Recycle Center Report to the Community 2020

2020 was a challenging year for the Brown County Solid Waste Management District commonly known as the Recycle Center. Operations started out as planned until Covid 19 forced us to make logistical and structural modifications. Covid resulted in a significant slowdown of material intake for our operation and a depression of commodity prices for recycle materials.

Gross material intake in 2020 was 659 tons while in 2019 it was 798 tons. This resulted in a -17% decrease and significantly broke our steady tonnage increase trend since 2012. Material from business recycling is substantial for our operation. Covid business slowdowns and closings negatively impacted those numbers.

Cardboard still takes to top spot on material intake. The breakdown is:

Cardboard: 50%

Plastics: 8%

Glass: 21%

Paper Products: 11%

Metal Products: 9%

Misc.: 1%

Additionally, we took in 69 freon appliances, or 7.7 tons, for recycling in 2020.

The Recycle Center still remains a 73% taxpayer funded operation with property taxes the primary source. The remaining 27% comes from donations, trash sales and the sale of recyclable materials. Prices received for those materials are still depressed.

2020 prices are as follows:

Cardboard: $70/ton

Newspapers/magazines: $20/ton

Office paper: $25/ton

#2 clear plastic: $600/ton

#2 colored plastic: $150/ton

Clear glass: $30/ton

Colored glass: $25/ton

Aluminum: $300/ton

Scrap Metal: $135/ton

Aluminum foil: $100/ton

Books, #1 plastic (most common), #3, #4 &#7 plastics we are paid nothing on. Our operation is not like a normal business. We cannot dictate commodity market prices. They dictate to us. We are seeing some promising upward trends in commodity prices thus far in 2021.

Our downstream material flow is very legitimate. Here are what a few of your recycled products are made in to and where they go :

Cardboard: new cardboard/partition board

Major buyer: Eaton Paper Mills – Eaton,IN

Glass: fiberglass, commercial carpeting and other glass products

Mohawk Industries – Edon, NC

Plastics: plastic pellets for general manufacturing, carpet padding, new plastics

Mohawk Industries – Edon, NC

Numerous plastics manufactures such as Nypro Kanaack in AL

Paper Products: other paper products such as office paper, toilet paper, paper towels

Major buyer: Kimberly Clark – Owensboro, KY

Due to Covid we were only able to conduct one Electronics Day and one Shredding day last year. However, in that one day the public recycled 20,281 pounds of electronics plus 80 television sets. Paper shredding stood at 10,000 pounds. These are good numbers. We still charge only $20 per TV set or computer monitor. This is what our electronics vendor charges us and we do not mark it up. That equipment has to be torn down by hand into its individual components for recycling.

On a bright spot, the year brought three lucrative grant awards for us. The first was from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management in the amount of $18,500. This was a matching grant that enabled us to purchase a brand new high capacity Toyota forklift. The Recycle Center would also like to thank the Brown County Community Foundation for their generosity in awarding us two additional grants. The first was for the purchase of a late model Izuzu diesel cargo truck in the amount of $5,500.The second was a Covid grant in the amount of $908.65.

The recycled plastic benches program was and still is wildly successful. Our bench order in 2020 was for 16 benches which are now spread throughout Nashville. We have twenty more orders waiting. These benches are made from recycled plastic bottle caps and lids. The company that makes these benches. Green Tree Plastics, is located in Evansville, IN. They are the only manufacturer in the world that makes them. It takes 200 pounds of caps to make one bench so we had to come up with 3,200 pounds for the 16 benches. The businesses, government entities and citizens of Brown County have been instrumental in saving and bringing us these caps.

Again, as a result of Covid, safety concerns and budget cuts we decided to close the drive through. Covid forced us to limit our exposure to the public. Ongoing safety concerns guided this decision as well. We have had numerous “near misses” in the drive through that could have resulted in serious injury or death. With two moving forklifts in that area, it made it all the more dangerous. Additionally, without the drive through activity, our processing has realized a 75% productivity increase. Another factor in this decision was we were told to cut $60,000 from our 2021 budget. Labor costs were hit the hardest on that.

Our bagged trash service did well in 2020 with a gross intake of $4,903.50. We are proud to partner with Knights Trash on this program.

In conclusion for 2020, Two Great Minds in Nashville developed an effective new website for the Recycle Center. It’s “browncountyrecycled.org.” Please browse through it. There is a lot of detailed information on what we take, upcoming events, locations of recycle bins, hours of operation etc. Our phone number is (812) 988-0140 if there are ever any questions or concerns.