

Recycling Coordinator's
2007
Year End Report



Banner Year for Dept of Solid Waste & Sanitation

100 Year Landfill Expansion Plan

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) approved Madison County's permit application that will allow the Dept. of Solid Waste and Sanitation to move forward with a 100 year expansion plan at the Buyea Rd. Landfill site; a project that has been on the drawing board for the past two years. And, at long last the Landfill Gas Utilization project will become a reality.

According to information published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), no other private or public landfill in the United States has any plans in place to cover the next 100 years. The permitting process, begun two years ago, is extremely rigorous. A number of issues related to the landfill expansion were investigated.

An archaeological survey was conducted by Alliance Archeological of Fayetteville, NY and coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This survey took one year to complete.

A full environmental Assessment Review that included the potential impact on the land, water, air, animals, public health, noise and odor are a few of the items investigated.

The landfill site, located on Buyea Rd. in the Town of Lincoln encompasses 615 acres. The West Side Landfill Expansion is located west of Buyea Rd. contiguous to the existing West Side Landfill. The lateral expansion footprint area is approximately 63.5 acres [i.e. limits of waste area] and comprised of 13 varying sized cells. An additional 123.3 acres – plus or minus – of land will be developed for construction of the landfill containment berms, access roads and mining areas.

Landfill Gas Utilization Project Becomes a Reality

[After 10 years of false starts and disappointments]

Ten years ago County officials began looking into the possibility of turning landfill gas into electricity. A number of different contractors presented plans for utilizing the methane gas. But as the years passed and contractors came and went the County was no closer to a solution for this green power.

Persistence on the part of the county staff and the Board of Supervisors has brought a viable Landfill Gas-to-Energy project to fruition after ten years of searching.

Landfill gas is a natural byproduct of the decomposition of organic materials deposited in the landfill. Landfill gas, a potent “greenhouse gas” known to be harmful to the environment, is composed of 50 percent methane and is the source of odors which typically emanate from landfills.

Mike DeBottis, recently retired Chairman of the Madison County’s Public Utility Service Committee (PUSC) and the Solid Waste and Recycling Committee, explained that for the past ten years the PUSC has been investigating various opportunities to harness, for beneficial uses, the energy in the Landfill’s methane gas. “With recent changes in the energy market, several viable possibilities have been found in the past year and a half,” DeBottis said.

Following improvements to the system of pipes which carry the Landfill Gas in 2006 and 2007, and an engineering company’s projection of the quality and quantity of gas available, the PUSC concluded that the marketplace would determine the best use for the Landfill Gas. A request for Proposals process that started in early 2007 culminated on November 27 when the Madison County Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Waste Management Renewable Energy LLC of Houston, TX, allowing them to construct and operate a Landfill Gas Utilization Project at the Buyea Rd. Landfill site, for the purpose of generating electricity.

Construction of the electricity generation facility is anticipated to be completed, and production of ‘green’ electricity is anticipated by the end of 2008.

The County’s share of the expected revenue from the Landfill Gas Utilization Project is approximately \$9.3 million over the 20 year agreement with Waste Management Renewable Energy LLC. Some of the revenue from the project will reimburse the Solid Waste Dept for its investments in the research and development of the project over the past ten years, and will be used to help control costs and environmentally safe disposal of wastes generated by County residents and businesses.

The Board of Supervisors has anticipated that the majority of the expected revenues from production of renewable electricity and related environmental credits will be used to offset the County’s general operating expenses, and thus will be a benefit for all of Madison County’s taxpayers.

The Landfill Gas Utilization project is estimated to produce 1.3 megawatts of electricity. Based on the Dept. of Energy's estimate that an average home uses 10,656 kilowatt hours of electricity per year, the 1.3 megawatt project would provide electricity for 1,050 homes, or a community about the size of the Village of Cazenovia.

Flow Control

On March 31, 2007, the US Supreme court ruling upheld the right of counties to require that trash haulers bring garbage to public landfills and transfer stations. This was a major victory for Madison and Oneida-Herkimer counties and neighboring counties considering the enforcement of flow control.

Jim Zecca was quoted as saying, "It means that Madison County will be able to continue its long-term planning and guarantee that waste will be managed properly."

In Onondaga County, William Bulsiewicz, the top lawyer for the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency said, "That is certainly good news for our system, and it's good news for recycling."

The March 31, 2007 ruling clears the way for Oswego County to consider adopting its own law requiring that trash produced in the county be disposed of in the county system, according to Frank J. Visser, director of the solid waste operations.

County's Recycling Programs

Madison County continues to out pace neighboring Counties with new and innovative recycling programs.

Madison County accepts plastic bottles, jugs and jars numbers 1 through 7 for recycling and also accepts stackable containers such as cottage cheese, yogurt and sour cream for recycling. Onondaga County only accepts plastic bottles, jugs and jars numbers 1 and 2 and does not recycle stackables.

Residents of Madison County' can drop off their **electronic recycling** Tuesday through Saturday at the Buyea Rd. transfer station and two days a week during operating hours at one of the County's other transfer stations in Cazenovia, Hamilton or Sullivan.

During 2007, Madison County residents recycled 64.98 tons of electronics. It should be noted that computer monitors and televisions contain mercury, lead and cadmium. Cadmium is a soft malleable toxic bluish white metallic element. Mercury and lead are cumulative chemicals [meaning they can build up over time]. If computer monitors and televisions were allowed to be disposed of in our landfill cell the solid waste leachate could turn into hazardous waste leachate. The cost of disposing hazardous waste leachate is cost prohibitive.

During 2007 the Dept of Solid Waste contracted with a new electronic recycler, Regional Computer Recycling & Recovery [RCR&R] LLC of Victor, NY. This was a good move for several reasons: The service and availability of RCR&R was by far superior to the previous recycling company. RCR&R provide a tractor trailer on site for storage of the computer monitors and televisions.

The other plus for RCR&R is their price. In 2006 Madison County recycled 67.46 tons of electronic material at a cost of \$10,462.46. In 2007, residents recycled 64.98 tons of electronic equipment at a cost of \$2,980.04 which represented a savings or difference of \$7,482.42 over the previous year. RCR&R signed a contract for 2008 at the same rate as that charged in 2007 allowing the Dept of Solid Waste to reduce the cost to residents to recycle televisions from three punches to one punch and reduce the cost to recycle computer monitors from two punches to one punch.

Other Recycling Programs

All retail plastic bags are now recyclable in Madison County. Cooking oil, aerosol cans, license plates and inkjet cartridges are also recycled here.

Madison County runs an ongoing, user friendly, **household hazardous waste** [HHW] program that is available to residents five days a week, not just on designated days as is the practice in Onondaga County. Residents can go on line and request an appointment to dispose of their HHW, which is a much faster option than calling for an appointment request form and waiting for a reply via the US Mail. However, for those without computers the US Mail is still a viable option. Residents of Madison County participating in this program can dispose of the first 14 wet gallon and 20 dry pounds of HHW for free. The Household Hazardous Waste disposal site is located at Environmental Services in Syracuse.

Free Shredding of Confidential Documents

The Madison County Dept of Solid Waste and Sanitation arranged for a free shredding program in June of 2007. The shredding program was

open to County residents and was held in the parking lot of Wal-Mart in Oneida in conjunction with ConfiData of Utica.

New Recycling Guide

In the spring of 2007 the County Recycling Coordinator gathered all of the Dept. of Solid Waste's promotional material and began a massive consolidation of this information. After careful consideration it was decided that a book containing all of the information on the County's numerous recycling programs, along with the rules and regulations for solid waste disposal would better serve the residents. Prior to designing the new Recycling Guide all information was located on separate fliers and in numerous brochures.

When a new program or educational tool is developed the first step is to distribute an all inclusive press release to the area media, which includes all of the weekly and daily newspapers in this area along with radio and television stations. Paid advertisements and/or posters, brochures and fliers generally follow publication of the press release to reinforce the message and increase saturation further announcing the new program or educational tool; in this case the new Recycling Guide.

Landfill and Recycling Center Tours

Tours of the landfill and ARC Recycling Center are conducted in the spring, summer and fall by the County's Recycling Coordinator. During 2007, 489 students and adults participated in tours and 650 people participated in recycling presentations for a total of 1,139.

The number of students touring the landfill and recycling center dropped in 2006 and in 2007 in part due to rising gasoline prices that caused area schools to cut down on the number of field trips students could participate in.

Recycling issue along the New York State Thruway

In 2007, the Recycling coordinator wrote a letter to Gov. Elliot Spitzer regarding the absence of recycling receptacles at the Travel Plazas along the New York State Thruway (See Attachment – May 23, 2007 Letter). The letter was CC to New York State Senator David Valesky, New York State Assemblyman William Magee and to Jeff Cooper, President of the New York State Association of Recycling.

The Recycling Coordinator received a response from Gov. Spitzer's office on May 29 saying that her letter had been forwarded to the appropriate members of the Governor's staff.

A second letter arrived on dated July 2, 2007 from the New York State Thruway Authority. This letter said that the Authority was in the process of preparing a recycling program for implementation at Thruway Travel Plazas (See Attachment – July 2, 2007 letter).

On July 15, 2007 an article appeared in the Post Standard titled "Thruway on road to recycling" (See attachment – July 15, 2007 news article)

No matter what the impendence, positive action has been taken and for that we are grateful, said Sharon Driscoll, Madison County Recycling Coordinator.

Driscoll was congratulated by former Solid Waste and Recycling Committee Chairman Mike DeBottis for "going above and beyond her job description to advocate change."

Recycling Bins

In 1990, Madison County received an equipment grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to purchase recycling bins for every household in Madison County. That was 17 years ago and many of the bins are now cracked, broken and/or totally destroyed.

On April 25, 2007, the Recycling Coordinator submitted a Capital Project [Equipment Grant] pre-application to the DEC for recycling bins. The total grant amount was \$165,000 – the state's share of this request would be \$82,500.00 if approved. At that time DEC officials explained that the turn around time was about two years, "but we are hopeful that this grant will come to fruition," said Driscoll who wants to purchase 35,000 recycling bins.

The second step in this process was to apply for an Education Grant, which covers a portion of the Recycling Coordinator's salary and provides funds for recycling education and waste reduction. In this case, Madison County is asking for funds to send out a bulk mailing (post cards) to residents notifying them of the new recycling bins. Each post card would represent one recycling bin and is a resident's claim check to be used for redemption. This pre-grant application was submitted May 1, 2007.

The second part of this grant request was to purchase reusable grocery bags with the recycling symbol and the words, "Madison County Recycles". These bags would be available to residents and are an alternative to plastic and paper grocery bags. Driscoll explained that plastic bags now litter our roads, decorate trees along the routes to the landfill and transfer stations, and get tangled around domestic and wild animals sometimes injuring or causing the death of the animal. It should also be noted that plastic bags are made from petroleum, which is extremely costly.

Driscoll said that distributing new recycling bins to residents of Madison County will encourage residents to recycle more and will promote goodwill between Madison County and its residents.

As a precursor to this program, Driscoll applied for and received a \$1,500 Community Grant from Wal-Mart to purchase reusable grocery bags. The reusable grocery bags will be handed out to all of the students and adults who participate in landfill and recycling center tours in 2008.

Schools Are Not Recycling

Many of the schools in Madison County are not recycling. Some say it is because they do not have recycling bins and can not afford to purchase them for all of the classrooms and offices.

With this in mind, the Recycling Coordinator contacted officials at the DEC and asked if she could use a portion of her previous education grant to purchase 500 recycling bins. After a bit of posturing, Driscoll was given permission to purchase the bins; with the condition that they carry a County recycling message on both sides of each bin [an educational advertisement of sorts for recycling].

Some of the bins went to residents that just happened to call the Dept. of Solid Waste and explain that their 17 year old bin had gotten run over by a truck; was cracked and broken or was stolen from curb side.

The remainder of the recycling bins have either have been or will be distributed to area schools in an attempt to reinforce the schools recycling efforts. Below is a partial list of the schools that have already received bins:

1. 50 bins to Bolivar Rd. Elementary
2. 35 bins to Bridgeport Elementary
3. 30 bins to Otto-Shortell

4. 50 bins to Canastota High School
5. 20 bins to Canastota Elementary
6. 20 bins to Madison Central
7. 18 bins to North Broad Street Elementary
8. 25 bins to Wal-Mart

When the bins are give out to schools and/or residents they contain a copy of the County's Recycling Guide to assist school officials and residents with their recycling efforts.