

Saskatchewan Municipal **Best Practice**

Rural Recycling Program

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

The RM of Canwood #494 is striving to adopt green practices throughout the RM. A resolution was brought to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) to have plastic grocery bags banned from use in Saskatchewan and to encourage the use of biodegradable and/or reusable bags. Council wanted to bring awareness to recycling in rural Saskatchewan and provide recycling areas which were easily accessible to all residents in order to divert some of the waste from its landfill site.

A large portion of waste that would otherwise have been disposed of with household garbage and/or burned is now being removed from the municipality and made into useful products. The recycling program will divert a large portion of waste from the landfill, thereby extending its life expectancy.

THE PROCESS

With the increased efforts to promote recycling at the local landfill, the RM took the initiative to promote recycling among its ratepayers. Council applied through the federal Gas Tax Program in March 2012 for funding to purchase recycling bins. When the funding came through, the RM purchased 16 recycle bins, and placed them at various locations in the RM. Rural residents can now dispose their unsorted recycling materials, including:

- paper (newspapers, magazines, catalogs);
- cardboard;
- tin and aluminum cans; and
- plastics (milk cartons, soft drink/water bottles, juice containers, grocery bags, other household containers and bottles).

The regional landfill is operated by the Highway 55 Waste Management Corporation, which is jointly owned by the RM of Canwood, the Village of Debden, and the Village of Canwood. The recycling program was developed along with the regional landfill.

Single-stream (or co-mingled) recycling service means no sorting of recyclables. This makes it more convenient for residents to make a commitment to recycling and protecting our environment. Promotional brochures on the program were distributed to all ratepayers, and at local businesses throughout the municipality.

Highway 55 Waste Management Corporation collects the recyclables from the drop-off locations. Material is stored at the landfill facility, compacted into bales, and then shipped to Loraas Recycle in Saskatoon. Loraas pays the corporation for the recyclable, and handles material separation and distribution to other companies.

The Operations Manager of the landfill facility estimates three to five tonnes of recyclable material are diverted from the landfill each month. As much as 60 per cent of material is kept out of the landfill, extending its life, and keeping costs down.

THE RESULTS

Recycling bins in the RM make recycling easier for RM residents, rather than having to haul recyclables to the villages of Canwood or Debden. Positive feedback from rural ratepayers and continued use of the recycling bins prove the program's success. Lake residents coming from principal residences in cities/towns were already accustomed to recycling and were happy they are able to continue their recycling efforts when they are at the lake.

It has brought awareness to residents that the RM is making an effort to save the environment. As residents become more accustomed to using the recycling program, there can be an even greater impact.

The RM's large size (approximately 26 townships) made it difficult to decide how many bins to purchase, where to place them, and how often to empty them. More bins may be needed in the future. Bins were placed along main roads, in old school yards, and in areas with denser population, such as the hamlet and lake development.

Visual awareness and continuing education of the recycling program in the RM to all ratepayers and new residents will be a challenge that will be faced each year as the program evolves.

LESSONS LEARNED

- There needs to be better identification of what can – and cannot – be placed in the recycle bins. Signage on or near the bins may be beneficial in educating consumers.
- Be prepared for the expansion of the program as residents become more aware of recycling in the area.