

SOLID WASTE RECYCLING HISTORY

Initially the reactions were mixed about the “Greenbox” site closures and the opening of the Recycling Drop-Off Centers. A few seemed to be against the sites because it infringed on their right to dispose of their waste as they saw fit without having someone around to tell them what they can and cannot dispose of. After a while most of the complainers began to be complimentary. A majority of the users voiced appreciation of a well managed site that they felt safe using. As a result more and more users began to recycle their waste.

RECYCLING:

Recycling efforts within Aiken County as reported by municipalities, commercial businesses, non-profit organizations, and industry have totaled 703,027 tons since 1993. The recycling of residential waste totaled 208,636 tons during this period which represents a diversion of 4.26 years of residential waste from the landfill. A sampling of recycling efforts within the County, as reported to SCDHEC, is as follows:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Tons</u>
1993	2,147
1994	15,354
1996	74,776
2000	95,733
2002	62,343

Various things, such as: weather, economy, business/industry closures and/or not reporting some years, affect total recycle tons.

Industry is making an effort to recycle as much of their waste as possible to avoid disposing of waste in a landfill. Recycling affords them an avenue of control whereas landfilling leaves them exposed to some liability.

Aiken County, through its Recycling Drop-Off Centers, initially began recycling the following items.

Cardboard	Newspapers	Magazines	Pasteboard
Soda Bottles	Milk Jugs		
Steel Cans	Aluminum Cans	Scrap Metal	White Goods
Glass Bottles:	Flint (Clear)	Amber (Brown)	Green
Banned:	Batteries	Tires	Used Oil

In 1995 Brown and green glass were dropped to make more room available for clear glass and steel cans. This made for more efficient use of the recycling trailers. Subsequently we added the following:

Junk Mail	Phone Books	Hard Cover Books
Textiles	Shoes	
Oil Filters	Oil Bottles	

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MARKETING:

All items accepted for recycling are done so with the primary intent of “REDUCING” waste going to the landfill. Since hauling costs are involved either way, we only calculate the tipping fee savings. The 208,636 tons of recycled residential waste saved the County approximately \$4,325,000.00 in tipping fees. Of course, there is also the monetary savings in landfill space and prolonged use of the current landfill. Also to be considered is the 494,391 tons of industrial and commercial material recycled during the same period. This is an additional \$10,258,000.00 in tipping fee savings.

The commodity prices of the various material changes week to week and in some instances month to month. Supply and demand being the main factors with outside factors, such as foreign markets, playing a major role in pricing. This is especially true in the scrap metal industry.

Another factor to be considered is the number of players (middle men) in the game of buying and selling the material. The problem that sometimes occurs with brokers is that they are here today and gone tomorrow without having us for the material. For this reason we have to be selective as to who we sell to.

EDUCATION:

It’s like trying to get people to see the benefits of using seat belts and not drinking and driving – all the promotions that have been done through the years still has not convinced everyone to properly participate. This being said we will continue to promote the 3 ‘R’s – Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

We have used billboards, newspaper, TV, and presentations in schools, businesses, industry, and civic organizations. We have given out brochures and handbills.

Our site attendants assist users of our Recycling Drop-Off Centers and encourage them to recycle and properly dispose of all waste in the correct container.

GOALS:

“South Carolina’s reduction goal for FY02 was based on reducing, on a statewide per capita basis, the amount of municipal solid waste being disposed of to 3.5 pounds per day. Based on annual reports from the MSW landfills and SW incinerators, South Carolinian’s disposed of 4.2 pounds of MSW per person per day for FY02. The State’s recycling goal for FY02 was based on recycling, statewide, at least 35%, calculated by weight, of the *municipal* solid waste stream generated. Based on annual progress reports from the counties, South Carolina recycled 28.7% of the MSW generated in the state during FY02.”¹

¹ SCDHEC FY02 Annual Report

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During Fiscal Year 2002, with a population of 143,905, Aiken County attained the following results toward the State's goals.

Recycling Goal: Percent of MSW Recycled	21.9%
Total Pounds of MSW Disposed per Person per Day	3.5 lbs.

Through a continued effort of encouraging the public to recycle more, it is our intent to obtain the State's goal of 3.5 pounds per day per person by the target date of June 30, 2005.

It is also our intent to work with the businesses and industry in Aiken County to encourage them to recycle more and to track their results and to report them to us for inclusion in our annual report to SCDHEC. The tonnage diverted as a result of recycling will prolong the use of our current Three Rivers Regional MSW Landfill.