

A \$1 million partnership

Landfill's gift aimed at reducing cost, keeping tipping fees stable

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POSTED: February 13, 2009

McELHATTAN - The Clinton County Solid Waste Authority is giving \$1 million to Pine Creek Municipal Authority to pay for improvements to its sewage treatment facility.

The donation will cover the cost of preparing the plant to treat raw leachate - the juices drained from garbage - from the Wayne Township Landfill. Leachate is currently treated at an on-site facility.

"This is a perfect example of a partnership. We're helping them offset the cost to upgrade so they don't have to seek that capital from their customers.

And it's allowing us to be more efficient here and keep a lower tipping fee," said Jay Alexander, landfill general manager.

The necessary upgrades to treat raw leachate - to be done as part of an agreement with the solid waste authority - will be made at the same time the plant is making other improvements required by Act 537. The act was revised in early 2007 as part of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative, requiring all municipalities within the state to re-evaluate sewage treatment plans and look for ways to reduce nitrogen to the Bay and its watershed area.

The agreement with PCMA requires minimal work to be done on-site at the landfill. The solid waste authority plans to use an existing sewer line that connects to the Pine Creek facility - a move that would only require a minor upgrade in piping on-site.

Alexander said the agreement with PCMA frees the solid waste authority to forgo improvements to its on-site treatment facility, which would have cost "way over a million dollars."

The decision to financially support the upgrade to the PCMA facility was made at Wednesday night's solid waste authority meeting.

In another partnership, the authority agreed to request proposals for use of leftover methane gas produced by the landfill.

The authority sells about half the gas it produces to Jersey Shore Steel in South Avis, where the private company uses the energy to heat its building. But there's more methane gas to sell.

What's left is "flared," or burned underground by a large burner.

The authority hopes to have an agreement in place with another buyer by May. Alexander noted the authority would continue to focus primary methane gas sales to Jersey Shore Steel, though.

The board did deny assistance to the City of Lock Haven for its downtown walkway project.

"We're in preparations for this expansion and need to manage our finances very closely," Alexander said, referring to a \$50 million project to re-use the north side of the landfill, which has been closed for 18 years. That project is still in the permitting stage with the state Department of Environmental Protection.

"We don't really see how we could contribute in any other way," he added.

The board did agree to buy a 2009 Polaris Ranger from Schreffler Equipment for \$13,333, and approved Trans Axle to rebuild an A35D transmission at a cost of \$18,000.