

County Connection for Week of 08/22/2018
By David Smitherman
Pittsylvania County Administrator

Last week, Butch Joyce from Joyce Engineering filled us in on the operational happenings at the landfill. We were impressed with what we heard. Changes have already begun; we have modified the methods and locations where trucks dump and are teaching our operators new ways to efficiently run the equipment. We may have some growing pains as we work things out but we're confident that in the long run our customers and employees will have a better experience.

A lot of the changes are simple ones like changing the way that our trash is dumped into the landfill to make it harder for water and leachates to build up. When rainwater hits trash (or the working face) it becomes leachate and must be treated in a similar manner as sanitary sewage. Leachate treatments costs money – big money: \$160,000 in the past 24 months alone. If we can divert rain runoff away from the (smaller) working face we will save money in treatment costs.

Some of the changes will help make it easier on drivers coming into the landfill, others will make life easier for our employees. Our employees are learning more about “why” we do what we do and are experiencing a lot of On-the-Job Training that has not been done in many years.

“They’ve never been told the right way to do things,” Joyce told us. However, they’ve been very receptive to learning ways to do it right.”

Landfill Site Manager Ronald Shields said that he thinks the changes are going well so far. “I’ve enjoyed working with Joyce,” Shields said. “We both have a plan, and working together, we’re implementing that plan. I think things are moving in the direction they want it to move, so I’m happy with that.”

The possibilities for the way things could work out there are endless. Can we reuse filled trash cells by burying new trash in sinkholes or between “mounds”? Can we do things in-house that we previously subcontracted to others? Can we build a more customer friendly area for our citizens and private contractors to dump their garbage. All these and more are possible and in our plans.

Our conversations are about where we plan to be five years from now and what we need to do to get there. We’re planning ahead so we understand future costs and how to avoid, minimize and/or address them. Thanks to help from Mr. Joyce and our great landfill staff, we have a vision for the landfill’s long-range success.

You could also be a part of our vision for a success future. We are actively hiring for site attendants to help residents navigate the convenience centers and maintain attractive sites. If you think you might be interested, I would encourage you to apply.

Is there something you’d like to see us change? Do you have suggestions for what we should add to our convenience centers to make your experience better? We want to know!