

Recycling Coordinator's 2010 Year End Report

Madison County has been a leader in New York states' recycling efforts since the first plastic bottle was accepted for recycling in July of 1990. Since that time – 20-years ago – the list of items that are now recyclable has grown to include televisions, computer monitors, mercury and products containing mercury, plastic bags, license plates, pizza boxes and more.

The management and staff at the Dept of Solid Waste and Sanitation take pride in the fact that Madison County is on the cutting edge when it comes to new recycling insensitive and programs that save energy and protect the planet.

Methane Gas

Methane gas is being turned into electricity at the Gas Utilization facility and sold on the grid. A small portion of the excess heat produced by the CAT generator is providing free heat to the ARC Recycling Center, the ARC Break building and the Scale house and Education Center. The Solid Waste and Recycling Committee is contemplating the establishment of a business park – Arigrutural Renewable Energy Park (ARE) at the landfill site. Businesses that choose to relocate will be encouraged to take advantage of the low cost, excess heat produced by the Gas Utilization generator.

Solar Panels

A grant from New York State Energy Research and Development Authority NYSERDA will allowed the Dept. of Solid Waste to install 11 solar panels on the south facing slope of the closed west side landfill cell. These solar panels will produce of electricity that will be utilized by the ARC Recycling Center. The power will be net metered – meaning that any power that is not used by the ARC will go back to the grid. The Madison County Landfill is the first municipal landfill in the Country to utilize solar technology on a flexible landfill cap.

Saving the Planet

Computer Monitors & Televisions

The County instituted mandatory recycling of computer monitors and televisions in September of 2004. These units contain mercury, cadmium, lead and other toxic chemicals that are now being kept out of our landfill. To date, approximately, 450 tons of electronic material hasbeen safely recycled in Madison County.

Mercury

In December of 2009, the County established a pilot project to collect mercury based products at the Buyea Rd. Landfill on the first Saturday of each month from 7:10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and includes items such as: thermostats, thermometers, fluorescent and spiral lights, barometers, blood pressure cuffs etc. "It should be noted that one gram of mercury can pollute a 20-acre lake," explained Recycling Coordinator Sharon A. Driscoll.

Household Hazardous Waste

The Household Hazardous Waste [HHW] program also helps residents properly dispose of toxic materials; offering Free disposal of 14-wet gallons and 20-dry pounds of hazardous material to residents who sign up. Each year, 60 to 80 families take advantage of the HHW program.

Safe Pill Collection

One of the County's newest programs aimed at saving our environment and our children is the Safe Pill Collection. The program debuted on September 12, 2009 and took in 140 pounds of pills. Two Safe Pill Collections were held in 2010; the April 24 event took in 380 pounds of pills and the September 25 collection took in 240 pounds of pills – for a total of 750 pounds of pills in three collections.

As people become more aware of the environmental and social ramifications of improper disposal of prescription medication, attendance for the Safe Pill Collection increased as did the quantity of medications delivered to the landfill site in Lincoln for safe disposal. "The most important thing to remember is do not flush outdated or unwanted medication!" said Driscoll.

Aligned with the drug collection program is the Sharps Collection program that has been underway since the mid-nineties and in 1998 won the Best Paper Recycling Awards presented by the American Forest and Paper Association.

Spreading the Word Landfill & Recycling Center Tours

Each year the Recycling Coordinator conducts tours of the ARC MRF and Landfill site for area school children and college students along with businesses and non-for-profit organizations.

This year there has been increased interest in the Madison County Landfill due to the addition of the Gas Utilization facility and the installation of solar panels on the southern facing slope of the closed west side landfill from area college professors.

Geology students from Onondaga Community College in Syracuse and Hamilton College in Clinton are frequent visitors to the Madison County Landfill, participating in spring and fall tours.

New to the landfill circuit tours are: The Biomass Energy Resource Class

at Morrisville College and students interested in recycling and green energy from Colgate University along with Sociology Students from Hamilton College in Clinton, NY.

Recycling Presentations and Exhibits

Helping residents with their recycling questions is an ongoing task. The recycling coordinator puts out a Recycling Guide that encompasses all of the programs available through the Madison County Department of Solid Waste and Sanitation. This brochure is updated each year and is available in the lobby of the County Office Bldg., at the Main Landfill Office, at Town Clerk's Offices throughout Madison County and on line at www.madisoncounty.org

The Recycling Guide is given to everyone who requests a replacement recycling bin and/or a new bin. They are also available when the Recycling Coordinator puts on a presentation and/or a recycling exhibit is set up – such as those prepared for the Madison County Fair in Brookfield and the Firemen's Field Days in DeRuyter.

New recycling programs are promoted through press releases, paid advertisements in area newspapers and on WMCR in Oneida.

Reuse Center

One of the future projects planned for 2011 is a reuse center. The reuse center will be adjacent to the Buyea Rd. Transfer station at the County's main landfill and will coincide with the directives of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan.

Prior to undertaking any new program J. Zecca and S. Driscoll thoroughly research the subject. In this case, tours were conducted at reuse facilities across New York State. Talking to the folks who manage these facilities provided insight for those in Madison County who were starting from scratch with the Reuse Center project. "It is always wise to speak with those who have traversed the trail before you."

The former maintenance garage on the east side of the Buyea Rd. Landfill site will be the starting point for the new Reuse Center. Shelving was purchased during the first week in January 2011. In October, Director Zecca had the landfill crew move three empty tractor trailer boxes to the scrap metal site for use as storage containers for items deemed worthy of being sold in the Reuse Center.

Inmates from Camp Georgetown have been removing good and usable items from the scrap metal area and have placed them in the trailers.

The plan is starting to materialize.