

More recycling

Oakland sets ambitious goal of 40 percent

by Dave Varga
Staff writer

Oakland County wants to recycle more of its trash and burn less.

Policy makers on a countywide Solid Waste Task Force met last week and raised their goal for recycling to an "ambitious" 40 percent of the trash produced by county residents.

Initially, the task force aimed to have 20 percent of county solid waste recycled in five years and 30 percent in 10 years after the plan takes effect.

The new goal changes several elements of the county's billion-dollar solid waste plan. The plan is being developed to find a place for its trash before six existing landfills fill up, as expected, within the next five years.

The goal was agreed to by a task force consisting of administrators, county commissioners and citizen volunteers.

MORE RECYCLING will mean:

- Only two incinerators will be needed, not three, to "cook" solid waste into ash, thereby generating electricity and steam. That should save capital funds, since a contract to build one burner is \$123 million.

- Three recycling centers — called resource recovery facilities — will be needed instead of two. Although the locations will dictate the

cost, a rough estimate is \$20 million per center.

- More education will be needed so residents know how to separate their glass, metal, plastic and paper products for recycling.

"I WOULD SAY that's a very ambitious goal," said Milt Handorf, director of public works and solid waste chief. Other communities say they are recycling 40 percent, he said. "It depends a great deal on your waste stream," he added.

Planning for more recycling is a gamble that may save money up front with only two incinerators. The county board of commissioners has awarded a \$123 million contract for the first waste burner. The second burner will be the now-closed Southeastern Oakland County Incinerator Authority that will be rebuilt to improve air pollution controls and make it convert waste to energy at a cost of \$20 million.

The task force has decided to delay building the third incinerator until two are working, to see if it is needed.

"The risk," Handorf said, "is that, by waiting, if you're wrong, the cost to construct a new incinerator would then increase."

TASK FORCE members and county officials are planning to have the entire solid waste plan done by June 1 to start three months of public reviews and hearings.

Then the county board will make any changes, approve the plan and send it to the local communities. If

two-thirds of the communities approve, the state Department of Natural Resources will get a look before final approval.

Other elements in the county plan include a composting site of about 20 acres to take care of 300 tons of organic waste daily and a 40-year landfill of 460 acres or more to hold ash and construction debris.

Construction costs will be covered by revenue bonds supported by user fees. County officials are also applying for some minor state grants.

The bottom line is that residents will pay more to have bags taken

from their curbs.

"It's very hard to say how much it will increase to the average homeowner," Handorf said.

AT A FINANCE committee meeting last week, one county commissioner suggested encouraging recycling by charging homeowners more for regular bags of trash and less for recycling-separated garbage bags.

That kind of solution can cause problems. "As soon as the general public feels it's out of hand," Handorf said, "you're going to have stuff littered on your rural roads."

National honors for Camp Oakland

Camp Oakland Youth Programs has received the 1988 Eleanor P. Eells award for program excellence from the Fund for Advancement of Camping, headquartered in Hatteras, N.C.

The camp, near Oxford in northern Oakland County, was one of three to receive the national recognition at the annual conference of the American Camping Association in Seattle.

Camp Oakland was honored for its family camp program, according to Susan Myer, director of its adventure center who accepted the award. It benefits children considered at

risk by helping their low-income, single-parent mothers cope with their problems.

Each summer, during a nine-day stay at Camp Oakland's 320-acre site, 20 mothers who are struggling to raise large families alone live together in dormitory quarters.

They relax, swim, fish and join in counseling sessions, learning to improve their parenting skills and self-esteem.

They get respite from 24-hour-a-day child care while their children are supervised by summer camp counselors.



Colleges for sale

Area students piled into the Pontiac Silverdome last week for the Metro Detroit National College Fair where they learned about more than 170 colleges from admissions counselors. It was a first-time regional college fair in this area, according to James Stone, event chairperson and counselor at Groves High in Birmingham. Above, John Fry of Andover High in Bloomfield Hills talks to Harlan Steinle, counselor from a group of Colorado colleges and universities.

Parents trained in special ed

A free training session for parents whose children receive special education services will be hosted by the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Metropolitan Detroit at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham.

Training will include an overview of special education rules and advocacy techniques that can be used during Individualized Educational Planning Committee meetings. A time for questions and answers will follow the session.

For more information about the two-hour session, or subsequent sessions in Detroit or Livonia, call 557-5070.

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