



**For Immediate Release:  
April 29, 2010**

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## **The Inland Empire Regional Composting Authority Receives Honors from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers®**

**Inland Empire** - The Inland Empire Regional Composting Authority (IERCA) has received the Excellence in Environmental Engineering® Honors Award in Operations/Management from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers® (AAEE). The AAEE Award seeks to identify, reward, and promote projects which encompass excellence in all aspects of environmental engineering practice. The criteria for being honored includes the demonstration of an integrated approach that considers all environmental media, quality measured by user satisfaction and performance, contribution to social and economic advancement, originality and innovation, as well as the complexity of the problem addressed.

IERCA was created as a public entity in 2002 by a Joint Powers Agreement between the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA) and the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (LACSD). This agreement led to the construction, operation and maintenance of a composting facility to address southern California's challenges with biosolids management. The reuse of biosolids generated from the water treatment facilities from both IEUA and LACSD, produce quality compost for healthy soils.

"The composting facility focuses on manufacturing exceptional quality compost in a cost effective manner while promoting conservation and environmental protection," stated IERCA Vice President and IEUA Director Gene Koopman. "Compost products are proven to save water and produce direct benefits to soils and crops in both horticulture and agriculture."

"IERCA has decided that composting is the most environmentally-sound and economical method to beneficially reuse the biosolids generated from our wastewater treatment facilities," stated Jon Blickenstaff, IERCA Chairman.

IERCA identified a vacant 413,000 square foot former-IKEA Furnishings warehouse in Rancho Cucamonga as an ideal location for a composting facility called the Inland Empire Regional Composting Facility (IERCF). It is the largest completely enclosed, aerated static pile composting facility in the United States.

Construction began in 2003 and was completed in 2007. Compost is produced by mixing biosolids with other organic materials. The facility can process 150,000 tons of biosolids and 60,000 tons of wood and green waste per year. All waste materials are received, mixed and composted inside the building. The composting process takes approximately 60 days. After curing the compost is ready for distribution and sale. The finished product, called SoilPro Compost, is sold for a variety of direct and retail uses. Kellogg Garden Products bags the product for sale to large retailers such as Home Depot and Lowes.

“We are extremely satisfied with the high-quality end product we produce. This high-end compost has exceeded our expectations both in sales and in quality,” stated IEUA General Manager Richard Atwater.

This innovative local program reduces water needs and protects groundwater. Project proximity to both the wastewater plants and the end users reduce truck traffic and all related negative environmental impacts.

“This program demonstrates how innovative thought and partnerships can transform biosolids management into something beneficial,” stated Steve Maguin, SDLAC Chief Engineer and General Manager. “It is an approach that can be replicated anywhere.”

*Inland Empire Utilities Agency supplies imported drinking water and recycled water, collects and treats wastewater, and provides renewable energy and compost to over 850,000 residents in the Inland Empire.*

*Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County protect public health and the environment through innovative and cost-effective wastewater and solid waste management, and in doing so convert waste into resources such as reclaimed water, energy and recycled materials. The Sanitation Districts serve about 5.7 million people in 78 cities and unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County.*



*IERCA operates the nation’s largest indoor composting facility, located in Rancho Cucamonga, CA. Solar panels can be found located directly on the facilities roof for energy production.*