

County Connection for Week of 12/19/2018
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“What We’ve Learned”

The year 2018 has been a roller coaster of a year in Pittsylvania County, especially when it comes to solid waste. Over the last six months, we have made lots of changes to the way that we operate in order to save taxpayer’s money and improve service. Here’s what we’ve been working on!

SOLID WASTE ORDINANCE:

The new solid waste ordinance was officially added to the county ordinances in May. There have been several changes since it was originally approved. The board wanted to find a way to make it easier for business owners like apartment and mobile home park owners to get trash service at their locations. Instead of charging them \$120 per housing unit, which could easily surpass \$5,000 for some of these businesses, we offered them the chance to obtain a private dumpster service on location and waive that fee.

LANDFILL:

We added Saturday hours at the landfill in July, which is something that many of our residents have requested over the last year. However, these hours were underutilized. We saw 24 customers come in during these hours since August, which totals up to about \$1700 in revenue. This was not enough to break even on the hours that we operated the landfill. Because of this, we will be reevaluating these hours and deciding what to do with our policy going forward. We want our landfill to be available to the citizens, but we also don’t want to waste your money and our employee’s time.

Over the last six months, we have also replaced, repaired and updated much of our equipment at the landfill. We are spending less time repairing equipment and more time using it, making our operations more efficient.

We also changed the way that we are dumping garbage into the landfill in order to make operations more efficient, and our waste more crushable and easier for our employees to work with.

We have experienced growing pains as our contractors and residents get used to the changes, but it will be significantly better for all of us, our environment, and our wallets in the long term. This is just one of the changes that our contractors have helped us make at the landfill that will allow us to keep using the current cell of the landfill for a significantly longer period of time, saving us millions of dollars, not to mention time and headaches.

The latest change to the landfill is the acceptance of all tires for \$3 each. We hope that this will keep tires out of our green box sites and convenience centers and make it easier on our citizens to dispose of them in a way that doesn’t lead to them ending up on the side of the road or in a ditch somewhere.

CONVENIENCE CENTERS AND GREEN BOX SITES:

Most of you will have seen or heard about the changes we made at our green box sites and convenience centers across the county. This is where most of the obvious changes have happened, from the repairs and updated signage to the locked gates and attendants.

Many of the boxes and compactors at our sites were more than 20 years old, and desperately needed repairs or replacement. We are still in the process of working our way through the county sites, but we have already seen vast improvements to most of them. We intend to take better care of these boxes in the future so that they do not get into this condition again.

There are three ways that we are ensuring that our convenience centers stay clean and operational - through surveillance cameras and site attendants at our pilot sites throughout the county. We have already seen less abuse from contractors and out of county residents, particularly at our Brosville site.

We were seeing a lot of abuse from Henry County and local contractors. Since putting site attendance at that site and locking the gates at night, we have seen significantly less waste at that site from illegal users. In fact, we have seen an average reduction of nine (9) tons of trash per week – from 40 tons to 31 tons. This is exactly the purpose of these attendants and locking the gates! We are pleased that it is working there, as well as at our other pilot sites. We look forward to seeing the results at our other sites as well.

Our solid waste assistance team has been hard at work educating the public at our sites and ensuring that troublemakers know that what they are doing is wrong. In the coming year, we will be issuing more tickets to those who break our rules.

We are still seeking site attendants for some of our pilot sites. You can apply on the county website or in person at the County administration building in Chatham you are interested in becoming a part of our solid waste team.

There are still some changes to be made and we look forward to making them in the future. This will be the last time you hear from me about trash for a while. Thank you to everyone who wrote or called us about their suggestions or issues. It has been instrumental in helping us make decisions for some of the changes to our program.

Happy Holidays!