

City considers incinerator ash recovery plan

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By [Michael Brun](#) on Nov 13, 2015 at 8:00 a.m.

There is valuable metal in the city of Red Wing and Xcel Energy's ash landfills that a Wisconsin company says it can extract and sell.

CEO Brent DuBois of Lab USA, headquartered in Green Bay, Wisconsin, presented details of a proposed partnership with the city and utility company Monday at a City Council workshop.

"There is a legitimate amount of ferrous and non-ferrous metals that exists in incinerator biomass across the country, and Xcel's ash as well as the city's is no different than that," DuBois said.

Red Wing has special landfill cells that contain ash generated from the city's garbage incinerator, which closed last year, and Xcel Energy's steam plant — located off Highway 61 near Barn Bluff and the Izaak Walton League — which also burns trash or what the industry calls refuse-derived fuel.

He said his company would invest some \$9.5 million to set up and run a processing center in Red Wing on a 10-year lease and then hand the building over to the city at the end.

Revenue, space

Jeff Schneider, deputy director of solid waste for Red Wing Public Works, said the proposal could be a future revenue source for the city and open "a lot" of space by removing metal from the landfill.

The venture also would create six full-time jobs that DuBois said would be filled with preference given to local candidates.

The reclamation process uses magnets and other machinery to extract metal — such as discarded silverware and belt buckles — from the hardened ash.

Lab USA then recycles and sells the material for profit.

Two sites are being eyed for the operation at either the city's Solid Waste Campus or near Xcel Energy's ash landfill on Bench Street.

Council member Lisa Bayley said the waste campus location is the better option, adding she expects pushback from residents living near the other site over dust and noise concerns.

Lab USA is a subsidiary of Lab GMBH and the CNIM Group, a French engineering and industrial company with divisions specializing in waste-to-energy operations.

DuBois said ash reclamation is a common practice in Europe and has become economically viable to bring over to the U.S.

A public hearing on the proposal will be held before council members consider an agreement early next year.