

SCS Engineers' Hostetter Focuses on Problem Solving to Prevent Headaches

By Willona Sloan



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SCS ENGINEERS' HOSTETTER FOCUSES ON PROBLEM SOLVING TO PREVENT HEADACHES

DAVID HOSTETTER SPOKE WITH WASTE360 ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE WORKING TO DETECT AND RESOLVE ISSUES WITH LANDFILL GAS SYSTEMS TO HELP TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY

WILLONA SLOAN | OCT 19, 2016

Professional troubleshooter David Hostetter's formal job title is senior project professional. He works for SCS Engineers, an environmental consulting and contracting firm, where he uses his skills to proactively address landfill gas system issues before they become big problems.

"David has a keen eye for troubleshooting and diagnosing control system issues which all-too-often arise as a headache for clients. He serves clients wholeheartedly and goes out of his way to provide assistance as well as expertise to make their day-to-day as easy as possible," says Justin Stevenson, SCS Engineers.

Hostetter was recently named as a *Waste360 40 Under 40 award recipient*. He spoke with *Waste360* about his experience working to detect and resolve issues with landfill gas systems to help to improve safety and efficiency.

Waste360: How did you find your way to the waste industry?

David Hostetter: While I was in college, I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with myself and my career. I was feeling like I wanted to do something more than just design a widget or bring home a paycheck every day. I ended up taking an environmental ethics course and that

kind of turned me on to the idea of environmental engineering and sustainability and green building, and that larger field. Leaving college, I was feeling like that's what I wanted to do.

Waste360: What are your major responsibilities at SCS Engineers?

David Hostetter: I work with our landfill gas group. I knew when I came into SCS that it was a company that was much larger than their energy focus. They had a very good name for themselves in the landfill and landfill gas industry.

It's been great. I work on a lot of different things: anything from designing blower flare stations to helping troubleshoot them. As a mechanical engineer, that's a good use of my skillset because I'm versed in how to select mechanical equipment for landfills.

I also do a lot of control system design and troubleshooting. One of the things I've been doing a lot lately is remote troubleshooting, remote monitoring, and remote control systems. I get involved with projects where I take it the whole way from conception through to installation and then using the system. I enjoy helping clients to identify and fix problems before they become major problems.

Waste360: Why would you say landfill gas as an area of focus matters?

David Hostetter: It's a huge global warming potential chemical. The more that we can collect and get rid of it the better. From a large perspective, I think that's why I'm interested in the field. I wanted, from as early as college, to make a difference with my career, and I see this field and my job, in particular, as doing a good job of that – making sure that [I'm helping to] leave the world and the environment better off than when I got here.

Waste360: Are there other things that you do in your current role?

I'm involved with a lot of different design projects. One of the cool projects I've worked on is a for an elevated temperature landfill. I designed a cooling system for the gas that was coming off the landfill. That was neat because it's a focus within the industry. It was fun to be on the cutting edge and get to develop new systems for that.

Also, we have a whole system called SCSeTools® that is an online database where clients can store all of their landfill gas wellfield data, data from groundwater and leachate systems, and also be able to view and operate other systems. I'm working with that group to implement these systems here on the east coast.

Each day is very different. I like that it's not mundane. It's a fun environment. This is the best job I've ever had.

Waste360: What has been an opportunity that has helped to take your career to the next level so far?

David Hostetter: I think my exposure to Tom Conrad (SCS co-founder) was very helpful in my career because he kind of took me under his wing, mentored me, and taught me a lot about the industry in general and about how to run projects, how to write good reports, and communicate effectively with clients. I think that's been one of the highlights of my career so far. We're an 800-person firm and Tom has been in the business for quite a while, and he's very well-known in the industry. It was really awesome to be able to do that.

Waste360: What advice would you give to a young person who is new in this industry?

David Hostetter: I think one of the things that's helped me out a lot is to be inquisitive and to really try to figure out what's going on with things—whether it's a design and or troubleshooting something, and to accept a lot of different opportunities. Don't necessarily pigeonhole yourself into one specific field or area. If someone asks you to do something, if you don't have a good excuse to say no, then say yes and start digging into it and enjoying what you're doing.

Each opportunity can be a great way to move your career into a different direction and to create a larger view and understanding of the world.

I think it's also really important to get to know your co-workers and your clients and the people that you work with because those relationships are what helps drive your career forward. The more you know people, the more projects you're going to get involved with, the more recognition you might get for things that you do.

Also, each individual person has things that they know and things that they're gifted in. Don't be afraid to speak up when you have information or an experience that might help whatever it is that you're working on.

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