

Gustavus Disposal & Recycling Center (DRC) Quarterly Staff Report
Ian Barrier, DRC Manager/ Operator
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General Operations and Management

Labor

I currently have very little to report on labor since it has only been myself this last quarter. Being by myself can be difficult at times but it is working out. I have been able to take care of the majority of the tasks at the DRC without falling too far behind on anything in particular. I have had enough time to work on some oddball tasks such as processing the DRC's stash of propane cylinders with our plasma cutter, re-anchoring our baler to the concrete floor, and cleaning out our sheds of unneeded items that have been accumulating since before my time here. These are all the kinds of things that get neglected during the summer due to how busy we are and during the winter due to the snow making access difficult and burying items, leaving fall and spring as a window of opportunity for these types of tasks before the summer season officially begins. Syd Glasmann is returning May for another summer season and I'm very grateful she has kept interest in the position at the DRC. I'm planning on only having her in the labor pool for the summer to keep labor cost at a minimum. I will be keeping an eye out for any good, reliable locals that would be interested in part-time work this winter to fill the labor void when she is gone.

Equipment

I am happy to report I only had one minor breakdown this quarter which was when our 763's parking brake aka shift lock solenoid failed which left the machine unable to move. This randomly occurred one morning when I went to do some mound burial and the machine wouldn't disengage the mechanism. I had to move the shed the machine is stored under so I could lift the cab and diagnose the problem. It was a simple fix and I'm always grateful for simple repairs and procedures compared to some of our other breakdowns. Such as when the fuel pick-up tube rotted away on the 763 and required me to pull the engine to access the fuel tank to replace the tube.

Compost

This year I wanted to try something different for the compost sales. What I decided was to spread the compost sales over a greater stretch of time rather than dedicating a single day to the sales. I asked the public to drop off labeled containers on a day that we were open to the public and pick them up the next day, opening the gates between 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM; and those who were interested in gathering compost on a regular business day was aloud; I just couldn't guarantee I could assist them. This gave me enough time in the morning to fill all the containers that were dropped off the previous day before opening the gates. I was initially stressed I might be bombed the first day by customers but I'm happy to say it was a steady trickle and I wasn't overwhelmed at any time. At the time of writing this report I am still getting a small trickle of customers asking for compost but currently we have sold ~16.64 yards of compost for a total income of \$3,009 according to Trashflow, our POS software. At the end of this week I am going to allow the public to purchase more than the current limit of two cans/twelve buckets because I will need the room to stockpile next years compost. I received a lot of good feedback from the public in regards to this years compost sales. Nobody had to wait in line and folks were very happy about this fact. I think I'm going to continue having the sales done this way.

Funds for New Building

I'm happy to say the funding amount of just over \$3,000,000 for the new building was approved and this will be a major change for our operations at the DRC. Having ample room for all our equipment and a place to store waste for more than a day is huge. We will also have room for more sophisticated equipment when the time comes, such as a shredder which would be a big improvement to our operation. With a new building, half of our old building can take on the role of being a new home for our machines and tools with room to work on the equipment and organize our tools more efficiently, essentially our shop. The other half could be used for a few things, such as storage of our paper products to keep them out of the weather, or become part of the Community Chest where hardware and power tools can be stored and sold, along with other large bulky items that the Community Chest is unable to store. On May 14th there is a "Kick-off" meeting to initiate the process of awarding the city the funds for the project. I plan on attending and imagine I will have plenty to learn.

Community Clean Up

Breanna Lawson at the GCC hosted/organized the Community Clean Up this year on May 4th and the event went smoothly. Katy Dighton volunteered to help during the event and her help was much appreciated. I mainly had her run the baler while I mainly ran the front to keep the flow of traffic moving, but she pitched in wherever she could and made the day so much easier. The community was able to round up quite a bit of trash and recycling from around town including large pieces of scrap metal from various locations such as the ditches. In total the community brought in 196 pounds of non-recyclables and 471 pounds of recyclables.

Shipping

Since I have been the only operator this quarter I have been loading shipping containers on my own which has been relatively challenging and I have had to become creative in loading the containers. Shipping out light materials is relatively easy but heavier bales such as cardboard and mixed paper can be difficult due to the fact we have to double stack the bales and move them towards the back of the container with a pallet jack, and moving anything over 1800 pounds proves difficult alongside the tight tolerances of the container which means it's almost a precision process. A few things that makes this job easier is to tilt the container downwards so gravity can assist with moving the bales and I have to make sure alignment is right. When things aren't quite in the right position I have to use the Porta Power (a type of hydraulic ram) to cram the bales to the walls of the container; my other method has been to use a wooden beam on the bottom of the bales and push against it with the A770 Bobcat and cram them into position, and it works surprisingly well. Another thing that is a relatively new procedure at the DRC is utilizing high top containers to the fullest. In the past we would never stack bales three high in the high tops due to the difficulty loading the containers with very little headroom. We have to remove two pallets from the bales to make the height work out. On my last paper shipment I was given a high top container and decided to try it out to make our shipment more efficient. I was able to make it work and was able to ship out more than usual although it was quite hard and was a split second decision half way through, my execution could have been better but I proved to myself it's possible to do. This week I am shipping out aluminum cans with a high top container and will be my second attempt at filling the container all the way. A typical container will fit sixteen bales of recyclables with two layers of eight bales. The high top containers are capable of fitting twenty-four bales of recyclables with three layers of eight. I'm going to utilize the high top containers as much as possible from here on and I will be curious how it affects our overall operation budget, since it costs the same as a standard height container to ship.

My First Inspection

My first inspection as manager/operator of the DRC is scheduled for May 15th by Zack Gianotti of ADEC and I'm excited for his visit and what feedback he may have. Currently the DRC gets a very good score when inspected and I hope to continue the trend and get a high score.

Water Sampling

In April I preformed my first round of water sampling on my own. It was a straight forward task. I have not received the test results at this time. Our permit with ADEC determines how often we take water samples and we currently send our samples to Admiralty Enviromental in Juneau and they test the pH, conductivity, and metals including arsenic, lead and mercury. Out of our four wells two of them were dry and I was unable to pull samples, I am hopeful to get them replaced soon when we expand the landfill. I plan on talking to Zack Gianotti about the best location to place the new wells; as was recommended by Paul Berry.

DRC's page on the City's Website

I have had several people in the community come to the DRC confused about our hours of operations and the difference between our summer and winter schedule. Even though I feel it is pretty clear when the correct link "Hours of Operation" is clicked folks seem to miss read the information. I also have had some folks mention we need to clarify what we can and can't accept along with what is free, with pictures of the items. Although this information is available in a document on the website I feel many don't want to download a separate document to scroll through. Over the summer if I can find the time I hope to draft up some proposed changes to our website to make it clearer, more user friendly, and modern. I think the best approach would be to post our summer and winter hours at the top of the overview page along with a detailed list of the items we accept, do not accept, what is free, and how they are categorized with pictures of the items in their category. Then moving all PDF documents into it's own page that can be visited if folks desire to learn more. Statistically speaking most people who browse a web page only spend ten to twenty seconds looking for the information they seek and leave if they cannot find it in that time frame.

Community Chest

The community was short staffed late winter and early spring this year since most of the usual volunteers were traveling during this time. They have reported to me that many volunteers have returned just in time for summer and are happy to have the additional help. I currently cannot recall all the current volunteers, so I apologize for not listing them in this report. In April I had a few volunteers come to me with concerns with folks dumping items of little to no value and often these "donations" would contain stray trash; like cleaning out a garage for example. Having difficulty in finding a good solution we came up with the idea of having cameras at the chest with the sole intentions of spotting folks dumping items on days they were closed. I brought this idea forth to the City Administrator and Mayor and then it was brought forth to council and the idea was accepted. I haven't quite pulled the trigger and ordered security cameras yet as I wanted to have a meeting with the staff at the community chest to ensure they really want them now that the idea was approved. I know there have been at least one shipment of goods from the Community Chest to Glory Hole (or Hoonah?) this quarter and I believe Alaska Seaplanes shipped these donations at no cost.

That is all for now, thank you.
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