

Not Your Father's Waste Management Anymore

Computers are everywhere, and nowhere is that truer than in the waste management industry.

By Duff Kennedy

The site began operations with two Mettler Toledo Steel Deck scales, and has added scales over the years to its current total of six. The addition of the new scales has reduced tare-in and weigh-out time, increasing operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Two other Republic facilities in the Las Vegas area—the Cheyenne and Henderson Transfer Stations—also rely on Mettler Toledo products. The Cheyenne Station has been in operation since 1982 and runs about 6,000 tons of solid waste through the facility per day. The Henderson Station has been in operation for six years and runs about 100 trucks through twice a day.

Each facility has a Steel Deck scale for inbound traffic. Outbound traffic passes over scale modules positioned to accommodate front and rear axles after being loaded with waste bound for other facilities.



Active Scale Manufacturing Inc. (www.activescale.com) of Ontario, Canada, also markets a variety of devices, including floor scales legal for trade from 2,000 to 10,000 pounds, and the Modu-Deck truck scale, a portable scale which may be dug-in for a permanent (or semi-permanent) installation or simply moved from site to site.

[SUBHAD] Beyond Scales

The computer is making waste management easier in a couple of other areas: specifically, automated accounting, integration with the Internet, and GPS tracking of trucks.

One popular piece of waste management accounting software is that provided by Soft-Pak Inc. (www.soft-pak.com) of San Diego, CA. Soft-Pak marketed its first product in 1975. In the '80s Soft-Pak made the conscious decision to focus on developing software for the waste disposal industry.

Soft-Pak markets a range of products aimed at everyone from large operations to single users. Its three packages are i-Pak, e-Pak, and e-Pak Lite. In addition, individual user modules—such as Credit Card Authorization, Zip Code Validation, Letter Generator, Google Maps, Microsoft Mappoint—can be integrated on an individual, as-needed basis.

Soft-Pak has been marketing i-Pak for over 20 years to all segments of the hauling industry. (The Web-based version of i-Pak, called e-Pak, allows you to manage your operations from any Internet connection. For more on e-Pak, see the Soft-Pak Web site.) The software is upgraded and new features and benefits added based on user feedback. To encourage this feedback, Soft-Pak holds an annual users conference in San Diego to hear haulers from across the country share their ideas, discuss how they do business, and make “wish lists” of desirable features they'd like to see.

Colquitt County, GA provides solid waste services for approximately 9,000 customers and runs its billing, work orders, invoices, and financial reports with Soft-Pak. It finds the package “easy and efficient” and the sales and support team to be “talented and experienced.”

Daily Disposal of San Diego, CA had the same observations. It found that e-Pak made daily operations quicker and easier, and provided more accurate monthly billing, dispatching, and report-generating capabilities than their previous system.

Armstrong Disposal was a small, family-owned company in Oregon with four trucks when it first bought e-Pak, and it has enjoyed its benefits ever since. The addition of e-Pak has allowed Armstrong to streamline its operation, and owner Terrell Garrett now enjoys the freedom of running the business over the Internet. Describing a vacation in New Mexico, Garrett says "I put the laptop on the kitchen table in our cabin and spent all of seven minutes running the monthly billing while enjoying the scenery." Having e-Pak certainly allows him to roam. On one visit to Disneyland he continued to run his business over the Internet, returning calls, changing customer service levels, issuing work orders, and carrying on business as usual. According to Garrett, "All you need is an Internet connection."