

To: Delweir Daily Register

From: Fayette County Solid Waste
Management Commission

Re: Recycling Now + Then

Fax: 1-319-283-3268

Please print in your next
edition.

Thank you!

Recycling Then and Now

The following is a summary and synopsis of the recycling program within Fayette County. As with any issue or subject, it is vital to understand the history of the program and its progression to the present time.

Prior to 1982, the management of solid waste was the primary responsibility of each city, municipality, or individuals. These responsibilities were difficult to provide or maintain in a safe or sanitary manner. In 1982, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 28E of the Code of Iowa, the municipalities of Fayette County created the Fayette County Solid Waste Management Commission.

The purpose of the agreement is to create a Fayette County Solid Waste Management Commission. The Commission is established for the purpose of planning, developing, operating, and maintaining solid waste facilities for and on behalf of the municipalities who are the parties of this agreement to provide solid waste management in Fayette County, Iowa.

The members of the "Commission" are the cities of Arlington, Clermont, Elgin, Fayette, Hawkeye, Maynard, Oelwein, Randalia, St. Lucas, Wadena, Waucoma, Westgate, West Union, and the County of Fayette.

It is important to note that the management of solid waste **IS NOT** the County's program, but the program of the Fayette County Solid Waste Commission. The County of Fayette is simply a voting member along with all other members.

In 1987, the Iowa State Legislature passed the Ground Water Protection Act. A significant portion of this law included the waste reduction mandates for the state. This mandate, per Iowa Code 455, mandated that solid waste entities shall reduce waste volume by 25% by July 1, 1994 and 50% by July 1, 2000 (the Code has since been altered to require only 25% to current date).

In 1990, the Fayette County Solid Waste Management Commission implemented the Recycling Program to begin the journey of meeting these mandated reductions. It was decided to use a community drop box system as the means of collection. This decision was based on the rural nature and relatively small community size of Fayette County. Each community decides where the boxes are placed within their community. It seems to work best and have the least amount of non-recyclable trash when they are placed in highly visible locations. Again, it is important to note that the recycling portion of the system is that of the members of the Solid Waste Commission and **NOT** the County of Fayette. The boxes are hauled to the Recycling Center, located near the Prairie View Care Facility, where they are emptied, sorted, and processed for sale.

The fees for operating the recycling program were and remain \$1 per capita, per month or \$12 per person, per year. The fiscal needs to operate are much higher but are augmented by the sales of the processed materials. These fees are due and payable to the Solid Waste Commission from the member communities. Most communities attach the fee to the citizen's water bills or other collections they may procure from their residents. The County pays their required share through the rural services tax fund. There are not boxes located in the rural portions of the county, but these residents regularly bring their recyclables to a community and likely spend dollars at local retailers in town. Incidentally, the building site and initial start-up equipment to process the recyclables were provided by Fayette County and over \$250,000 in grants obtained through the crafting of the Fayette County Conservation Board.

The program has been highly successful and has achieved one of the highest reduction rates in the state at 51.53%. Nothing in the 28E prohibits any municipality from expanding on a recycling program. For example, the City of Oelwein offered a curbside option to its residents for an additional fee. The current situation in Oelwein, evidently, is that the curbside fee and system is considered the program for the City. This is a decision made by the City of Oelwein and not the Fayette County Solid Waste Commission. That being stated, it is the stance of the Commission that the roll off box system is status quo and the fees agreed to by the municipality are still in place.

The Oelwein City Council recently moved and asked the Commission to remove the boxes from the City. The Commission has removed them, pending further discussion with the Council. It is understood that the main concern is the inordinate amount of trash that is being dumped at the box locations. Every town has some of that as well. This issue is generally tempered by the use of cameras or a concerted effort to curtail such illegal activity by local law enforcement.

A community that decides to remove themselves from any portion of program voted upon and approved by the Solid Waste Commission is not entitled to the balance of services provided by the Commission. In the event of a withdrawal of a municipality from the Commission, that municipality would carry its own responsibility for waste disposal, facilities, comprehensive plans, and other responsibilities required by state law.

The Fayette County Solid Waste Management Commission is committed to the recycling and waste reduction program within Fayette County and embraces its partnership with all member communities.

Respectfully submitted,
Fayette County Solid Waste Management Commission