



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

# Press Release

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## National Partnership selects MWRD staff to mentor Texas biosolids program



*MWRD biosolids program coordinator Dan Collins has shared his knowledge and experience as a mentor for Houston's Sims Bayou Wastewater and Biosolids Management program. He's pictured in front of experimental compost piles of combined biosolids and mulch at the MWRD Lawndale Avenue Solids Management Area.*

The National Biosolids Management Program has selected Dan Collins, coordinator of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Biosolids Management Program, to mentor the city of Houston, Tex., wastewater agency as it implements a similar program.

Collins, a Supervising Civil Engineer, has worked with the MWRD for 25 years and has worked with the Biosolids program since 1991. In the past three years, he has served as the Illinois Water Environment Association Biosolids Chairperson and is on the National Association of Clean Water Agencies Biosolids Committee based in Washington, DC.

Biosolids are nutrient-rich, highly organic material developed through extensive treatment. Biosolids are a superior, yet less expensive alternative

to chemical fertilizer and are used in landscaping, for turf at parks and athletic fields and for agricultural crops. Biosolids are not only a better source of nutrients than chemical fertilizer, but they also improve soil quality. MWRD's biosolids are of exceptional quality based on federal standards. As a service to municipal and commercial users, MWRD offers and delivers biosolids at no cost.

"Many area golf courses, park districts and communities in the Chicago area are using biosolids to improve the quality of their turf, and farmers in the nearby counties like the benefits of higher yields they receive by using biosolids," said Collins. "We are proud of our program and appreciate the opportunity to educate other wastewater treatment agencies on how they can use the

material produced through their processes."

"MWRD's reputation for excellence and for going above and beyond regulatory requirements was a strong factor in selecting the MWRD to take part in the mentoring program," said Ned Beecher, National Biosolids Management Program representative. "Their program staff have excellent, hands-on experience in implementing the biosolids management program, and this experience will be very helpful to city of Houston staff as they begin to develop and implement a similar program."

David St. Pierre, MWRD executive director, said that it was a credit to program staff to be asked to share best management practices. "Our biosolids program has developed into a strong, well-managed process that takes treated waste and converts it into a superior, usable product. We are always willing to share our insight and demonstrate techniques that are instrumental to our success."

Each year, MWRD hosts a field day at area farms or parks to demonstrate how biosolids are developed and to show how they have been successfully used. MWRD also presents awards to an individual and an organization for their efforts to benefit the environment through the use of biosolids. This year's field day is currently in development. Additional information can be found at [www.mwrdd.org](http://www.mwrdd.org) or by calling (312) 751-6633. Our water environment... Take it personally.

*Established in 1889, the MWRD ([www.mwrdd.org](http://www.mwrdd.org)) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.*