

## Meleesa Johnson

Meleesa Johnson is the director of solid waste management for Marathon County. She oversees solid waste programming and facilities serving central and north-central Wisconsin. Under her leadership the Solid Waste Department transitioned from primarily a landfill business to a regional resource for residents, businesses and local governments working on waste reduction and recycling programming as means of creating greater sustainability.

Serving as adjunct faculty at University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, Meleesa helped create the current curriculum for both the introductory and advanced waste management classes. The advanced class now serves as a capstone class for the Waste Management and Soils degree program. While she no longer enjoys a position with the university, she continues to guest lecture and mentor students.



Meleesa is an alderperson for the City of Stevens Point and is a supervisor for the Portage County Board. Her primary focus as alder is working to create a more walkable and bikeable community and to implement an organics diversion program. As supervisor Meleesa is dedicated to finding ways to keep the county nursing home a viable county asset to serve the elderly and disabled with few financial means.

In her fourth term as president of Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW), Meleesa has charted a path for AROW that has elevated its prominence and value, bringing both state and national recognition for the organization. The recent AROW Glass Taskforce report, published in an effort to make glass recycling more sustainable and affordable, is being used to help recycling programs across the county.

Meleesa is treasurer for the Solid Waste Association of North America-Badger Chapter and for the Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association and chairs the Advocacy Committee for the Badger Chapter. Recently she was appointed to the Wisconsin DNR's Waste and Materials Management Study Group, co-chairing this group and also its organics and food residual sub-committee. In 2005 Governor Doyle appointed her to the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Waste Materials Recovery and Disposal. She is the 2012 recipient of the prestigious AROW Christy Dixon Recycler of the Year Award and in 2016 was nominated for the Wausau Area Chamber's Athena® Leadership Award.

Meleesa has an associate degree from the University of Wisconsin Manitowoc (1998) and a baccalaureate degree from the University of Wisconsin Green Bay in Environmental Policy & Planning (2000), where she graduated summa cum laude and with a distinction in the major. She was awarded the Chancellor's Leadership Medallion upon her graduation. As well, Meleesa is the 1999 Morris K. Udall Congressional Scholar for Excellence in National Environmental Policy.

Meleesa is the mother of three adult children, Sara (Manitowoc), Beth (Stevens Point) and Jeremy (Xi'an, China) Lebrick. The greatest joy in her life has been helping to raise her granddaughter Ellie Lebrick, now a college student in Stevens Point. The newest addition to the family is her grandson, Coltin, who will be the first bilingual member of the family, currently learning to babble in both English and Mandarin.

In her free time Meleesa enjoys spending time with her family, playing with her dogs, bicycling, cooking, reading a good spy novel and grassroots activism.