



2008 Indio International Tamale Festival

Evaluation and Environmental Assessment Report

Prepared For:
The City of Indio



Prepared By:
G-Rock

Scope

The 2008 Indio International Tamale Festival, held on December 6th & 7th in Indio, California, was a 2-day festival featuring tamale and other various food vendors from Southern California. The family-oriented festival was a community celebration of the local tamale tradition. In an effort to make their festival environmentally friendly, the City of Indio collaborated with G-Rock, an environmental consulting group that uses a collaborative approach, partnering with local businesses, governments, academic institutions and waste management services to increase event sustainability. This collaboration not only led to successful educational outreach and a highly reduced carbon footprint, but it also led to a substantial reduction in energy, resource consumption, and waste generation. Initiatives like these contribute to healthier local and global environments in which we live, learn, work and play. Through the G-Rock certification process, the City of Indio sets the standard for event sustainability.

Implementation

The City of Indio implemented the following initiatives:

I. Waste and Recycling

The City of Indio, in collaboration with California Bio-Mass and Burrtec, initiated a “zero-waste” system, which utilized green waste collection and recycling at the event, eliminating the need for a landfill hauling service. This differentiated waste collection is called “waste diversion.”

To eliminate landfill waste the City of Indio used a dual receptacle system that included one container for recyclables (bottles, cans, etc.) and another for green waste (paper, cornhusks, and food waste). The green waste bins were lined with certified biodegradable liners provided by EcoSafe,

which allowed the contents to be easily composted, facilitating an easy diversion of 15.46 tons of organics from the landfill. The City of Indio also prominently displayed blue recycling lids atop of recycling bins throughout the festival grounds to encourage festival attendees to participate in recycling their waste. Sufficient receptacles, signage and collection allowed for easy and convenient disposal of waste. All refuse was transported to the California Bio-Mass, a local organics recycling facility.

In partnership with Naturally Iowa West, the City of Indio became the first city in the United States to bottle water in PLA (plant-based plastic) compostable water bottles. These BPI (Biodegradable Products Institute) certified biopolymer water bottles are less dependent on petroleum, using 68% less fossil fuel during production and releasing a total of 80-90% fewer greenhouse gases (GhGs) than their conventional counterparts. After attendees were finished using these bottles they were disposed of in the green waste receptacles and composted, producing an ecologically useful byproduct.

The Boy Scouts of America, Indio Chapter, helped to achieve the waste diversion initiative through their recycling efforts. The Boy Scouts collected more aluminum cans and plastic bottles than in the past five years at the Tamale Festival due to the prominent recycling receptacle lids. These lids, and the efforts of the Boy Scouts, prevented many potentially recyclable items from



reaching the landfill. The waste collection initiative generated both awareness of how and what to recycle for festival attendees and revenue to support the local Boy Scouts. By reducing the waste generated by this event, the City of Indio also reduced the energy consumption and carbon footprint, minimizing the environmental impact of the 2008 Tamale Festival.

Recycling Collection Data:

- Volume: 90.6 lbs of aluminum cans and 111.5 lbs of plastic bottles
- Redemption proceeds (for Boy Scouts): \$236.37
- Green waste: ~ 33,880 lbs
- Total waste diverted: > 34,083 lbs



Renewable Resources:

- The six 125kw and seven 60kw generators powering the event were run on B20, a blend of diesel containing 20% biodiesel, which contributed to a significant reduction in the carbon emissions produced by the event.
- Over 80 gallons of fryer grease was collected from food vendors to be converted into biodiesel, thus allowing G-Rock to offset the fuel consumed in their transport to the event.
- The Eco-Center, sponsored by the City of Indio, demonstrated the potential for solar power. Festival attendees, festival staff and vendors were able to use a solar charging station, provided by Solio, to charge their personal electronic devices throughout the event. A mobile charging station, provided by a local solar company, Renova, powered staff computers, lighting and a fan-cooled trailer that provided a sanctuary for green-team volunteers.

II. Environmental & Community Outreach

The City used the Eco-Center as an opportunity to educate festival attendees on the City's Environmental Programs. The City surveyed festival attendees on their knowledge of environmental issues like water conservation, recycling, and storm water run off. The City distributed reusable bags made of recycle materials. Key chains were distributed made of recycled material with messages of "Conserve Water" and "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." Mr. Recycle coloring books, which cover all City environmental programs, were distributed. The books are made from recycled paper and printed with soy ink. The City also distributed magnets with the City's Environmental Hot Line number to call for questions regarding environmental issues.



Additionally, the Eco-Center provided College of the Desert student volunteers with the opportunity to engage in community outreach activities with festival attendees, informing them about sustainable practices and alternative products. Through inter-personal exchanges, staff at the Eco-Center was able to bring social responsibility to an individual level, showing how it could benefit the community as well as local organizations and businesses.

The following environmentally conscious products, practices and organizations were featured at the Eco-Center:

1. *Maggie's Soap Nuts* – Soap nuts are a natural and earth conscious laundry detergent. Soap Nuts made from the dried fruit of the Chinese Soapberry tree.

2. *To-Go Ware* – are sustainable and reusable utensil sets made from bamboo, for our “to-go” culture. They are a creative solution to the tons of plastic utensil waste currently destined for landfills.
3. *Solio* – Hybrid portable photovoltaic cells (PVs) used to charge hand-held electronics.
4. *ChicoBag* – a reusable bag that fits in your pocket and helps to reduce the volume of disposable paper and plastic bags.
5. *Unicars Honda* – Honda has played a leading role in meeting environmental challenges by offering hybrid and natural gas vehicles.
6. *Naturally Iowa West-* manufactures biodegradable water bottles made from renewable plant starch, reducing conventional petroleum plastics dependency.
7. *California Bio-Mass, Inc.* – is a Coachella Valley organics recycling company dedicated to mixing good business principles with sound environmental practices. CBM composted all the organic waste generated at the festival.
8. *Renova* – is an Indio solar installation company, which conducts a five star energy audit to reduce client's electrical demands before designing and installing residential and commercial solar systems. Renova provided power to the Eco-Center with its mobile solar array.
9. *La Hacienda Nursery and Landscape*– provided plants and materials for native plant propagation demonstrations to help reduce the amount of water needed to maintain a beautiful landscape.
10. *SunLine Transit Agency* – was the first 100% Compressed Natural Gas transit facility and has the first public ‘clean’ fueling station. By using clean compressed natural gas and hydrogen to fuel their vehicles, SunLine provides “green” public transportation to and from the Indio area.

Children’s Education:

Additional initiatives were implemented to engage and educate children on strategies for waste diversion and environmental preservation. A recycling game was developed to educate children on the differences between landfill waste, recyclables and compost. The game was an individual or team relay race in which each team or

child was given a pail containing various materials they had to sort into three receptacles within a minute. The team that sorted the most items won and received prizes that included organic lollipops and Tread cases, made of repurposed inner tubes salvaged from Columbia, for their accomplishments. All children who came to the Eco-Center were encouraged to play as many times as they wished. The children were excited by this educational opportunity and wanted to continue playing until all the items were sorted correctly.



Mr. Recycle:

Mr. Recycle, Indio’s recycling mascot and the friendly face for waste diversion, was the Grand Marshall of the Tamale Festival’s parade. Mr. Recycle posed for pictures, providing children with a souvenir of their educational experience at the festival. Mr. Recycle was accompanied by the “Mr. Recycle Song,” a hip and catchy tune that further emphasized the importance of recycling for children. The song was written and produced by Bitemark Records, a premier artist career development record label and partner of G-Rock.



III. Green-Team Volunteers

Volunteers for the Green Team were a vital component to the educational outreach and the overall success of the event. The Green Team was comprised of a group of highly motivated students from College of the Desert who volunteered their time to help reduce the carbon footprint of Indio's Tamale festival. Volunteers received vocational training prior to the festival. The Green Team participated in tours of Renova, SunLine, California Bio-Mass, and Unicars Honda to learn how to best present strategies for environmental sustainability to the public. During the event, volunteers assisted in the diversion of substantial amounts of waste, provided information and support to festival participants on greening initiatives, facilitated the recycling game and helped to effectively engage the local community. While providing instrumental assistance to the greening of the Tamale Festival, College of the Desert students gained valuable experience with industry experts and have since been offered internship and job opportunities to start 'green' careers.



G-Rock and the City of Indio provided various additional support and services:

- Assisted the City of Indio and local vendor staff with facility set-up and maintenance
- Provided food and water to volunteers and children
- Charged cellular phones for free to participants, staff, and volunteers
- G-Rock signage was posted informational throughout the venue to inform participants about the City's greening efforts

IV. Transportation

G-Rock certification helped to facilitate alternative means of transportation to/from the venue to improve the quality of life in the surrounding Indio community. This initiative helps to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to and from the event, which is considered the most effective means for reducing the overall carbon footprint of an event.

As a part of G-Rock's certification initiative to reduce carbon emissions and overall global footprint, all participants, staff, and volunteers were encouraged to take advantage of carpooling and mass transit systems.

To provide a healthy example of carbon footprint reduction, the G-Rock staff, based in Berkeley, California, made the 1,000-mile roundtrip in a biodiesel truck run completely on B99 (99% biodeisel). This vehicle was parked on-site near the Eco-Center as a practical demonstration of an alternative fuel vehicle, in addition to the hybrids and compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles provided by Unicars Honda.



Sunline Transit Agency:

The City of Indio and G-Rock partnered with SunLine Transit Agency and posted the SunLine schedule, routes, and fee information on the Tamale Festival website. This provided event participants with an easy, convenient and inexpensive alternative transportation to the event. SunLine Transit Agency has been serving Coachella Valley for over 30 years. As an aggressive early adopter of clean fuel transit, SunLine converted its entire bus fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG) in 1994. SunLine came to the Tamale Festival to engage the local community about its outstanding accomplishment of becoming an environmental leader in public transit.

V. Ongoing Management and Support

Using a collaborative approach, the City of Indio and G-Rock worked in harmony to provide a highly educational experience and established the 2008 International Tamale Festival as an environment of people helping people. In pursuit of constant performance improvement, G-Rock looks forward to developing its relationship with the City of Indio, improving upon the successes of the 2008 Tamale Festival and insuring that Indio's environmental standards are met as effectively and efficiently as possible.

G-Rock will be donating a garden to the City of Indio for the new senior center. Incorporated into the design for the new facility, this garden will provide a haven for seniors and people of all ages to enjoy the beautiful outdoor scenery of Indio.

