since everything is packaged
Next up: Food Waste Depackaging System
Service & revenue impacts

• 260 closed residential accounts in our Napa County service area
• Destroyed equipment – over 1000 melted carts
• Busiest time of year, shortage of debris boxes during Crush
• Anticipate increased C&D business over next 2-3 years
2006 Flood
2014 Earthquake
2017 Wildfires
What’s Next...a Plague of Locusts?

Probably not, the Rocky Mountain Locust is extinct.
Questions?

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