

Waste Watchers - Wayne Twp. Landfill recognized for reducing, reusing, recycling

By LINDSAY DAVIS — ldavis@lockhaven.com

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McELHATTAN - The guys at the Wayne Township Landfill recycling center have been watching their "waste," and it hasn't gone unnoticed.

Clinton County Solid Waste Authority recently received its seventh Waste Watcher award in nine years, given by the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association and the Keystone Chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America.

Recycling Coordinator Mike Crist credits that achievement to the success of the center's special events, namely its annual tire collection event, ongoing electronics recycling program and bi-annual household hazardous waste collection event.

"They (the organizations handing out the award) ask what you've done to improve your process. We told them all about those special events and programs because we've really had a great response from the community," Crist said.



The recycling center collected more than 7,000 tires during its May 2007 collection event, bringing the total number of tires collected since 2003 to over 34,000. County residents were allowed to bring in up to 12 tires for free, without having to pay the fees of \$1 per tire without a rim, \$1.50 per tire with a rim and \$4 per tire for large truck or tractor tires. Though tires can be disposed of at the landfill year-round for the same fees, more than 300 vehicles came through the facility during the two-day event.

Another of the center's programs that saw high participation from county residents in 2007 was electronics recycling. During its regular business hours, the facility accepts a variety of electronic equipment to be recycled. On the list of accepted materials are computer systems, PDAs, printers, scanners, cordless and corded phones, cell phones, pagers, answering machines, fax machines, copiers, audio visual equipment, televisions, VCRs, CD players, DVD players, radios, stereos, video game consoles, cameras, calculators and adding machines.

The recycling facility is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The facility's fourth household hazardous waste collection event, held the second weekend of August 2007, was also a popular program. Crist said the two-day event, also offered in 2002, 2003 and 2005, attracts more county residents each time it's offered.

The center brought in a contractor certified to handle and manage that kind of waste.

"It's a little more involved than the tire collection. Our guys (who work at the landfill) aren't allowed to handle the hazardous materials, so we have to get outside help," Crist said.

Among the items accepted at the event were latex or oil paint, stains and paint thinners, paint removers, pesticides, weed killers, garden chemicals, fertilizers, household batteries, solvents, pool chlorine, deodorizers, cleaners, bleaches, aerosol cans, spot removers, drain cleaners, propane tanks, car batteries, brake fluid, antifreeze and other flammable liquids.

The next household hazardous waste collection event will likely be held in August 2009.

The 2008 Waste Watcher award recognized the Wayne Township facility not only for providing county residents with a way to safely dispose of items not accepted by most garbage disposal services, but also for its strong efforts to educate customers about the dangers of improperly disposing of certain materials and how the recycling center can help. The center began sending out a recycling flier via bulk mail in 2007, and it's proven to be yet another worthy use for recycled paper.

"The response we get each time we send one out is just unbelievable," said Crist, noting that a surge in people interested in both the special events and the regular curbside and commercial recycling programs follows each mailing.

Sent out twice a year, opposite the landfill's semi-annual newsletter, the fourth flier arrived in mailboxes little more than a month ago.

The recycling facility applies for the award every year, and Crist is already looking forward to the improvements he'll boast about in the 2009 application, including the recent replacement of the center's bailer and the upcoming replacement of its conveyor sorting system, both of which he's especially proud of.

A new auto-tie bailer churned out its first bail on Sept. 15, replacing the manual-tie bailer the center had been using since 1999. The new piece of equipment is more than just a shinier version of its predecessor. It has made more efficient the process of bailing together cardboard and other materials.

"It can produce five bails of cardboard in the time it previously took to produce one," Crist said.

With only one employee to load and another to operate the machine, it has also cut down on the manpower needed for the bailing process. It used to take at least three or four people.

About 90 percent of the \$240,000 needed for the machine came from a state Department of Environmental Protection grant. The facility traded in the old bailer for the new one, another move that lessened the financial blow of the large purchase.

Next on the center's list to update is its can processing area. Crist said he hopes to have a new conveyor sorting system online by January 2009. The facility is only able to sort tin and aluminum cans with the equipment it has now, but the replacement will allow it to also sort No. 1 and No. 2 plastic bottles.

"That could increase the value of our plastics at least three times," said Crist, noting that separate bundles of No. 1 bottles, clear No. 2 bottles and colored No. 2 bottles can be sold for more than a combined bundle.

The new sorting station will have six chutes and will condense two conveyor belts that currently slope downward into one horizontal belt, making it more energy efficient than the current set-up.

"These new machines will mean more money and more manpower for us to be able to do other things," Crist said.

These improvements are just the most recent in a tradition of innovation. Since the landfill began its recycling program in 1990, it has grown by leaps and bounds. The landfill took in 62 tons of recyclable materials in 1990 and has raised that volume each year, most recently weighing in with more than 2,000 tons in 2007.

Beginning with two multi-purpose recycling trucks and four employees, the program now has three curbside collection trucks, four roll-off trucks, six full-time employees and between six and eight community service workers at a time. The program's first home was a 4,600 square foot maintenance garage. Recycling at the landfill now takes place in a 10,000 square foot processing center.