

RECYCLING REPORTS

Frequently Asked Questions

TO: College Students

FROM: Mr. Bill Anderson, Recycling Coordinator

DATE: April 28, 2003

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2002 Solid Waste Data – Frequent Questions

The following represents information taken from Aiken County's Annual Report to South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and from SCDHEC's Annual Report which encompasses all the counties in the State. You may use any portion of this information to fulfill the requirements outlined by your teacher. Do not hesitate to e-mail me should your teacher have a question about solid waste and/or recycling for which you cannot find an answer. Also, you may check out SCDHEC's web site at www.scdhec.net/recycle.

The South Carolina Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 requires all counties to eliminate yard waste, land clearing debris, and construction debris, as well as appliances and scrap metal, lead acid batteries, and motor oil from the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) landfills. The counties are also required to recycling 35% of their waste stream. The State has also adopted the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines of reducing the waste stream generation rate to 3.5 pounds per person per day.

You will need to contact the city Public Works Department should you need information pertaining to the City in which you reside. The City of Aiken Public Works phone number is 642-7613. The City of North Augusta Public Works Department recycling contact phone number is 441-4245.

The following represents questions submitted by college students.

RECYCLING REPORTS

Frequently Asked Questions

When did the recycling program first start in Aiken County

Recycling of scrap metal through Goldberg Brothers, Augusta had been going on for several years prior to an official recycling program.

The South Carolina Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 was the reason for putting a recycling program in place. The ground work began in 1991/1992 with the Barden and Wagener C&D Landfills being opened in March, 1993 and the first two Recycling Drop-Off Centers, Perry and Belvedere, being opened March, 1994. Langley and Windsor opened April, 1994.

When it first opened, what materials were being collected for recycling?

Old Corrugated Cardboard (OCC), newspaper, magazines; Glass: clear, green, brown;
Cans: Aluminum, steel; Plastic bottles; Scrap metal, white goods(appliances);
Banned items: lead acid batteries, used oil, and tires.

Were the materials handled at this facility, or were they taken out for processing somewhere else?

The County pulls all material from its Recycling Drop-Off Centers with its own trucks to ensure efficient service and available containers for the public.

Material placed for recycling is hauled to our Recycling Staging Center at our Barden C&D Landfill located on Connector Road, Graniteville. Cans, paper, cardboard, plastic bottles are baled; while the other recyclable material is bulked in its assigned area. The material is then loaded on vendor trucks and hauled to their respective processing facility.

What, if any materials are now being processed that were not handled by this organization previously?

Within the first year we stopped accepting brown and green glass and enlarged the clear glass and steel cans sections of the recycling trailers. This enabled the paper and Aluminum can sections to fill up about the same time as the glass and steel cans. This made for more efficient use of the trailers.

Subsequently we added junk mail; phone and paper back books, hard cover books, textiles (clothes), shoes, oil filters, and oil bottles.

Textiles were dropped January, 2003 due to people placing trash in with the clothes. We referred recyclers of clothes and shoes to the non-profit organizations.

Roughly, in volume (dollars and/or pounds) how much is handled yearly? How does this benefit the community?

E-mail banderson@aikencounty.net for recent figures.

Which material of all the materials recycled is the highest in volume?

In tonnage Scrap Metal and Paper (OCC and Mixed Paper) have been within a couple hundred tons of each other for the last few years. Through our RSC we handle approximately 1800 tons of each category.

In dollars OCC is the most valuable with paper being second and scrap metal third.

RECYCLING REPORTS

Frequently Asked Questions

Which material is the hardest (labor intensive or otherwise) to process?

In the last three months we began to recycle most of the better paint being brought in. The unusable paint has to be solidified to be disposed in the landfill. This entails blending it with cement and sand.

What types of difficulties are there in the recycling program (i.e., manpower, machines, etc.)?

Getting the public to recycle and then getting them to properly separate without also placing trash with the recyclable material. We recently discontinued textiles due to too much trash being placed in the clothes.

A recent National news story interviewed a facility and the person said they were finding it was costing their plant more in manpower than the benefits. This was due mostly to sorting the items. Do you find that to be an issue at your facility and in what way? If not, does it have anything to do with the citizens and how they pre-sort the materials, or ????

In our operation it has everything to do with the public properly separating the material. Our R-DOC's are set up for the public to bring the material in separated and place in the correct container.

Those communities, like North Augusta, that operate a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) use either several hired employees or inmates to separate the material off the picking line. In this case it does cost more.

The savings come about in the return from sale of the recyclable material, the savings in landfill space and tipping fees, and the savings in our natural resources.

What benefits have you seen in this recycling program (including citizens' opinions)?

As stated in #11 the main benefit is the reduced waste to landfill, landfill charges, and the reduction in use of natural resources.

Most have voiced an appreciation for a manned, lighted, clean, and safe location that the wife and/or teens can deliver their waste as apposed to the old secluded, unlighted, and trashy "Greenbox" sites.

Are there any negatives that come to mind?

Those people that refuse to recycle. Material that is landfilled costs us more to dispose of and we also loose the benefit of recouping recycling dollars and saving landfill space.

What hurdles have you come across in the program (including Citizen viewpoints that have already been addressed).

The voluntary nature of the program, on the local and State level, make it difficult for us to make the program cost effective due to the many tons of recyclable material that is landfilled.

RECYCLING REPORTS

Frequently Asked Questions

What changes would you like to see in the program?

Of the 3 'R's, Reduce, Recycle, and Reuse; participate in the reduce aspect by purchasing items made from recyclable material. There are also those that acquire items from others for reuse. Many people do the 3 'R's without realizing it. Recycling is the part that takes a conscious effort.

Recycling in Aiken County is voluntary. There are communities that require the public to recycle, although, it may be many years down the road it is something to consider.

If any changes are foreseen, which are planned for the near future?

Enlarge the Recycling Staging Center and upgrade the baling operation with a new baler.

Do you have any other future plans or ideas?

We have hope of adding a Mixed Fuel tank at one or two of our locations in the next couple of years.

Consideration may be given of a "Pay-As-You-Throw" program. This requires the citizens, using the Recycling Drop-Off Centers, to purchase specially marked and colored bags to dispose of their non-recyclable waste. Participating merchants would purchase the bags from the County and in turn sell to the bags to the public at a regulated price. The number of bags to be purchased by the public will be dependant on the volume of waste they have for burial after recycling or not recycling.

Have you ever found something of great value within the recycling materials? If so, what was it?

Someone brought in to one of the R-DOC's a relatively new push mower they thought was severely damaged and would not start. Our people checked it out and removed some heavy wire wrapped around the blade and one of the wheels. The mower is being used to cut grass at all of our 10 R-DOC's

What materials would you like to add to your recycling operation that you don't handle now?

Mixed fuel (gas and oil) and antifreeze.
Household hazardous waste.

If you handle anti-freeze, oil, or the like - what happens to these items? Do you get much of these materials?

We do not provide for disposal of anti-freeze or mixed fuel at this time.

We do, since the beginning – March, 1994, provide containers for Used Oil. Santee Cooper collects the oil and burns it at their facility in Moncks Corner, SC. Two gallons generates enough electricity to power an average home for 24 hours.

Used Oil Filters are drained, crushed and the metal is recycled through the scrap metal industry.

RECYCLING REPORTS

Frequently Asked Questions

Batteries are recycled through the battery industry. Through December, 2002 we were paid for the batteries. Being a banned from the landfill item we are glad to be able to dispose of them without the benefit of income.

What do you consider the challenges within the recycling program?

Keeping people interested in recycling and getting people to recycle.

How would you summarize this recycling program, and how do you think it measures with the recycling programs of other areas?

It is probably one of the most efficient and cost effective operations in the State.