

Golden rule of trash: reduce, reuse, recycle

Sixth article in a series on solid waste

By Nancy Smith
special writer

HOW can we solve the mountain of trash dilemma? Everyone has an answer. Some want a high tech solution; some swear by incinerators. This method costs too much — that one pollutes air and water. Recycling can be curbside or drop-off. Confusion reigns.

But order will be found in the midst of chaos.

STATE AND county planners agree that waste disposal of the future must consist of integrated systems and appropriate application. They will try to give every citizen a clear picture of what can be done.

In an April policy report the Michigan Department of Natural Resources issued long-range goals for reduction and recovery of solid waste. By 2005, DNR will strive for an 80 percent reduction in landfilled waste. The resource recovery strategy projections:

- WTE (waste-to-energy incineration), 40 percent; less 10 percent of ash that must be buried.

- Recycling, 25 percent.
- Composting, 10 percent.
- Source reduction, 10 percent.
- Reuse, 5 percent.

DNR hopes each community will see what's out there — then pick the technology best suited to its own size, location, resources and needs. After careful study, one town or city may find the appropriate system may be 40 percent recycling and zero incineration; another — 70 percent incineration and 20 recycling.

EACH TYPE of waste reduction is important.

The easiest, cheapest way to reduce waste is to avoid throwaways. Buy long-lasting products and reuse them in their original form. It pays to conserve.

Industry and commercial operations do this already.

Low technology composting is recommended by DNR. This requires minimum costs for labor and equipment. Backyard or simple community-wide recovery of leaves and grass clippings can eliminate 10 percent of the total waste stream.

A 25 percent recycling goal has been set. Recycling is the separation, collection and processing of waste materials for conversion into raw materials or new products.

Incineration is the most costly method, yet it could remove 40 percent of total trash. A regional approach is the only way rural areas could afford to incinerate.

Landfills, too, must be maintained — for incinerator ash and other waste that cannot be reclaimed. The state goal is to landfill only 15 percent of all waste.

By looking at what other communities have done, we can see what works and which would be best for us.

A RECYCLING success story in northeastern Oakland County is Holly Township. On May 3, an initial 200 "pilot boxes" for curbside recycling were put in place.

July 5, the entire township participated, reports Ardath Regan, Holly's representative on the Municipal Solid Waste Planning Board. Every resident and employee will separate glass and paper into black storage boxes provided by Oakland County. The containers are made from recycled tires and recycled plastic.

"Holly is the first local municipality that has developed a fully integrated recycling program from scratch," Regan said. Inspired by a curbside pick-up with 85 percent participation in Ontario, Canada, she created the operation using four "Clean Michigan Fund" grants.

Her embryonic group has expanded to involve the entire community.

The recycling committee now includes student members, from 9 to 15 years old, who have full voting rights. Their goal: "Know why we should recycle; make it easy; create a habit."

THIS WEEK the Holly board voted to include oil recycling. Their incentive: tax dollars saved that will be spent to remove oil dumped into waste water.

Two oil companies will donate 300-gallon tanks to be set on a concrete pad. Regan expects to pick-up more materials once the program is fully proven.

"We want it to work," she said.

"The keystone of recycling is a saying in costs and liability," Holly's

goal is to reduce waste at least 25 percent.

Each five-year update of the county plan will reflect consideration of many such programs. Officials and concerned citizens of every municipality can thus design a waste reduction operation best suited for their situation.

The seventh article will explain specific government, industry and citizen roles in waste reduction.

Nancy Smith is a member of Oakland County Solid Waste Planning Committee since 1978 and a Farmington Hills resident for 25 years.

OCC teaching specialty cooking

A series of three-credit classes in specialty cooking is being offered through August by the hospitality department of Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus, 27055 Orchard Lake Road near I-96 in Farmington Hills.

Four one-week sessions are offered. Classes are limited to 18 stu-

dents. All classes meet from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. A noon meal is included in the price of each class.

Pre-registration is encouraged, but students may report to J Building on campus the first day of any class for registration.

Detailed information about any

classes available from the OCC department at 471-7786.

The four classes, dates and costs are:

- "The Art of Yeast-Raised Dough," July 18-22, \$87 plus \$40 lab fee. It will cover the fundamentals from sourdough to croissants.

- "Gateaux and Tortes," July 25-29, \$87 plus \$60 lab fee. Topics will be tortes, Bavarian cremes and flans.

- "Petit Four and French Pastry," Aug. 1-5, \$87 plus \$60 lab fee. Topics will include mirror layout and buffet presentation.

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