Summer 2015

Municipal Recycling News

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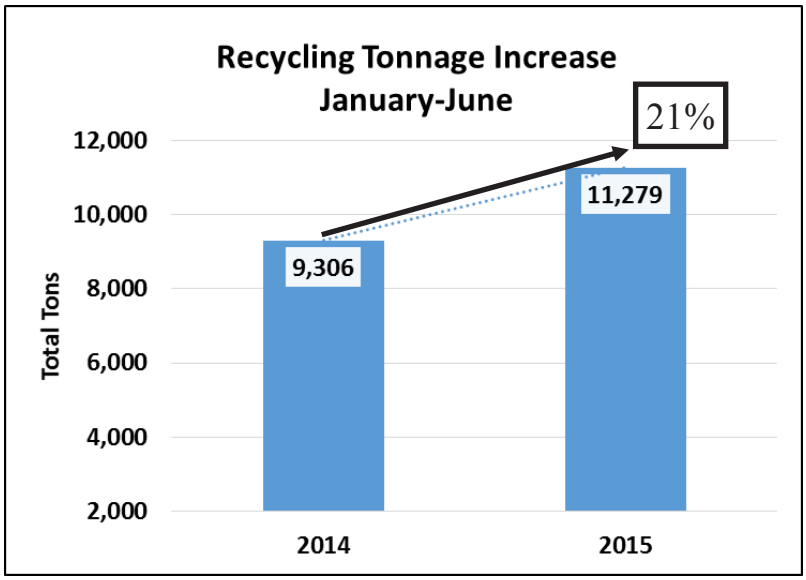
MRF Grand Opening Leads to 21% Increase in Recycling

After years of planning, and coordination with our 25 municipal partners, the new Waukesha County/City of Milwaukee Materials Recovery Facility located in the Menomonee Valley ("Valley MRF") began processing recyclables in March 2015. A grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony was held on April 14th at the state-of-the-art $15 million single stream MRF. Over 100 people attended, with municipal officials participating in tours of the impressive facility.

The Valley MRF is jointly owned by the County and City, and privately operated by the company, ReCommunity Recycling. The equipment is designed to process up to 35 tons of recyclables per hour, or more than 60,000 tons per year in a single 8-hour shift. As the 25 partner municipalities in the County recycling program fully convert to single-sort collection system, recycling tonnage is projected to increase 25% over the next 3 years. Data from the first 6 months of 2015 shows we have already made great progress toward this goal, with recycling tonnage up 21% compared to the same time in 2014 (see chart below).

The new County/City partnership has been recognized as an excellent example of intergovernmental cooperation and public/private partnership that increases efficiencies and saves tax payer dollars.



Pictured left to right: Ghassan Korban, Paul Farrow, Paul Decker, Michael Murphy, Dan Vrakas, Tom Barrett, Bob Baumann, James Bohl and Michael Crowley

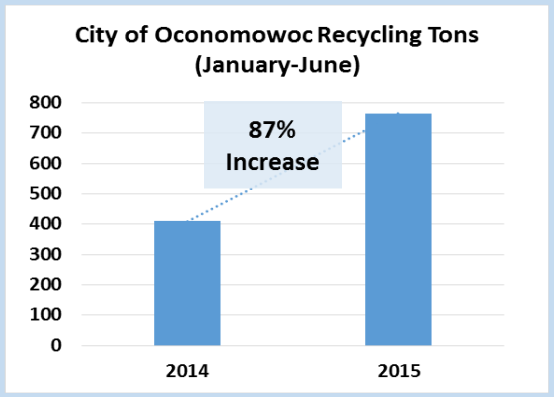
Diane Gard and Mark Frye

Shawn Reilly, Paul Decker, Steven Ponto, David Ament

Featured Municipalities

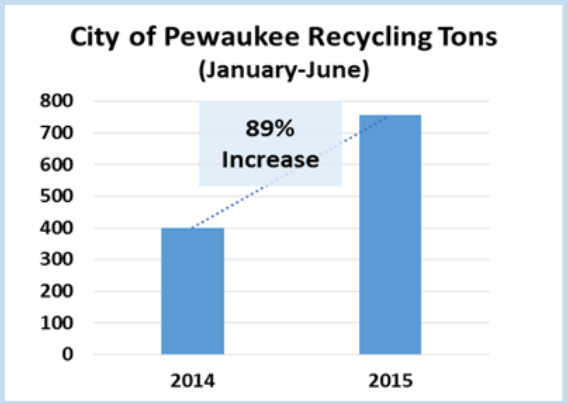
Cities of Oconomowoc and Pewaukee

In 2014, Waukesha County coordinated a collection contract request for proposals (RFP) process on behalf of 20 municipal recycling partners. As part of this RFP, communities obtained proposals for several solid waste and recycling collection service options, including manual up-the-drive and automated curbside collection. The competitive RFP process allowed many communities to realize substantial cost savings, totaling over $4.5 million per year, primarily through automating collection and instituting municipal collection contracts. The Cities of Oconomowoc and Pewaukee are featured here not only due to their respective 26% and 29% savings in recyclable collection costs, but also because of their impressive 87% and 89% increases in recycling rates. Both cities switched from weekly manual up-the-drive recyclable collection to every-other-week automated curbside collection. It should be noted these cost savings do not include an additional estimated savings of $30,000 per year in landfill disposal fees due to the additional tons now captured for recycling.



26% Cost Savings

29% Cost Savings



MRF Fires Caused by Contamination in Recyclables

How Municipalities Can Help in Prevention Efforts

Two small fires at the new Valley MRF were recently caused by exploding propane gas cylinders that residents included in their recycling containers. The fires were quickly controlled, but it demonstrates the risks associated with contamination of recyclables. While made of valuable aluminum, compressed gas cylinders cannot be recycled because of the high risk of explosion and fire while compressed into large bales to prepare for market.

This is a great example of how the quality of recyclables is as important as the quantity. Preventing contamination of recyclables ("residue") is imperative to maximize program revenues, reduce MRF disposal costs, ensure worker safety, and protect the public investment in recyclable processing equipment. The residue rate in the old dual-sort County MRF averaged 3.5%. However, the residue rate at the new Valley MRF is now at a concerning 10%.

The County continues to develop education materials, programming and media campaigns focusing on the quality of recycling materials, such as the new campaign underway called "Recycle Right". There are also a number of things that municipalities can also do to help reduce contamination:

- Include local links to County recycling web pages;
- Include recycling articles in municipal newsletters;
- Distribute recycling educational materials to residents;
- Refer local civic groups and schools to the County for recycling presentations and Valley MRF tours;
- Include County recycling displays at community events;
- Enforce municipal collection contract provisions relating to recycling education and contamination.

Many community collection contracts require haulers to implement a recycling education plan to local residents. (This was included in the sample contract and RFP discussed above.) Through their weekly contact with each household, haulers have a unique opportunity to do this. Municipalities should take advantage of this and ask their haulers to coordinate educational efforts with the County to increase recycling rates, reduce contamination, and ultimately increase recycling dividends back to partners.

2015 Recycling Dividends Increased 23%

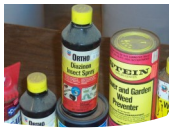
This spring, Waukesha County distributed nearly $1.5 million in Recycling Dividend checks to our 25 partner municipalities, a 23% increase over 2014. The total dividend amount depends on local recycling rates, recycling markets, state grants and the current program fund balance. The amount for each municipality depends on the following factors:

- Municipal recycling collection/program costs;
- Tons of recyclables collected and recycling rate;
- The number and size of new recycling containers, and the local costs for hauling recyclables to the Valley MRF.

With the transition to single sort recycling, the 2015 dividend payment was adjusted, as described in previous mailings and community meetings. The solid waste tip fee credit was eliminated, but the base dividend and recycling incentive amounts were increased. In addition, County financial assistance is being provided through a 10-year intergovernmental agreement to help support municipal costs for new larger single sort recycling containers and direct haul to the Valley MRF.

Since 2001, the County has provided over $13.6 million in Recycling Dividend payments to our 25 municipal partners. These annual payments have helped smooth out local budget impacts from fluctuating recyclable markets, increased program costs, and reduced state grant funding. A summary of the 2015 dividends is below.

Municipality	Total 2015 Recycling Dividend	Tons Recycled (2014)	Tons Landfilled (2014)	Recycling Rate (2014)
Village of Big Bend	$9,339	99	451	18%
Village of Chenequa	$3,611	45	313	13%
Village of Dousman	$13,673	178	569	24%
Village of Eagle	$12,050	152	700	18%
Village of Elm Grove	$41,391	364	2,208	14%
Village of Hartland	$65,066	726	1,947	27%
Village of Lac La Belle	$2,309	47	284	14%
Village of Merton	$24,875	286	742	28%
Village of Nashotah	$6,364	59	347	14%
V. Oconomowoc Lake	$4,232	56	285	16%
Village of Pewaukee	$40,608	425	1,568	21%
Village of Summit	$30,931	329	1,719	16%
Village of Wales	$18,594	221	652	25%
Town of Brookfield	$26,547	318	1,995	14%
Town of Delafield	$40,984	556	2,889	16%
Town of Lisbon	$39,571	577	4,134	12%
Town of Merton	$17,011	494	2,029	20%
Town of Oconomowoc	$30,959	565	2,853	17%
Town of Waukesha	$65,034	763	2,454	24%
City of Brookfield	$199,899	2,566	11,840	18%
City of Delafield	$27,074	312	2,309	12%
City of New Berlin	$186,628	3,428	10,321	25%
City of Oconomowoc	$112,766	940	4,785	16%
City of Pewaukee	$80,165	809	4,815	14%
City of Waukesha	$396,676	4,478	15,974	22%
TOTALS	$1,496,357	18,790	78,183	18%

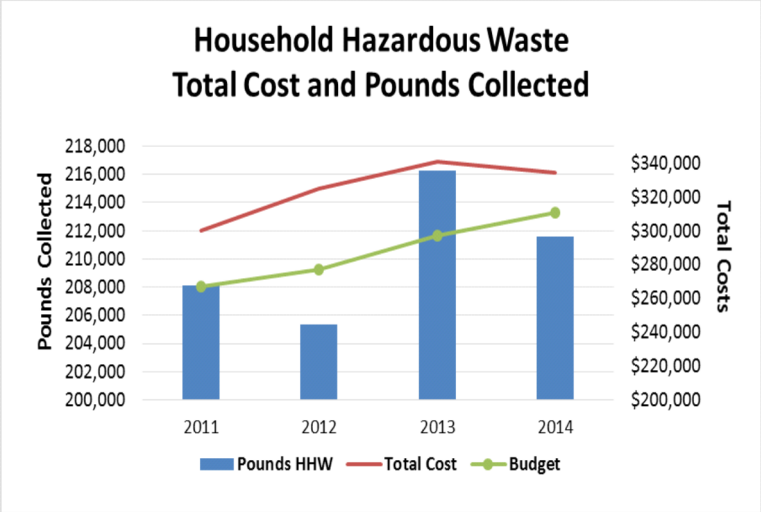


Controlling Costs Remains a Challenge for Household Hazardous Waste Program

Over 200,000 pounds of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) are collected each year through the Waukesha County HHW program. While the program has been successful, costs have been over the approved annual County budget by an average of 12% or $37,000 since 2011. *(Note: Municipalities pay 1/3 of net program costs after other grants and landfill fee revenues are exhausted.)* After a detailed program review and contract negotiations, several major changes have been implemented to reduce program costs, including:

- Closing three permanent sites during January and December each operating year;
- Reducing operating hours at the Waukesha and Franklin sites;
- Setting staff reimbursement limits in service contract;
- No longer accepting oil, antifreeze and batteries (other no-cost options available for safe disposal)

Although these and other changes have been implemented, projected annual cost savings are limited. To achieve a sustainable funding level, future challenges remain. The County will be reviewing 2015 HHW program data to determine actual cost savings realized. If costs are not adequately controlled, future program changes will be explored such as the elimination of one or two satellite collection sites. The County will communicate with municipal partners as future program changes are considered. Stay tuned.



Cooperative Electronics Recycling RFP Completed

Since 2010, the County has facilitated the V.A.L.U.E. in Local Government bid process for interested parties, including municipalities, counties and school districts to provide electronics recycling services. The residential electronics recycling services were provided at no cost due to strong commodity markets and the State recycling law under E-Cycle Wisconsin. As commodity markets dwindled and manufacturers purchased less credits from recyclers, the awarded contractor was unable to renew a no cost contract.

In July of 2014, 5R Processors was awarded the bid with a no cost service contract for residential electronics recycling as provided by all previous contractors. At that time, 5R was a registered recycler with the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Within one month of transfer of operations, 5R was failing to meet contractual obligations. Throughout the next several months, 5R attempted to get into compliance. The County began recommending to stop collections at municipal sites and focus on clean-up efforts with 5R. As of January 2015 municipal sites have been cleaned up and remain closed for collection.

The County is working cooperatively with eight (8) communities and recently completed a coordinated RFP process for residential electronics recycling services. The County will provide participating communities with non-binding award recommendations including temporary (event) and permanent site collection options (July/August). This RFP also included a provision that service be made available for other local units of government.

E-CYCLE WISCONSIN

For more information, please contact the Waukesha County Department of Parks & Land Use at 896-8300 or online at waukeshacounty.gov/recycling