



**Press Release
For Immediate Release
July 26, 2016**

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Looking Good at Forty

Johnson Canyon Landfill Celebrates 40 Years of Service to the Salinas Valley

(Gonzales, CA) – It was the summer of 1976 and patriotism soared as our nation basked in the honeymoon of our bicentennial anniversary. Families filled up their cars with gas priced at \$0.59 a gallon, and installed CB radios for summer road trips. The world watched in amazement as 14 year-old Romanian gymnast Nadia Comăneci won 3 gold medals at the Montréal Summer Olympics with seven perfect scores. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak founded Apple Computer Company in Palo Alto, while IBM introduced the first laser printer. And on Monday, July 26, 1976, the Johnson Canyon Landfill opened to the public in Monterey County, accepting its first loads of garbage.

Located along Johnson Canyon Road in eastern outskirts of Gonzales, the Johnson Canyon Sanitary Landfill facility is owned by the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA), a Governmental Joint Powers Authority between the County of Monterey and the Cities of Salinas, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, and King City. Since 1976, it has evolved from a managed disposal site for southern Monterey County, to a resource recovery facility that produces clean energy and recycles organic waste.

While originally only metals were separated for recycling, in October 2000 the facility began recycling separated yard waste, clean wood, metal, cardboard, glass and plastic, continually increasing the materials accepted for recycling with the evolution of the recycling industry. After the 2009 closure of Crazy Horse Canyon Landfill in northern Salinas, Johnson Canyon Landfill became the primary regional landfill serving all of Salinas Valley, with broader recycling services to match the expanded service area.

In 2013, SVSWA completed its 1.6 mega-watt landfill gas-to-energy partnership project with Ameresco, Inc. The innovative renewable energy project was developed to improve the surrounding environment and provide green power to the City of Palo Alto as a source of revenue for SVSWA. The 20-year agreement to sell competitively priced power to City of Palo Alto helps SVSWA offset the shifting paradigm of revenue from

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landfilling as they continually strive to divert waste from the landfill and create green jobs in the Salinas Valley.

In 2014, SVSWA Board of Directors progressed in its vision for a “Future Without Landfills” by ending its past practice of importing garbage from outside of Monterey County. Not only did this monumental action significantly extend the life of its last remaining landfill, but also reduced the community’s long-term financial and environmental liability associated with caring for active and closed landfills. Last year, SVSWA took over management of the Johnson Canyon Landfill, and continues to expand the list of materials accepted for recycling. Its popularity is on the rise as more members of the community have discovered the convenience of the only Monterey County landfill open on Sundays.

Johnson Canyon Landfill has grown from accepting a total of 43,315 tons of waste in 1997 when SVSWA assumed ownership, to 176,000 tons in 2015. While the landfill was originally expected to reach capacity by 2018, through increased diversion and community participation in recycling programs, ending importation of waste and the construction of additional capacity, the life expectancy has been increased to 2055.

What’s next for the Johnson Canyon Landfill? “We’d like this to be the landfill’s last birthday, but landfills are still a critical part of our community’s waste management system until we figure out how to reduce, reuse and recycle everything we throw away,” says Patrick Mathews, General Manager/Chief Administrative Officer for SVSWA. “However, our vision remains focused on a Future Without Landfills for the Salinas Valley.”

SVSWA continues to develop plans for renewable energy options and services to help the Salinas Valley recover and process its resources more effectively, to reduce its impact on the local environment, and improve the health and safety of the communities it serves. Also known as Salinas Valley Recycles, SVSWA plays a critical role in helping Salinas Valley cities achieve their State-mandated recycling goals to avoid fines, and to help the State reach its 75% diversion goal by 2020.

SVSWA is currently in the midst of preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for proposed services and locations to determine the best possible combination of environmental, technological and economically beneficial projects to support the resource recovery and waste management needs of the Salinas Valley into perpetuity.

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The outcomes of the EIR and related studies will establish objective recommendations to guide the community, stakeholders and elected officials in making informed decisions that will impact current and future generations.

Until then, Salinas Valley Recycles will work with the community and stakeholders to educate the public about recycling, reuse and waste reduction, to give them the power to make better choices that improve the quality of life in the Salinas Valley.

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Photos / Captions



Main Gate at Johnson Canyon Landfill, July 26, 1976



Main Gate at Johnson Canyon Landfill, July 2016



The first private vehicle to empty trash into the Johnson Canyon Landfill, July 26, 1976



The first commercial trash hauler empties its load at Johnson Canyon Landfill,
July 26, 1976

Location Information

- Johnson Canyon Landfill is located at 31400 Johnson Canyon Rd. Gonzales, CA 93926; (831) 675-2165; www.SalinasValleyRecycles.org
- Hours of operation are Monday - Friday 7am-4pm; Saturday & Sunday 8am-4pm



- Owned and operated by Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority (SVSWA) a.k.a. Salinas Valley Recycles; SVSWA is a Joint Powers Authority comprised of the County of Monterey and the cities of Salinas, Gonzales, Greenfield, King City and Soledad.

Historical Timeline of Johnson Canyon Landfill

July 26, 1976	Johnson Canyon Sanitary Landfill opens to the public, accepting its first self-haul and commercial hauler loads
January 1997	The Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority is formed as a Joint Powers Authority to manage and provide secure long-term solid waste disposal and resource recovery services to all of its members in an environmentally sound and cost-effective manner
October 2000	Under contract with the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority, Recology (formerly NorCal Waste Systems) establishes recycling program to divert resources from the landfill; opens for service 7-days a week, including Sundays
May 2005	Recology establishes a chip and grind operation for yard waste and wood from construction and demolition debris
June 2009	Crazy Horse Canyon Landfill closes in Salinas; Johnson Canyon Landfill becomes the primary regional landfill for the Salinas Valley
September 2013	Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority opens the landfill gas-to-energy project, creating clean renewable energy; enters 20-year agreement to sell the energy it produces to City of Palo Alto
2014	Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority ends its contract with Recology South Valley, putting an end to importation of waste from outside Monterey County into the Johnson Canyon Landfill
2015	Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority ends its management agreement with Recology and takes over day-to-day operation of Johnson Canyon Landfill at a significant savings and improved level of service; material recovery center is redesigned and new signage installed
July 26, 2016	Johnson Canyon Landfill celebrates 40 years of service to the community; public education campaign promoting Sunday service



and increased recycling services effectively doubles the average number of customers it serves on Sundays compared to 2015