

Gustavus Disposal & Recycling Center (DRC) Quarterly Staff Report
Ian Barrier, DRC Manager\Operator
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My last quarterly was for the November 13th General Meeting. My next quarterly report is scheduled for the May 14th, 2024 General Meeting.

General Operations and Management

Labor

During my last quarter I had one individual apply for the temporary position and they worked part time for the months of December and January. It was very helpful having somebody around to help out and they seemed to enjoy the variety of tasks at the Disposal & Recycling Center. The individual ended up leaving the state of Alaska on short notice due to personal reasons. This once again leaves me solo to run the Disposal & Recycling Center which is fine during the winter as the flow of incoming materials is very slow. Even being by myself I have the ability and time to keep the operation running smoothly while catching up on odd ball tasks and repairs that are difficult to accomplish during summer and fall. I have nothing else to report on labor.

Equipment

I have managed to make some repairs to our large Cram-A-Lot baler, most notable is the ejection mechanism. Repairing the ejection mechanism required the correct thickness and size of pipe to wander its way into the DRC to be salvaged along with time to make the repair. With winter being the ideal time to make repairs. The repair involved cutting out the ejection mechanism from the baler, then cutting the hinge mechanism apart. The next step was to cut a small length of pipe and then cut this section into two halves, then positioned around the pin of the mechanism and welded together and finally welded back into the baler.

I have also preformed some essential maintenance on our glass pulverizer, replacing worn down screens and re-welding the teeth on the spinning “jaws” of the pulverizer. This is a part that needs this treatment every year to remain functional. The welds act as a wear surface against the glass and when they are worn through the teeth are next to wear which causes them to shrink; reducing the efficiency of the pulverizer and causing the machine to clog more frequently. If left in this state for too long the machine will not function and continually clog when attempting to crush glass.

Annual Reports\Data Reports

I have not compiled an annual report at this time.

My Trip to Seattle

During the first week of December 2023 I had to personally fly down to Seattle to remove a radioactive object that was located in a scrap metal bale that was in one of our scrap metal shipments and was being held at AML shipping yard. I flew down to Seattle prepared with various tools including crow bars, brooms, and hammers with the intentions of dissecting the bale.

Once I arrived in AML’s shipping yard I had to check into there office and was escorted to the bale in question. I laid down a tarp to catch debris and setup a large cargo box to hold objects that were not suspect. I knew generally where to look for the object as its general location was marked with spray paint by a radiation specialist who previously scanned the bale. I ripped out various objects and laid out anything suspicious on the tarp. Within 30 minutes of digging I found an old RPM gauge from an old piece of equipment or aircraft and set it aside to wait for the radiation specialist to arrive.

Once the radiation specialist arrived he began to scan the objects I had laid out and his tool was immediately drawn to the gauge and it was concluded to be our offending object. The object posed no danger and was safe to handle with nothing more then latex gloves. We then scanned the bale again

and the debris. We then realized some of the radon paint flaked off the gauge and was scattered among the debris. We spent another hour removing every bit of this contaminated material and placing it into another cargo box along with the pallet which was contaminated with paint flakes along with the tarp and the offending object. I had to through away a small crow bar I brought with me as it appeared to be radioactive as well. Everything was scanned again including me and it was concluded to be safe and clean. We then reloaded the scrap metal bale and other loose scrap objects back into the shipping container and my mission at AML was considered complete.

Another fun activity I did when I was in Seattle was to visit Seattle Iron & Metal's facility. This was incredibly exciting and the sheer scale of the operation was impressive. I was given a short tour of the operation and learned about the different grades of materials and there standards, the equipment used for processing and sorting, and where some of the material goes. For example, some ferrous materials end up shredded and then sold to a local rebar manufacture in Seattle which possibly makes it back to Alaska and used to construct the foundations for our homes. In theory this means something you recycled last year could end up in you home the next year. Another fun fact I learned is Seattle Iron & Metals has been in operation for over 100 years. The visit to the facility gave me insight on how to better process our materials to get the best value possible from them.

Community Chest

The Community Chest has continued its usual operations with the help of our volunteers which includes Kate Boesser, Annie Mackovjak, Vikki Bender, Judy Hardy, Maggie O'Brien, Mary Williams, Becky King, Maribeth Jarvis, Connie Darnell, Angie Swortzel and possibly others I could have miss. I have continued to help purge old hardware and objects that have little value or minimal use that may be taking up valuable space at the chest and by next summer the place should be cleaned up nicely. These are things like old toilets, fluorescent lighting, door handles, and obsolete tools. Otherwise not much outside of usual business has occurred at the Community Chest.

Capital Projects

Landfill Expansion

During the last CIP work session I submitted a scoping document for expanding the landfill to get the ball rolling on expanding the fenced in area where we place our bales of solid waste. The project is still in the planning phase and represents a big change for the Disposal & Recycling Center but is needed to ensure we have enough space to deposit waste for many years to come. The project involves installing new fencing and an access gate along with rerouting the drainage ditch that is located on same land the DRC is located on, and planting of new trees to camouflage the expanded area. I would also like to install new ground water monitoring wells during this time as equipment will already be present at the DRC. Until the project is approved through council I have nothing more to add on the expansion.

New Building

The community has frequently asked me about the status of the new building and I wanted to quickly address that question in my report. The new building CIP project has made it onto the CDS list, (Congressionally Designated Spending) but the bill that funds the project and others has not been approved at this time and the City waits patiently for good news related to this.

This concludes my report and feel free to reach out with any questions, thank you.

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