



Eliminating the Waste in Waste Collection™

“After the trial period, we concluded the BigBelly system had more than proven itself. We then purchased units to cover the entire tourist sector.”

- Oliver Von Ow, Building Authority,
Stein am Rhein

Stein am Rhein, Switzerland

Stein am Rhein is a lovely, historic town located on Lake Constance, where the Rhine River begins, about 50 km (30 mi.) northeast of Zurich near the northern Swiss border with Germany. A popular tourist destination for its medieval Old Town and boat rides on the river and lake, the town of only 3,500 residents welcomes some 20,000 visitors on weekends and holidays from April through October each year.

A real challenge

Managing all the trash generated by that influx of visitors, while maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the town, was a tremendous challenge for the town's Building Authority. The Authority tried putting out more waste receptacles, and increasing the collection trips, but these costly steps were inadequate to keep up with the volume of trash.

“We would empty the trashcans on Friday evenings,” said Oliver Von Ow with the town's Building Department, “but often by Saturday afternoon we were dealing with ugly, overflowing trashcans by the pier.”

The town sought a solution that would allow collection crews to avoid having to empty the trash at all over weekends and holidays. Another goal was to keep the waste contained to avoid litter from overflow, and from gusts of wind that would scatter trash over the streets and into the beautiful river and lake.

BigBelly system exceeds criteria for success

Working with BigBelly Solar's European distribution partners, the town tested the BigBelly waste collection system from December 2008 to February 2009. After the trial period, the Building Department concluded that the BigBelly system had more than proven itself, meeting or exceeding all their criteria for success.

Prior to the Easter holiday, the town accordingly purchased five BigBelly solar compactors, and then bought another four machines in the beginning of 2010. These nine units are sufficient to cover the entire tourist pier section downtown. The town has determined that the return on investment is less than two years.

The Building Authority has found that the BigBelly system provides the town with the following benefits:

- No collection needed during periods of at least 3 days (weekends, Easter, and other holidays)
- Closed system – no stray litter; no trouble from bees, vermin; no odor
- Fullness indicator reveals machine status without workers needing to open the units
- Limited opening, thus reducing the illegal dumping of household waste
- Waste is compacted on the spot, optimizing logistics and requiring much fewer trips to the Old Town, thus reducing the cost of fuel and labor; and reducing particulate matter, CO₂ emissions, and noise pollution
- Quiet, safe, fully automatic, user-friendly, vandal-proof, no chance for user error or resulting injury
- Possible to change unit location within 45 minutes across the city
- Virtually maintenance free, and can be emptied by all Building Authority staff
- Capacity is at least equal to an underground container; but each unit can be emptied without a special vehicle.

Economic, aesthetic and educational solution

The town is pleased to have solved its trash collection problem, and is delighted that the solution is an innovative solar device that has attracted positive attention from citizens and visitors alike.

