

SWANA announces Professional Achievement Award winners

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The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) announced the recipients of its annual Professional Achievement Awards on July 28. According to the association, the Professional Achievement Awards recognize SWANA members for their valuable and distinguished contributions to SWANA, the solid waste and recycling industry, and the public. The award winners were nominated by their peers for their dedication to their organizations, the industry, the public and the environment.

“SWANA’s annual Professional Achievement Awards recognize leaders, and this year is no exception,” SWANA’s Executive Director and CEO David Biderman says. “The three individuals selected for these awards have been long-time leaders seeking to improve solid waste and recycling systems at the local, state and national levels.”

Robert L. Lawrence Distinguished Service Award: Enrique Zaldivar, director and general manager, LA Sanitation and Environment

Zaldivar has been at the helm of the city of Los Angeles’ LA Sanitation & Environment Department (LASAN) as director and general manager since 2007. Through his leadership, LASAN oversees the city’s Clean Water program, Solid Resources program, and the Watershed Protection program. LASAN’s achievements in solid waste under Zaldivar’s direction include the recently implemented recycLA Franchise Initiative with the adoption of the Solid Waste Private Hauler Exclusive Franchise Initiative. Ongoing programs and initiatives include work to improve recycling markets via the new US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA); a commitment to electrification of the refuse collection truck fleet to move toward zero emission goals; and implementation of a long-term zero waste plan through 2030.

Association Life Member Award: Harvey Levitt, retired, Georgia’s Dalton-

Whitfield Solid Waste Authority

Harvey Levitt joined SWANA and the Georgia chapter in 1995 and is still an active member 25 years later. As a long-time member, he served on the chapter board of directors for 20 years, helped develop Georgia's landfill operator training and certification, and then served as an instructor for 13 years. Levitt won SWANA's Professional Achievement Award for Public Sector Members in 2013. He is retired from the Dalton-Whitfield Solid Waste Authority.

Upon being notified of his recognition, Levitt said, "SWANA is all about training and bonding and sharing training with your peers."

Robert L. Lawrence Lecture Award: Heidi Sanborn, executive director, National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC)

Sanborn is an internationally recognized advocate for extended producer responsibility (EPR) and a circular economy. NSAC is both an advocate and lobbyist on behalf of EPR and product stewardship at all levels of government. NSAC is known for its support of California's landmark 2018 medicine and sharps take-back legislation, the first law in the United States to address both medicines and needles through EPR at the state level, among other bills.

"These individuals have had a tremendous impact on the communities they have served and on the solid waste profession," SWANA President Brenda Haney says. "Their work will have a lasting impact."