



Wheelabrator WESTCHESTER News

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Winter 2009



Students leave
Wheelabrator
with new
perspective

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“They’re environmental students and they come in with a list full of questions, and I enjoy it,” Kendrigan said. “This is the best part of my job. I believe educating students and the community about waste-to-energy and our plant is the key to our success. Education is a driving force in everything we do at Wheelabrator..”

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Pace student
Jessica Haas
takes a picture
of a burner
during a tour.

PHOTO:
REBA SALDANHA



Operations manager Brett Baker discusses the plant's safety record.

Records are made to be broken at Wheelabrator

BY SEAN LEONARD

Every shift at Wheelabrator Westchester begins with a safety briefing. This daily routine has clearly paid off – all 65 employees have gone more than two years without a work-related injury and more than 976 days without a lost-time injury.

“Everything we do here is geared around safety. That’s the first thing we discuss at the start of each day and it is how we’re going to keep doing our jobs safely,” said Operations Manager Brett Baker to a group of visiting Pace University students who recently toured the plant. “We want everyone to

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Thank you for your support



Peter Kendrigan
Plant Manager

Welcome to the winter edition of *Wheelabrator Westchester News*. 2008 has been an exciting and productive year for us. We recorded zero incidents or injuries; introduced a new work schedule, which includes a fifth shift; launched a medication take-back program, the first of its kind in New York; and watched our student partners at Peekskill Middle School earn the Recycling Practices Award at the annual Wheelabrator Symposium for Environment and Education. More recently, we welcomed to the plant environmental students from Pace University, which you will read about in this edition. It was wonderful to see young people so interested in our operations, and

excited about what they witnessed. They asked thoughtful and challenging questions, making for an interesting exchange of information.

I am also excited about my new role on the board of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce. I look forward to working more closely with the communities in Putnam and Westchester counties in the new year.

Happy holidays and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2009. Thank you for your continued support and interest in Wheelabrator Westchester.

Peter Kendrigan is plant manager at Wheelabrator Westchester.

Open-door policy

Have you ever wondered what happens to your trash after it is collected from the curb?

We invite you to tour our plant and witness firsthand the journey waste takes as it is converted into electricity.

To set up a tour, please contact:
Wheelabrator Westchester
One Charles Point Ave.
Peekskill, NY 10566
Tel. (914) 739-9555

Going Green: Waste Management chief embraces environmental initiatives

BY DAVID LISCIO

Green may be today's buzzword among the environmentally conscious, however sustainability is not a new concept for Waste Management, Inc. Year after year, Waste Management has found cutting-edge ways to use trash as an energy source.

This message was the theme of the keynote address delivered by Waste Management President and Chief Operating Officer Lawrence O'Donnell III at the 20th annual symposium of the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC), held in Baltimore on Nov. 17-18.

According to O'Donnell, the company's more than 47,000 employees often express a desire to get involved in community efforts to preserve wildlife habitat, conserve open land and generally make the planet healthier.

"In the late 1980s, Waste Management began working with the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC). Our employees were looking to get involved and this organization helped us do just that," he said, noting the council has been responsible for ensuring 2.4 million



Lawrence O'Donnell III

wildlife habitats, complete with a visitor center and associated education program. In Baltimore, a riverside fish hatchery is operated adjacent to the company's waste-to-energy facility. Both projects are evidence of the company's environmental commitment.

In 2006, Waste Management recycled enough paper

acres, most of them owned by large U.S. corporations, remain as wildlife habitat, conservation land, or are otherwise part of sustainability projects.

"We have been thinking green for a long time. So, what in the world is a trash company doing talking about sustainability?"

With this rhetorical question, O'Donnell launched into a list of Waste Management's green initiatives, particularly its hallmark program including 16 waste-to-energy facilities capable of creating enough steam to push turbines to generate electricity for homes and businesses.

At some facilities, such as the waste-to-energy plant in Saugus, Mass., landfills have been capped and transformed into scenic

to save more than 41 million trees and generated electricity capable of annually powering more than one million homes. The company's waste-based energy annually replaces the nation's need for more than 14 million barrels of oil. Its landfills, designed with liners to prevent leachate from entering the region's groundwater, provide more than 21,000 acres of WHC-certified land.

By 2020, the company expects to double its green energy output, increase the volume of recyclables processed from eight million tons to more than 20 million, and boost the efficiency of its truck fleet by 15 percent, which simultaneously will reduce emissions. O'Donnell said the company also plans to quadruple the number of acres currently set aside for conservation and wildlife habitat — news met with a roar of approval from WHC members at the Baltimore symposium.

O'Donnell credits the WHC for helping Waste Management achieve its ranking. WHC's programs can clearly benefit a corporation committed to leading the way in environmental stewardship. Since the start of their collaboration 20 years ago, the WHC has certified 49 Waste Management sites.

"We feel like we're making a difference. Companies are coming to us," said O'Donnell. "People are starting to look at us differently."

Wheelabrator Westchester Quick Facts

The Westchester facility processes up to 2,250 tons per day of municipal solid waste for 35 communities. At full capacity, it can generate 60,000 kilowatt-hours of electrical energy per hour. This is the equivalent of supplying all of the electrical needs of more than 87,000 New York homes.

Prescription drug recovery program a big success

BY SEAN LEONARD

Wheelabrator Westchester is doing its part to keep pharmaceutical waste from polluting the environment and keeping illegal drugs and contraband off the streets of New York.

Last spring, the plant launched a pilot prescription drug recovery program and it has proven to be a tremendous success, according to Plant Manager Peter Kendrigan.

Earlier this year, the Associated Press published a series of investigational stories on whether prescription and non-prescription drugs were seeping into the nation's drinking water supplies through general disposal practices. The research not only found traces of drugs but also discovered that 250 million pounds of pharmaceuticals and contaminated packaging enter the waste stream in America each year.

Kendrigan said it was an issue he discussed early this year in a meeting with Westchester County conservation officials.

"We were talking about drugs entering the waterways, and that same night on the news, there were reports about traces of all kinds of drugs being discovered in reservoirs and wells in the Midwest. I immediately thought this is an issue we can help solve."

Shortly after, Wheelabrator received permission from the state of New York to launch the prescription drug recovery pilot program. "To the best of my knowledge, this is the only pilot program of its kind in New York," Kendrigan said.

Lori Smith serves as Wheelabrator's community liaison, attending household hazardous waste collection events throughout Westchester County.

"We encourage people to bring unused or expired prescription drugs, vitamins and over-the-counter medications," Smith said. "We can properly dispose of the waste as opposed to flushing them down the toilet or throwing them into the garbage where there is a risk of the drugs seeping into groundwater or getting into the wrong hands."

Smith dedicates a weekend each month (two in November) at these collection events.

"We held collection days on Friday, October 24 and Saturday, October 25 at Croton Point Park. On Friday, we collected five half-filled bags, and these were the big, 96-pound bags," Smith said. "And that was in just two hours."

"Then on Saturday, we filled eight bags. We had people dropping off allergy medication, expired vitamins, and some cleaned out medicine cabinets of their parents who had passed away. There has been a big response to this program."

At the close of every collection day, Smith takes the collected pharmaceutical waste to the plant where, under the supervision of a police officer, the material is burned. "The police officer drives with us to the plant and witnesses the bags being dumped into the hopper," Smith said.

Kendrigan said the plant also works closely with state and county police to do "special burns" on request.

"Police will come in with illegal drugs they need to dispose of," Kendrigan said. "They come to supervise the burns and they come prepared."

Kendrigan said special burns are done as a community service, depending on the volume. Operations Manager Brett Baker explained police-supervised special burns are also done for other types of contraband, including knock-off designer clothing, laboratory waste or old and confidential legal documents.



Plant Manager Peter Kendrigan looks forward to continued service in Westchester County.

Reaching out to the community

Kendrigan on board at Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber

BY SEAN LEONARD

Following in the footsteps of his immediate predecessor, Tom Maillet, as plant manager at Wheelabrator Westchester, Peter Kendrigan has joined the board of the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce, which serves businesses and the communities of Putnam County and northern Westchester County.

Kendrigan, who in the nine years working at Wheelabrator has managed trash-to-energy plants in New Hampshire and New Jersey before taking the helm of the Westchester plant in the summer of 2007, said joining the board is "a natural fit," since he served on previous boards of chambers in other areas.

"It fits in with our company's community outreach programs, allowing us to meet people and become involved in areas that matter most to the community," said Kendrigan.

Maillet recommended Kendrigan to replace him on the 31-member board, and chamber President and CEO Ron Forehand extended that

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It fits in with our company's community outreach, allowing us to meet people in the community and work with them.

Peter Kendrigan, Plant Manager

invitation to Kendrigan following an interview.

"Tom Maillet was absolutely outstanding. Over time he became more involved with the chamber," Forehand said. "Peter obviously has a great background in community service and I could tell quickly that he has the same qualities, the same kind of heart that Tom has."

Forehand said the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber is comprised primarily of small businesses, which he said fortunately are weathering the downturn in the economy. "We have a high percentage of small businesses that are surviving nicely," he said.

Wheelabrator, Forehand said, has built a reputation for being a great

neighbor.

"The chamber has a scholarship program that Wheelabrator is very involved in, issuing scholarships in six different high schools, and the company has made a substantial donation to the Peekskill School District that I know was received extremely well," he said.

In addition to business seminars, networking events and its many programs, the chamber sponsors Town Days, which are town fairs, and Forehand noted that Kendrigan participated in the Putnam Valley Town Day in September.

"An important part of making donations is being at events and being active in the community. Peter is clearly committed to doing that," Forehand said, noting Kendrigan will be involved over the holidays in the chamber's efforts to aid the homeless shelter and rehabilitation center in Peekskill, which include a coat drive and food drive.

As a member of the board, Kendrigan will attend bi-monthly meetings, and next year, according to Forehand, he will be eligible to serve on the board's executive committee, which he said sets the direction for



Pace University student Gregg Twehues checks out a burner during a tour of the Westchester plant.



Pace University's (from left) Gregg Twehues, instructor Claudia Mausner, Jessica Haas and Astia LeBron tour the Westchester plant.



Pace University students, from left, Astia LeBron, Jessica Haas, instructor Claudia Mausner, and Gregg Twehues tour the Westchester plant with Operations Manager Brett Baker.

PACEMAKERS

Students leave Wheelabrator with new perspective

By SEAN LEONARD

Wheelabrator Westchester Plant Manager Peter Kendrigan and Operations Manager Brett Baker were ready for a “ton” of questions from Pace University students who toured the plant.

“They’re environmental students and they come in with a list full of questions, and I enjoy it,” Kendrigan said. “This is the best part of my job. I believe educating students and the community about waste-to-energy and our plant is the key to our success. Education is a driving force in everything we do at Wheelabrator.”

Good questions

Pace professor Claudia Mausner and three students from her “Living Sustainably in Our World” class did not disappoint.

Kendrigan and Baker fielded questions from Mausner and students Gregg Twehues, Jessica Haas and Astia LeBron for a half-hour prior to the tour of the waste-to-energy plant.

“Is the heat generated in the boilers an efficient fuel source?” asked Twehues.

“While trash is not a very efficient energy source, it is a renewable fuel. In addition, because two-thirds is biomass — paper, food, etc. — it has less impact on global warming than traditional fossil fuels,” Kendrigan said.

The most commonly asked questions in the community are about emissions. “About one-half of the cost of building a waste-to-energy plant is

for pollution-control systems. This investment allows us to continually operate significantly below our permit levels,” Kendrigan said.

“What happens to pollutants filtered during the emissions process?” asked LeBron.

“Good question,” Kendrigan said. “The ash residue remaining from the combustion process is tested using EPA- and state-regulated procedures to demonstrate it’s safe for disposal in a landfill.”

Mausner asked, “If mandatory recycling has resulted in a drop in trash volume coming into the plant does that consequently mean a drop in revenue?”

“We’ve seen a change. Westchester County has put a strong push on recycling and we support these efforts,” said Kendrigan. “We encourage recycling as much as possible, but what they can’t recycle, we take and safely dispose of it and generate clean energy.”

“A common question I’m asked is, if I think waste-to-energy is the way to go. Obviously I do, but we also need recycling and composting; all of it working together to achieve a common goal,” said Kendrigan.

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A common question I’m asked is, if I think waste-to-energy is the way to go. Obviously I do, but I don’t think it is the only way. We need recycling and composting; all of it working together to achieve a common goal.

Peter Kendrigan
Plant Manager

The tipping floor

Mausner and the students donned hard hats and safety glasses and began the tour of the plant as Baker detailed the waste-to-energy process along the way.

The group stopped first at the tipping floor, the huge enclosed receiving bay where haulers dump their solid waste loads. The waste is pushed by a massive front-end loader into a pit, which holds about 8,000 tons of trash when filled to capacity.

Next, it was on to the turbine deck.

“This is where steam from combustion in the boilers gathers and is fed to the turbine to produce 60 megawatts of clean, renewable electricity an hour,” Baker said.

The boiler room

The tour proceeded to the boiler room where the group got a chance to peek inside one of the boilers to see trash burning on shifting grates.

“We have three boilers, each burns 750 tons a day,” Baker said.

Each boiler is taken out of service four times a year for maintenance. And once a year the entire plant shuts down for one or two weeks to inspect the steam pipes and make any needed repairs.

“Where does the ash go?” LeBron asked.

Baker said the ash is taken to the county-owned Sprout Brook Ash Landfill, six miles from the plant. Metals are separated from the ash and taken to a recycling facility on Long Island.

The control room

The group next visited the control room, where Supervisor Mike Haeser and Control Room Operator Joe Travis were at work.

“Joe’s got over 3,000 points he’s monitoring on these (computer) screens,” Baker said. “He’s what I call the babysitter. He’s watching the entire plant and everything it does.”

Mausner asked Haeser what type of education is required for plant supervisors and control room operators. Haeser noted he has a mechanical engineering degree and said many others have marine science backgrounds, since the combustion process at the Westchester plant mirrors that used to power ships at sea. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers recertifies the five control room operators and two supervisors every five years.

Reaction

The group, as Kendrigan anticipated, was enlightened by the tour and impressed with the plant’s operation. “When you read about the process it’s very technical, but seeing it, it’s easy to understand,” Mausner said, noting she was most pleased to learn the plant’s emissions are well below EPA and DEC standards.



Pace University students Astia LeBron and Gregg Twehues in the control room during a tour.



Westchester plant's truck collection.

Plant safety comes first for EHS Director Susanne May

BY SEAN LEONARD

Wheelabrator Westchester Environmental Health & Safety Director Susanne May has no shortage of paperwork and reports to file throughout the year, but she says her job at the Peekskill plant is a breeze since “there are no environmental issues here” and because workers are so dedicated to safety.

May, a Long Island native, holds an undergraduate degree in environmental engineering from the University of Dayton, as well as two masters degrees in occupational health and safety from Columbia Southern University. She served as a Seabee in the Navy for four years, stationed in Wales, and went on to work for two decades in the manufacturing, automotive and chemical industries, prior to joining Wheelabrator.

May enjoys her work at Wheelabrator Westchester because it draws on both her fields of expertise – health and safety and environmental management. In addition to implementing health and safety training and procedures, it is May’s job to report the plant’s emissions performance to various government agencies.

“I go to the control room to look at our numbers and work with the supervisors to fill out reports required by the County,” May said. “There are quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports to file with Westchester County, the state of

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This plant has a lot of pride in keeping the record zero-zero.

We pay a lot of attention to detail and start every day with a safety briefing.

Susanne May
EHS Director

New York and the U.S. EPA.”

May is also the plant’s liaison with the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), which visits the plant regularly and is briefed on health and safety procedures. She said the Westchester plant has gone more than two years without a workplace injury and more than two-and-a-half years without a workplace injury resulting in lost-work time. This is a testament to the diligence and dedication of the plant’s 65 employees.

“This plant has a lot of pride in keeping the record zero-zero,” May said. “We pay a lot of attention to detail and start every day with a safety briefing.”

May also serves as president of the Hudson River Valley Chapter of the American Society of Safety Engineers, which is dedicated to the promotion of safety in the workplace. The society holds health and safety fairs in conjunction with OSHA, she said.

One thing May would like to see are more women following her career path. “We have to encourage more women to pursue careers in engineering and, based on our recruiting efforts, I think we’re starting to see this trend.”

May lives in Ulster County, N.Y., with her daughter, Cyndi, who is in college and plans to become a teacher.

Accident-free at Wheelabrator

SAFETY: from Page 1

go home the same way they came to work.”

Baker pointed to two digital signs on the wall outside the turbine generator room. One sign displayed the number 929, “the number of days since we’ve had an injury,” and on the other, 976, “the days we’ve gone without someone losing a day of work to an injury.”

This exemplary record is a true testament to everyone who works here.

“It’s a plant record,” Baker said. “And we’re real proud of that. The guys are proud of themselves for going this long.”

Wheelabrator Westchester is a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) worksite designated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This designation was achieved in 2007 and is up for re-certification in 2009.

“Safety is a core value here. We take the guidelines OSHA gives us and we design our safety programs to exceed basic safety requirements,” said Plant Manager Peter Kendrigan. “When someone asks me how things are going at work, I instantly say everyone went home in the same condition they came to work in, so it’s another great day.”

Idiagbor is plant’s problem-solver

IDIAGBOR: from Page 8

plants are substantial. The counties bring in tons of trash, and we safely dispose of it, typically resulting in a 90% waste reduction. And emissions at this facility are cleaner than what one tractor-trailer truck puts out in one year,” he said.

Just prior to rejoining the company in July 2007, Idiagbor worked as an office manager at the New York Organic Fertilizer Company in the Bronx.

“This job is like coming home because it’s closer to my educational background,” he said. “My position supports operations and maintenance. Wherever there is a problem I take a look at it and resolve it. We are very focused on preventive maintenance.”

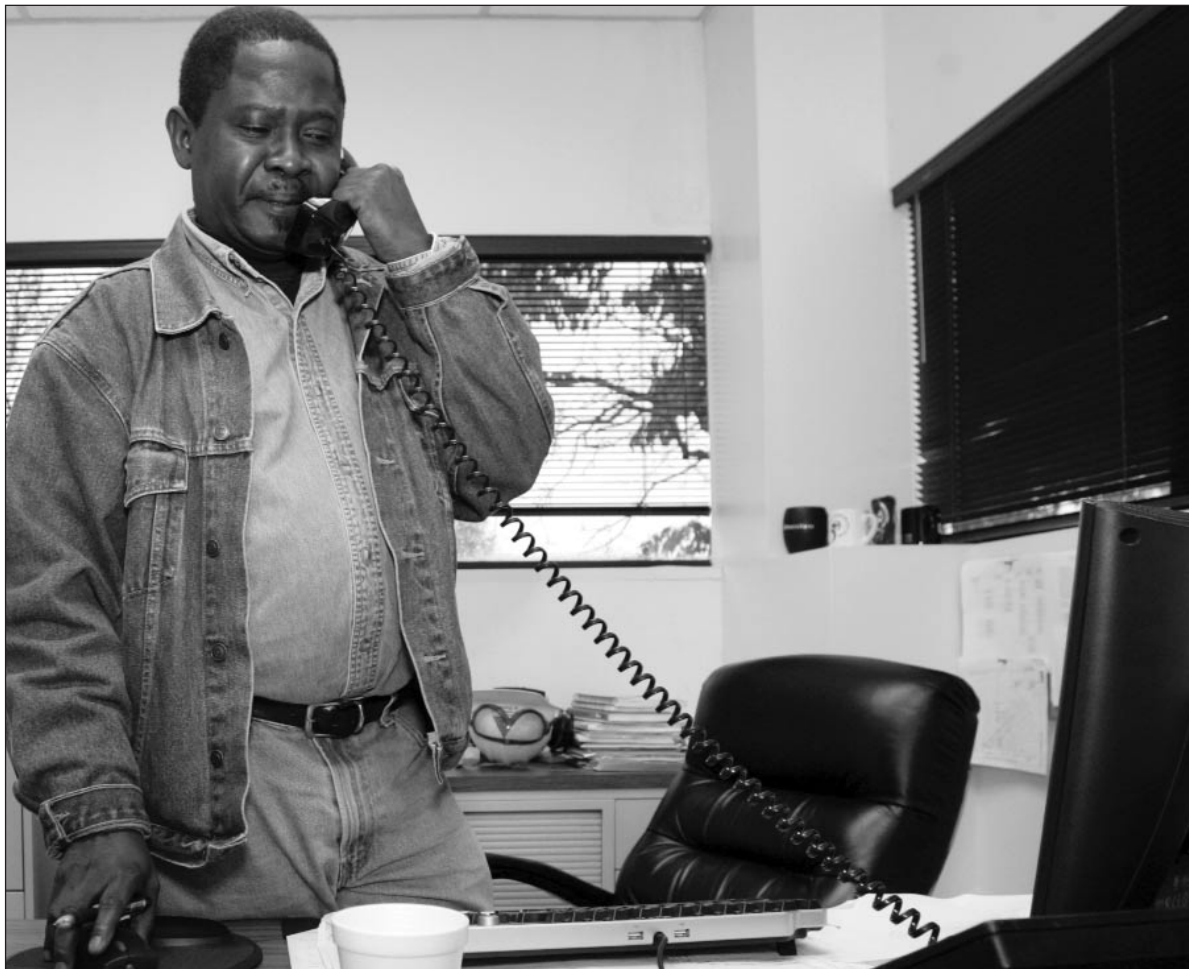
Each month, Idiagbor noted, one the three plant’s boilers is taken out of service for maintenance.

“The first three months of the year is a very busy time because that’s when each boiler is taken down for 12 days and taken completely apart and inspected,” said Idiagbor. “When things do go wrong, that’s when you see what the crew is made of. We come together, address the issue and get things back online.

“That’s another great part about coming to work here, the workers,” he added. “It’s a great place to be because we’re like a family here.”

Idiagbor lives in Teaneck, N.J., with his wife, Monica, with whom he is celebrating 20 years of marriage. He says he looks forward to returning home to visit family members in Nigeria every two years. While he’s a half-a-world away from Umutu geographically, as vice president of the New York Chapter of the Ndokwa Association In America, Nigeria is never far from his heart.

“It’s always a pleasure to be home where it’s nice and warm,” he said with a smile.



Plant Engineer Mike Idiagbor answers the phone in his office.

Safety at work



Wheelabrator Westchester's 65 employees have gone more than two years without a work-related injury and more than 900 days without a loss-time injury.

World of opportunity



Nigerian native Michael Idiagbor is plant's chief problem-solver

By SEAN LEONARD

Wheelabrator Westchester Plant Engineer Michael Idiagbor has come a long way from his native town of Umutu in NdokwaWe, Delta, Nigeria.

Idiagbor came to America in 1978 on scholarship to study engineering at the State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime College at Fort Schuyler.

"When I was graduating from high school the Nigerian government had a program awarding bursary awards to go to America for courses not offered in Nigeria," he said. "The whole idea was to graduate, go back home and apply what we learned to make Nigeria's economy better."

After graduating from SUNY Fort Schuyler in 1982 as a merchant marine with an environmental engineering degree

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"This job is like coming home because it's closer to my educational background. I support operations and maintenance. Wherever there is a problem, I take a look at it and resolve it."

Michael Idiagbo
plant engineer

and a Coast Guard license, Idiagbor did return to Umutu for about nine months. "But knowing how the economy in Nigeria is, I came back here because there is more opportunity," he said.

And today, he couldn't be happier for he's found opportunity, for a second time, working at a company committed to improving the environment while providing essential services.

"In Nigeria there are fossil fuel, natural gas and diesel fuel facilities, but nothing like waste-to-energy. In my opinion, this is the way to go," said Idiagbor, who first

worked for Wheelabrator in 1993, as a controller and manager of a wastewater treatment sludge facility in the Bronx.

"The benefits to the environment at all Wheelabrator

See IDIAGBOR Page 6



Plant Engineer Mike Idiagbor chats with Operations Supervisor Arthur Campbell.