

**November 2025**



## **NC SWANA News**

### **A Message from the President**

**Dear NC SWANA Members,**

I am truly honored and grateful to accept the role of President of the North Carolina SWANA Chapter. It is with great enthusiasm that I step into this position, joining a dedicated team committed to advancing the mission of fostering safety, training, innovation and collaboration in the solid waste community.

I also extend my deepest gratitude to the Past-President Joe Hack for his exceptional leadership and vision, which have laid a strong foundation for the organization's future. In addition, I would like to thank another Past-President Tracy Nestor for her years of service to the NC SWANA Chapter and the North Carolina Solid Waste Industry as she transitions to a new position. It has been a pleasure working beside her and experiencing her true passion for our industry. With Tracy's departure it has left a position on the Board, and we are excited to announce that Jonathan Bass has been selected to fill her vacancy. Welcome to the team Jonathan!

As President, I am committed to working closely with our members, partners, and stakeholders to continue training our members, providing a voice for the regulated community on issues that are important to them, and protecting the environment in a fiscally responsive way. Together, we

will strive to uphold the values and objectives that make SWANA a beacon of technical excellence and innovation.

Thank you for this incredible opportunity. I look forward to collaborating with all of you and building on the great work that has been done.

**Sincerely,**

**Mike Plummer, PE**  
**President**

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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The General Assembly completed the main portion of the 2025-2026 Session at the end of June; however, the Assembly did not enact a new biennial budget for State Government operations and increasing funding for many local operations. Under State law, the State will continue to function under the budget in place for the 2024-2025 fiscal year that ended on June 30.

The Assembly passed [Senate Bill 706](#) (Session Law 2025-66), the long sought after legislation to restore to the counties funds for scrap tire management. SB 706 was introduced and managed in the Senate by Senator Dave Craven of Randolph County, Senator Bill Rabon of Brunswick County, and Senator Michael Lee of New Hanover County. Long time House Members who have supported this legislation are Representative John Sauls of Lee County and Representative Howard Penny of Harnett County. Representative John Bell of Wayne County assisted in bringing the bill to the House floor in the waning days of the session. SWANA commends these legislators and urges members of the Association to express their gratitude if given an opportunity.

Since ending the main portion of the Session in June, the Assembly has been conducting monthly mini sessions, each lasting from one to four days. Through those sessions, the Assembly has provided additional funding to continue its efforts to assist in the recovery from Hurricane Helene in our western counties. The Assembly has been unable to resolve differences in the House and the Senate over the comprehensive State Budget or resolving a shortfall in Medicaid funding. Those issues may not be resolved soon. While the Assembly is scheduled to return for mini sessions in November and December, Speaker of the House Destin Hall of Caldwell County indicated that the House is not likely to conduct any more floor votes the rest of this calendar year.

The General Assembly has mini sessions scheduled for each month until returning for the 2026 short session in mid -April, where there will be efforts to

enact a budget if that has not been accomplished by then, and to wrap up any other unfinished business. During this interim period, the officers and members of the Policy Committee will be meeting with key legislators to conduct briefings on the primary issues that will be coming up in future sessions: 1) PFAS issues; 2) need for more landfill space; 3) safe lithium ion battery disposal; 4) safe disposal of solar panels; and other issues important to environmentally proper control of waste and recyclables.

- Jack Cozart
- Isabella DeVivo

## GOVERNMENT UPDATE

### Landfill PFAS Sampling

The Solid Waste Section issued a second round of Notice of Regulatory Requirement (NORR) letters to approximately 50 landfills in September related to PFAS assessment, bringing the total number of landfills to around 75 receiving letters since November 2024. We greatly appreciate the response to date in helping ensure that we have the data necessary and are making sound, scientific-based decisions to protect our natural resources and communities. This effort is part of DEQ's PFAS action strategy and overall strategic plan to "prioritize the reporting and reduction of PFAS emissions or discharges to air, surface water, or groundwater from priority locations including but not limited to industrial sites, municipal wastewater treatment plants, landfills, land applications, and sites with firefighting foam use".

The Environmental Management Commission agreed to move forward with groundwater standards and rules for three types of PFAS: PFOA, PFOS, and GenX at its September meeting. These were 3 of the eight PFAS substances previously regulated under IMACs since October 2024. The remaining 5 IMACs will expire this month, reverting to the practical quantitation limit, or PQL. The new standards and accompanying rule(s) will go before the Rules Review Commission at its October 30th meeting and if passed, will become effective on November 1st.

### 10-year Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan

As a reminder, DEQ encourages you to check out the [2024-2034 Solid Waste and Materials Management plan](#). It provides an overview of many

initiatives that DEQ wants to undertake in the next decade and demonstrates that we're listening to concerns from our residents, industries, and local governments. We are actively looking for opportunities to engage and act on these issues, to include analyzing disposal and materials management trends to help plan for adequate disposal capacity and to encourage and incentivize waste reduction, reuse, and recovery.

### **Scrap Tires**

With the passing of [SL 2025-66 \(Senate Bill 706\)](#), there is a change in the tax distributions and available funds via grants for scrap tire management, effective October 1, 2025. Local governments will see this starting in the 1st quarterly distribution of 2026. The Solid Waste Section will be providing guidance on the implementation of the changes in the next month.

### **Building Back After Helene: NCDEQ Secures \$61 Million to Strengthen Recycling Infrastructure and Waste Management in Western North Carolina**

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality has received \$61,006,486 in supplemental federal funding from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to support hazardous waste, recycling, and solid waste management recovery in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Both the Division of Waste Management (DWM) and Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) will be providing targeted information and outreach on these available grants to local governments and non-profits in the coming weeks and months.

DEACS received \$25 million of the EPA award to provide grants to local governments in western North Carolina to improve recycling infrastructure impacted by Hurricane Helene and that grant cycle is **now open** and accepting applications. The [Helene Recovery Recycling Infrastructure Grant launched this week](#), providing funding for eligible local governments in 39 Helene-impacted counties to improve their recycling and composting infrastructure.

These funds will help rebuild and modernize local recycling systems, expand processing capacity, and strengthen the local supply chains to keep

valuable materials circulating throughout the entirety of North Carolina's circular economy.

"These grant funds will be instrumental in further assisting Helene-impacted communities," said Michael Scott, Director of DEQ's Division of Waste Management. "We can make transformational improvements to western North Carolina's recycling infrastructure, reducing reliance on landfills and redirecting valuable materials back into the local economy."

Please visit the webpage to learn more about the [Helene Recovery Recycling Infrastructure Grant](#).

[Read more about the overall DEQ award here](#)

### **DEACS Grant Applications for 2026 Funding Cycles Now Open**



**Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant:** North Carolina local governments may now apply for grant funding to build lasting capacity to divert materials from the waste stream and/or increase public awareness of recycling. Local governments may apply for up to \$50,000 for priority projects and up to \$40,000 for standard projects.

**Proposals are due by 5pm on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026**

**For questions, please contact:**

Alex Miller at 919-707-8190 or [Alex.Miller@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Alex.Miller@deq.nc.gov)

Sandy Skolochenko at 919-707-8147 or [Sandy.Skolochenko@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Sandy.Skolochenko@deq.nc.gov)



**Recycling Business Development Grant:** The N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center (RBAC) seeks viable, well-planned proposals from

recycling businesses in North Carolina that build lasting, private-sector capacity to divert materials from the waste stream, promote the circular economy, and create jobs in North Carolina. Projects are eligible to apply for up to \$75,000.

**Proposals are due by 5pm on Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025.**

**For questions, please contact:**  
Emily Weaver at 919-707-8913 or [Emily.Weaver@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Emily.Weaver@deq.nc.gov)  
Sandy Skolochenko at 919-707-8147 or [Sandy.Skolochenko@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Sandy.Skolochenko@deq.nc.gov)

### **Upcoming Lithium-Ion Battery Meeting on November 5th,**

**2025**

NC Department of Environmental Quality's recycling office is hosting a battery recycling meeting with private sector stakeholders on November 5. This meeting is an opportunity to offer feedback regarding the lithium-ion battery landfill ban that goes into effect on December 1, 2026.

Topics will include:

- Collection and recycling options and operations
- Fire safety at recycling facilities
- Education needed to encourage proper battery management

The meeting will be held at DEQ's headquarters from **1:30 to 3:00 p.m. on November 5, 2025**. There will be a virtual option available for those not able to attend in person. If you are interested in attending, contact Matt James at [Matt.James@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Matt.James@deq.nc.gov).

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS**

### **2026 Proposed Landfill Transfer Station Training:**

March	Randolph County
April	Cleveland County
May	Edenton

June	MOLO Location to be Determined
July	Harnett County
August	Catawba County
September	Rocky Mount
October	Davidson County
November	Onslow County
December	Rutherfordton

The North Carolina Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America is proud to recognize colleagues for outstanding achievements and success stories. **Nominations for the NC SWANA Awards (Garby)** are accepted throughout the year and awards will be presented at the NC SWANA Annual Conference. Visit [ncswana.org](http://ncswana.org) for more information.

**Congratulations to the 2025 GARBY Award Winners:**

- Young Professional of the Year** - Dustin Gordon – City of Greensboro
- Transfer Station Employee of the Year** - Eugene Fulford – Coastal Regional Solid Waste Management Authority
- Municipal Employee of the Year** - Jamie Gray – City of Charlotte
- Safety Champion of the Year** - John White – City of Charlotte
- Landfill Operations Employee of the Year** - Michael Renfrow – Cumberland County
- Lifetime Achievement** - Ed Shuffler

The North Carolina Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America is pleased to support higher education by means of financial and educational support. Annually, the North Carolina Chapter offers scholarships to our members and/or their family members to continue educational endeavors. The North Carolina Chapter annual scholarship program will continue to honor the memory of former Board Member, Mr. Ray Church, who passed on September 25, 2006.

**Congratulations to the 2025 Scholarship Recipients:**

- Eric Lovett of Summerfield, NC** - Will be attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and will be majoring in Business.
- Caleb Shin of Waxhaw, NC** - Will be attending Purdue University and majoring in Marketing.
- John Bader of Benson, NC** - Will be attending East Carolina University and will be majoring in Earth Science.

**The North Carolina Chapter of SWANA** holds an Annual Equipment/Truck Road-E-O where contestants representing public and private waste collection agencies compete for top driving, operating, and mechanical honors. Drivers are required to maneuver competition vehicles through a preset course, and mechanics are tested in areas of troubleshooting and diagnostics. All categories are judged on accuracy and time.

**Congratulations to the 2025 Road-E-O Winners:**

**Landfill - Compactor**

**1st Place** - Josh Merritt, City of Greensboro

**2nd Place** - Johnny Aguilar, GFL Environmental

**3rd Place** - Pat Holland, GFL Environmental

**Landfill - Dozer**

**1st Place** - Joe Mills, GFL Environmental

**2nd Place** - Garrett Conroe-Riddle, GFL Environmental

**3rd Place** - Brad Fenner, GFL Environmental

**Landfill - Rubber Tire Loader**

**1st Place** - Andrew Subotnik, City of Greensboro

**2nd Place** - Scott Franklin, Republic Services

**3rd Place** - Billie Dennis, Republic Services

**Truck - Automated Side Loader**

**1st Place** - John Kennedy, City of Concord

**2nd Place** - Antonio Watson, GFL Environmental

**3rd Place** - Chris Thomas, GFL Environmental

**Truck - Front Loader**

**1st Place** - Jeff Ladd, Republic Services

**2nd Place** - Gary Smith, GFL Environmental

**3rd Place** - Johnny Hicks, Republic Services

**Truck - Mechanic**

**1st Place** - Tracy Hendricks, GFL Environmental

**2nd Place** - Jacob McMasters, City of Greensboro

**3rd Place** - Silas-Kames Metz, GFL Environmental

**Truck - Rear Loader**

**1st Place** - Bryant Pauling, City of Charlotte  
**2nd Place** - Maurice Griffith, City of Charlotte  
**3rd Place** - Wylie Winborne, GFL Environmental

**Truck - Roll-Off**

**1st Place** - Anthony Pittard, Republic Services  
**2nd Place** - Shawn Swafford, GFL Environmental  
**3rd Place** - William Goodwin, Jr., GFL Environmental

**Truck - Tractor Trailer**

**1st Place** - Michael Bryant, Coastal Environmental Partnership  
**2nd Place** - Daniel Perkins, Republic Services  
**3rd Place** - Robert McCormick, Republic Services

**The North Carolina Chapter of SWANA** was well represented by 14 contestants at the **2025 SWANA International ROAD-E-O** hosted by the Florida Sunshine Chapter in Lake Mary, Florida on October 10-11th. Congratulations to our trophy winners and thank you to all that participated. You make us proud!

**Truck - Front Loader**

**1st Place/Top Gun** - Jeff Ladd, Republic Services  
Gary Smith, GFL Environmental



**Jeff Ladd, Republic Services**

**Truck - Automated Side Loader**

**2nd Place - Antonio Watson, GFL Environmental**

**John Kennedy, City of Concord**



**Antonio Watson, GFL Environmental**

**Truck - Tractor Trailer**

**2nd Place - Michael Bryant, Coastal Environmental Partnership**



**Michael Bryant, Coastal Environmental Partnership**

**Truck - Rear Loader**

Bryant Pauling, City of Charlotte

**Truck - Roll-Off**

Anthony Pittard, Republic Services  
Shawn Swafford, GFL Environmental

**Truck - Mechanic**

Tracy Hendricks, GFL Environmental  
Jacob McMaster, City of Greensboro

**Landfill - Compactor**

Josh Merritt, City of Greensboro  
Johnny Aguilar, GFL Environmental

**Landfill - Dozer**

Garrett Conroe-Riddle, GFL Environmental

**Truck - Loader**

Andrew Subotnik, City of Greensboro

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## NC SWANA Membership

SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) is an international non-profit, educational organization serving individuals and communities responsible for the management and operation of municipal solid waste management systems. As an association dedicated to the advancement of professionalism in the field, NC SWANA offers workshops, training programs, technical assistance, and certifications to help meet its members' ever-growing needs.

Be part of North Carolina's leading network for solid waste professionals!

Get connected to the **heart of North Carolina's Solid Waste industry!**

- Exclusive Training & Workshops**
- Networking Opportunities**
- Legislative & Industry Updates**
- Engineering Resources**
- Commercial Contacts for Equipment & Services**

 Join Now: [www.swana.org](http://www.swana.org)

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# NC SWANA Safety Ambassador

With the changing of the seasons, we are faced with a new set of challenges to stay safe. Back to school is in full swing bringing more foot and vehicle traffic, the Atlantic Hurricane Season has already been active, and soon enough, we will be changing the clocks back, losing an hour of precious sunlight.

NC SWANA would like to take a moment to talk about ways we can help keep ourselves and our teams safe this season.

## **Back to School Traffic and Pedestrians**

As a driver, always remember:

- Know your school zones and when drop off and pick up times are. Exercise added caution for increased vehicle and pedestrian traffic during these times
- Children will be at bus stops early when it may be harder to see
- Children can act unpredictably and without warning
- Be patient and slow down around bus stops and school zones
- Leave plenty of following distance behind a school bus, and if lights are flashing and stop arm extended, **STOP**. The 10 feet immediately surrounding the school bus are the most dangerous
- Never pass a vehicle that is stopped at a crosswalk!

## **Hurricane Preparedness, Season Change and Low Light**

- Check your vehicles! – Ensure that all lights, signals, and blinkers are working
- Use sun visors and/or sunglasses to help reduce being blinded by direct sun
- Reduce speed – The speed limit may not be the safest speed if traffic is heavy
- Monitor weather for impending storms, which can lead to flooding, high winds, and power outages

- Have supplies and resources available should extreme weather occur – Bottled water, batteries, flashlights, garbage bags, bleach, radios, and first aid kits
- Make a plan and practice it! – Know your evacuation routes, meeting stations, and emergency contacts, and have practice drills so you're prepared in a real-life emergency.

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## Stay Connected!

For the latest updates, please visit our website  
at [ncswana.org](http://ncswana.org).

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[www.ncswana.org](http://www.ncswana.org)

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