



Larimer County Public Works Division

Solid Waste Department

Responsible disposal, environmental protection,
resource management, recycling, and education

Annual Report 2008



*"...it is our shared responsibility to leave
this planet in better shape for future gen-
erations than we found it" ...author unknown*



Notes from the Director

2008 brought more challenges to our goal of providing our customers with an excellent solid waste program in Larimer County. We continue



to look to the County Vision Statement as our guide as we face challenges.

We can't do it alone. In 2008, we both enhanced our current partnerships and created others. Partnering with Larimer County cities and towns, businesses, other County departments, as well as regulatory agencies and other groups interested in solid waste and recycling has expanded our ability to provide services and to help people solve their solid waste problems in the best possible way. Working together helped us create more opportunities.

We welcome the opportunity to learn what our customers need and want in services. This year two public surveys were completed to determine those needs. Surveys were completed for our Household Hazardous Waste Program and for our rural recycling operations, and helped us in making program decisions.

Our programs are designed to empower our customers to make decisions about what to do with their solid waste. Non-mandatory electronics recycling is offered; our Household Hazardous Waste Program is topnotch and continues to allow customers to make positive decisions about diverting waste that should not be placed in the landfill. The Recycling Program is available to those who want to recycle, and information and outreach is provided by the Education Program to help residents make informed decisions about reducing, reusing and recycling.

Federal, State, and County regulations also drive Solid Waste practices. In our changing world, we have to be good stewards of our public resources. Best management practices must be utilized to protect our resources and to help ensure that we can provide services our public needs. Addressing the needs and desires of our public must be looked at through the lens of cost effectiveness. An example: Collecting organics, a desirable diversion, was looked at, but found to currently not be cost effective.

Solid Waste employees are very proud of our facilities, the work they do here, and the services they provide. Come by, give us a call, ask questions, make an appointment for a tour, or just say hi!

Stephen Gillette
Solid Waste Department Director

Environmental Compliance

Closing another phase of the Landfill made for a very busy year in 2008, along with challenging weather conditions and conducting extra groundwater monitoring to keep the Landfill in compliance with environmental regulations.

The Phase 2 area of the Landfill, at capacity in early summer, was finished off with construction of a four-foot thick final cover consisting of compacted clay, dirt, and topsoil. Covering the 28-acre Phase 2 area required moving 190,000 cubic yards of earth and installing 1,100 feet of drainage pipe to

control runoff. The project took four months to complete at a cost of nearly three-quarters of a million dollars.

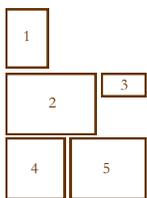
The County Engineering Department provided design and construction management services to ensure that the final cover was constructed according to plan and in accordance with state regulations. The Phase 2 final cover, designed to keep precipitation out of the buried trash, will help prevent future groundwater pollution in the Fossil Creek drainage.

Unusually windy and dry weather in 2008 made it difficult to control litter and dust, with a noticeable effect on local aquifers. Spring and fall typically bring several days of strong, gusty winds forcing us to close the Landfill an average of 17 days a year. Windy days were much more frequent in 2008 causing us to close 37 times. While we applied a chemical treatment and used 1.6 million gallons of water to control dust on the Landfill's unpaved roads, it was not always enough to counter the dry conditions.



With below average precipitation there was no recharge of the surficial aquifers, thus the water table remained at a record low level. Special assessment monitoring was conducted in October by Steve Harem, the Solid Waste Department's Environmental Specialist, in the northeast area of the Landfill where minor groundwater contamination was detected in the 1980's. Such extensive monitoring is required once every two years and involves testing water samples for over 200 chemical substances. Laboratory results showed no trace of pesticides, herbicides, PCBs, or semi-volatile compounds which fortunately meant no additional monitoring nor corrective measures.

On The Cover:



1. Solid Waste Business Office
Photo by Cheryl Kolus
2. West side.
Photo by Mark Clutter
3. Compactor at Working Face
Photo by Rich Helderman
4. Phase II Closure revegetation
Photographer unknown
5. Track Loader at Working Face
Photo by Stephen Gillette

Recycling

Recycling saw some major changes in 2008.

On a positive note, a new baler and in-line conveyor system was installed during the summer. Being able to continue to supply high grade fiber bales to the end markets necessitated replacing the old baler.

While having the right machinery is important, increasing the range of items that can be recycled helps create a good recycling program as well as

good will with our customers. Working with our partner Waste Management's Recycle America, we were able to add #3 through #7 (with some exceptions) plastics to the curbside collection as well as at the Recycling Center. Customers had been requesting this and were pleased when it came about.

Due to breakage, many bottles and jars weren't reaching their destination at the glass recycling company. A pilot program was begun in collaboration with the cities of Loveland and Fort Collins to give citizens the option to recycle separated glass in designated "glass only" bins at selected drop-off locations in order to capture more recyclable glass.



Unfortunately, not all news was good news in

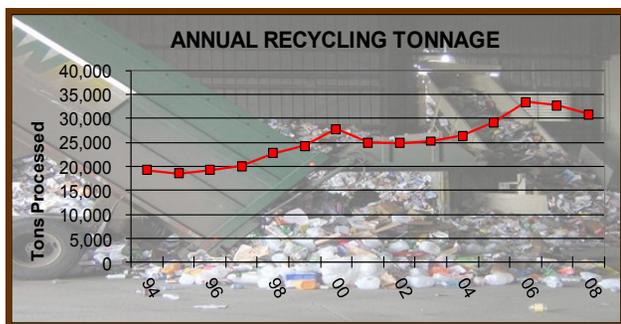
2008. Late in the year, the world economy contributed to an almost total collapse of the recycle market. The recycling industry was sent into a frenzy to find markets for their commodities. At the end of the year, uncertainty was still with us, but the hope is the collapse will be relatively short term. As with many arenas in the world economy, an upturn will be necessary for any significant changes in the recycling situation.

Recycling continues to allow us to conserve our resources and to reuse resources that otherwise would be buried in the Landfill. A large number of our customers want to "do the right thing" by recycling.

Recycling happens when consumers take the time to understand that there is "no away" when they decide to discard materials in the trash.



Customer recycling paperboard at the Recycling Center. Photo: Rose Watson



Hazardous Waste

The Household Hazardous Waste program remained popular and important to residents of Larimer County in 2008. Usage increased by 1,600 residents; total of 17,716 residents were served. An increase of almost 70,000 lbs. over 2007 brought the total of diverted waste to 1.9 million lbs. Through the "Drop n' Swap" program, 8,265 lbs. received went out with customers to be reused.

The **B**usiness **H**azardous waste **P**rogram and **E**ducation (**BH**APE) served 203 current and new business customers. Over 8,000 lbs. of hazardous waste and 58,000 pounds of non-hazardous waste was kept out of the Landfill through this program. The BHAPE program also assists businesses that have quantities over the program limits by directing them to other available options.

In 2006, the HHW began col-

lecting medical sharps (injectable needles) from residents. The program was begun to help protect trash and recycling haulers and Landfill employees from being exposed to potentially hazardous sticks and injuries. The program is slowly growing with the hope that the number of customers utilizing this service will increase as more people learn about it.

In addition, one day events are held to collect and divert wastes. Residents in outlying areas such as Berthoud (149), Estes Park (280), and Glacier View (100) were served. These events will continue in 2009.



Handling hazardous waste requires skill, knowledge and on-going training to assure the safety of both employees and customers. Technician Jeff Leleszi became a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager in 2008, Matthew Forrest joined the staff last year and Rhonda Lauden rounds out the small staff at the



HHW staff examines container labels. Photo: Linda Hayden

HHW facility. The staff of three and Manager Linda Hayden do an outstanding job of serving our community with dedication, skill and pride in their work and their facility.

Rising costs for disposal, a growing program and budget considerations will be challenges in the upcoming year, but with the support of the community and residents who value the importance of being good stewards of our environment, we look forward to many busy days in the year ahead.

Preserving our Investments

Preserving our investments in the coming years during times of challenge and opportunities remains a priority for the Solid Waste management and staff. Our investments are not only our infrastructure and equipment, but also our staff, our customers, our programs, our reputation for doing a good job of handling wastes, recycling, taking care of our environment and education as well as partnering with other groups and continuing to look to the County's vision statement as our guide.



Restoring the natural vegetation to closed area, Photo: Steve Harem

Partnerships

"No man is an island." ...John Donne

...nor can we be as a County department. Partnerships with the following entities help us to achieve our goals and to provide the best possible services and programs for our citizens.

* * * * *

- City of Ft Collins · City of Loveland
- Town of Wellington · Town of Berthoud
- Town of Estes Park · Glacier View · U.S. Forest Service · CSU · Waste Management, Inc.
- CO Dept of Wildlife · Rocky Mntn Natl Park
- Private and municipal waste haulers · CO Assoc For Recycling · Solid Waste Assoc of North America · CO Alliance of Enviro Educators · CO Dept. of Public Health & Env. · Larimer Cnty Public Works Division · County Manager · Human Resources · Health & Enviro · Facilities
- Commissioners · Sheriff · Purchasing
- Information Tech, and others

Education

The Education Department received an Environmental Achievement Award from the Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8, in recognition of the Garbage Garage.

"Our visit to the Garbage Garage completely turned our family around. We are now practicing the three 'R's' on a daily basis."...Cindy (a visitor on a return visit)

The Education Program has been an active and vital presence within the Solid Waste Department. with a change in staff from Cheryl Kolus to Rose Watson as Environmental Educator in late summer and the addition of Lindy Morgenthal as Education Center Attendant, the program continued to offer many opportunities for the public to learn about reducing, reusing and recycling.

In 2008, the Education Center hosted 126 tour groups and 344 drop-in visitors with a total of 3,184 individuals learning about the three "R's," Household Hazardous Waste, Landfill and Recycling Center. The popular summer classes for ages 6-12 year olds continued and saw many of the classes filled to capacity. Family Saturday Programs also grew in attendance.

A dedicated group of volunteers- Wanda Mayberry, Wally Jacobson, and Dick Rush-continued to be valuable to the program as they helped with tours and outreach. New volunteers Maureen McCarthy and Gail Zirtzlaff brought special skills, with Gail making a Patty Packrat mascot costume which premiered in



Making valentines from trash. Photo: Lindy Morgenthal

the Fall. Additional volunteers will be recruited in 2009 as the program continues to grow.

Outreach at events and presentations are an important part of the program: County's New Employee Orientation, Learning House Family Fun Fair, Avago Technologies green events, etc., and (new in 2008) Larimer County Fair, Loveland Children's Day, Fort Collins Composting Fair, Sustainability Fair and other outreach efforts have and will help educate thousands of people in Larimer County to develop more awareness of waste issues and the need to "do the right thing."

Each person we have contact with is one more person who is empowered to take responsibility and allows them to make their own educated decisions about how best to manage their trash.



Patty Packrat - Loveland Halloween event. Photo: Rose Watson



Linda Oatney, Senior Accounting Technician, checks the figures. Photo: Rose Watson



Stephen Gillette, Dept. Head, and Ann Lujan, Solid Waste Mngtr at Fair. Photo: Cheryl Kolus



Matthew Forrest, HHW Technician, checks a chemical. Photo: Rose Watson



Tony Kear, Landfill worker keeps busy in the shop. Photo: Chris Jones



Jeff Lleszki, HHW Technician attends to paperwork. Photo: Linda Hayden



Rocky Sanks and Trish Storm, Gate Attendants, greet customers. Photo: Peter Kiere

**Solid Waste Department
FAST Facts**

- We receive ZERO tax dollars
- Landfill rates have not increased in 5 years
- We have a staff of 22 customer driven employees
- Landfill volumes have been in a down trend since 2000

8 Major Service Areas:
Sanitary Landfill, Hazardous Waste, Environmental Compliance, Education, Transfer Stations, Recycling and Support Services

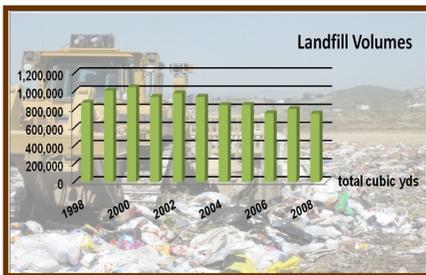
Did you know in 2008?
 ...we processed 32,248 tons of recyclables
 ...diverted 1,944,417 pounds of hazardous waste
 ...recycled 4,677 tires
 ...recycled 27,078 gallons of used motor oil
 ...gave tours to 3,184 visitors at the Ed Center
 ... added 2,063 offsite program contacts

Landfill

The Landfill saw a decrease in the volume of trash received 755,098

cubic yards in 2008 compared to 804,854 cubic yards in 2007. The banning of batteries and tires from landfills by the State of Colorado in mid-2007 as well as increased recycling efforts and opportunities for reuse of materials may very well have contributed to this decrease.

The estimated life of the Larimer County Landfill continues to be about 20 years. As more waste is diverted due to recycling and reusing, that figure could increase in years to come.



Diversion efforts included our popular annual free Christmas tree recycling program which resulted in 3,150 cubic yards of trees and other tree limbs being ground into mulch rather than being placed in the Landfill. That mulch was then offered back free of charge to the public in the Spring.

In addition, 7,000 tons of concrete rubble was crushed for use on Landfill roads which offers an operational cost savings as road base does not have to be purchased from outside sources.

The closure of Phase 2 was a significant event in 2008 with heavy equipment and dirt moving operations continuing over a five-month period. With this 27-acre site now completed, the aesthetics of the Landfill have improved for our neighbors to the north.

*Don't blow it—
good planets are hard to find!*

Time

The Landfill crew is dedicated to giving the best day's work to our citizens and businesses to assist them in their waste disposal.

Two new employees, Chuck Juhl and Rich Helderman, joined the Landfill staff in 2008.



Richard Helderman
Photo: Mark Clutter



Chuck Juhl
Photo: Robert Nielsen

Transfer Stations

The three transfer stations operated by Larimer County Solid Waste Department served 2,950 customers in 2008. The increase from 2007 of 2,609 may partially be due to less days closed because of snow.

The waste transfer stations serve residents in the outlying areas of Red Feather Lakes, Wellington and Berthoud on a part-time schedule. Household trash and recycling bins are also conveniently located in these communities.

Berthoud's Town Board voted on relocating the recycling containers to the transfer station in late 2007; containers were moved in January 2008. 1,109 Berthoud residents utilized the facility in the past year for disposing of their household trash.

Fred Torres, Jr. serves as attendant at the Berthoud Station.

Attendant Lois Schwindt staffs the transfer station in Wellington, serving 1,264 residents in 2008 as they disposed of their household trash.

Red Feather transfer station accepts household trash as well as offering recycling bins - a cost saving service for area residents. 577 residents utilized the trash service last year. Nancy Fleischhacker is the attendant at Red Feather.

The Estes Park Transfer Station has been in operation since 1984 and has been managed by Waste Management, Inc. Town residents can take household trash as well as recyclables to the transfer station. Estes Park also provides a drop-off for household hazardous wastes. Over 47,000 cubic yards of waste, which is equal to 556 trailer tractor loads was collected in 2008.

While the transfer stations provide a needed service to their communities, they are *not* financially self sustaining.

The Berthoud, Red Feather and Wellington stations were subsidized \$47,136 in 2007 and \$20,437 in 2008.

Trash: There are no rugs left to sweep it under.

Milwaukee Journal



Fred Torres, Jr.
Berthoud Transfer Station
Photo: Rose Watson



Nancy Fleischhacker
Red Feather Transfer Station
Photo: Ann Lujan



Lois Schwindt
Wellington Transfer Station
Photo: Rose Watson

Summary of Finances

Larimer County Solid Waste is an enterprise fund department. (zero tax dollars)

Revenues by Major Program

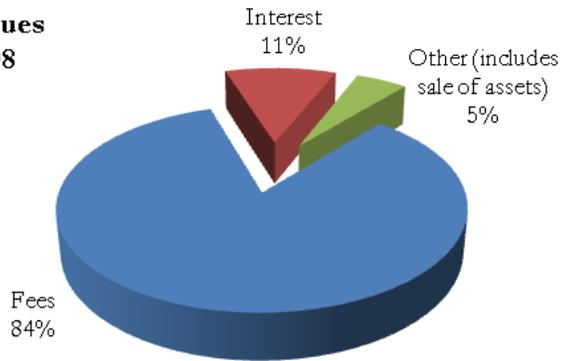
Landfill: \$3,814,320
 Recycling: \$804,241
 HHW: \$33,453
 Transfer Stations: \$199,857
 Interest/Sale of Assets: \$917,027
Total: \$5,768,898

Expenses by Major Category

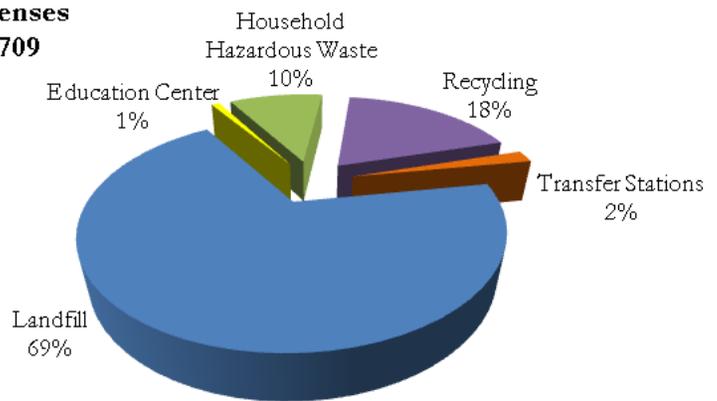
Personnel: \$1,584,853
 Operating: \$2,199,979
 Capital: \$1,853,877

These figures are unaudited.
 The audit is to be complete mid-2009

2008 Revenues \$5,768,898



2008 Expenses \$5,638,709



Looking Toward the Future

"It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." ~Charles Darwin

We're anticipating 2009 to be a year of expected, and unexpected, change. Exactly what will happen depends upon the world economy as well as our national economy. Every year we continue to look for ways to divert more materials from the Landfill and to keep the operation sustainable.



There is a likelihood of legislation that will ban electronics from being land-filled. Because of the multitude of toxic materials contained in these items, ground water contamination is a real threat as they degrade in the landfills. A solid program would need to be put in place statewide to recycle these products and recover their resources.

As 2009 begins, and progresses, we will continue to hope that the recycle market will have had time to turn itself around so that the sustainability of recycling is not in question. The market collapse of late 2008 has been damaging to some of our recycling efforts. We will, however, continue to encourage our customers and residents to keep up their recycling efforts.

As we continue through the new year, it will be imperative for all Solid Waste employees to look for solutions rather than impediments in our changing environment.

The Solid Waste Department will continue to look for sustainable ways to do the right thing. We are always open to hearing ideas from others and encourage employees, the public and our customers to share those with us.

Solid waste disposal has not changed dramatically, but looking at new processes, innovations and solutions will bring about a revolution in the way materials can be beneficially reused.

Acknowledging and acting upon the belief that there's more than one way of doing business will serve us well as we work toward meeting the goals and challenges of the upcoming year.





D8—Robert Turner, Landfill Assistant Manager. Photo: Mark Clutter



Customers at landfill. Photo: Donna Climer



Steve Harem, Environmental Specialist
Photo: Cheryl Kolus

Larimer County Vision Statement

Larimer County will add value to the lives of its citizens by:

- Building Partnerships
- Being Customer Driven
- Empowering People to Take Responsibility
- Being a Fulfilling and Enjoyable Place to Work
- Being a Good Steward of Public Resources

As the needs of the County and its citizens have changed over the years, so has the Solid Waste Department's response to those needs.



Early days at the Larimer County Landfill
Photographer: Unknown

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Marc Engemoen, Director

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Fleet

Natural Resources

Road and Bridge

Solid Waste

The Ranch



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Education Center

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Ft Collins, CO 80526
970-498-5772

Berthoud Transfer

Hwy.56 & County Line
Berthoud, CO
970-498-5760

Wellington Transfer

Owl Canyon Rd.
Wellington, CO
970-498-5760

Red Feather Transfer

West of Parvin Lake
Red Feather, CO
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