



WEST MICHIGAN  
**STRATEGIC**  
**ALLIANCE**



Recycling Resource Study  
of West Michigan  
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## Introduction

The West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA) was formally organized in June 2000 by community leaders from the greater Grand Rapids, Holland and Muskegon areas concerned about the effects of rapid population growth on the region's quality of life. Since then the organization has grown to represent members from Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa counties and focuses on promoting environmental, economic, and social development in West Michigan. More information about the WMSA and its partners is available at [www.wm-alliance.org](http://www.wm-alliance.org).

The focus on recycling in West Michigan was researched because it intersects with all three aspects of environmental, social, and economic development. Improving West Michigan's recycling infrastructure makes local manufacturers more competitive, reduces the amount of waste entering landfills, and promote new businesses that collect, sort, distribute, or use recycled material in their products.

To improve recycling in the region it is important to understand West Michigan's existing recycling infrastructure. This report examines the availability of recycling services in different cities throughout West Michigan. Information was obtained through interviews with business, government, and community leaders and focuses on the availability of curbside recycling to city residents, whether available curbside programs are universal or contracted individually, and the number of drop off facilities available. The paper also describes gaps in the region's current recycling infrastructure, examines best practices from this region and elsewhere, and offers recommendations for improving recycling operations.

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## Executive Summary

Almost all residents living in cities in West Michigan have access to curbside recycling. Most residents contract service individually through a private waste hauler that operates in their area. Some cities run universal curbside recycling programs which are available to all residents. Universal programs are contracted by local governments and usually funded with tax revenue, though some cities incorporate user fees or other strategies to generate funds. Although statistical data is hard to come by, it is generally believed that municipal run programs have a higher capture rate of recycled material than areas where residents contract services individually.

Many residents in West Michigan also have access to drop-off facilities that accept a variety of material to be recycled. These facilities are usually located in less densely populated areas of the region as a substitute for curbside collection programs which, because of the low population and/or long distance to the nearest recycling center, are too expensive to operate.

Certain items are difficult to recycle, or even safely dispose of, regardless of the programs available to residents. Materials such as batteries, tires, hazardous waste, electronics, appliances, or motor oil are collected for recycling by only a fraction of private waste haulers contacted for interviews. Most universal programs also did not collect these items at curb-side. Some areas had special drop-off facilities to collect these materials while other areas offered special clean up days, run once or twice a year, to keep these materials out of landfills.

One problem affecting the collection of information for this report was the lack of quantitative data available on current recycling in the region. Most recycling in West Michigan is collected by private companies. Many smaller companies simply do not have the ability or inclination to track the volume of material collected for recycling. Larger companies consider the information to be proprietary and often refuse to share it. Without this data it was difficult to measure capture rates in most areas or to determine the number of people that participate in recycling.

It was also difficult to connect with many private waste haulers in the region resulting in gaps in the information about their operations. Every effort was made to present accurate information about the types of materials accepted for recycling by private companies but some information, such as lists of material accepted by Allied Waste, were taken from general websites or other sources and may vary slightly depending on where services are contracted. In other cases the missing information was simply recorded as N/A.

Because data on the volume of solid waste recycled in each county was unavailable, the various recycling activities available were evaluated for each county. This report examines the availability of curbside recycling in cities, whether these recycling programs are universal or contracted individually, and the number of major drop-off facilities located throughout each county.

## Section I: County Profiles

West Michigan is comprised of eight counties (Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa), each of which was evaluated based on a set criteria. This information was used to develop an outline of recycling resources available to residents in each county, with a focus on programs available in cities. Criteria for evaluating each county included:

- **Population living in cities** - Recycling programs function on an economy of scale, meaning that programs work better in areas where many people have access to them. For this reason, focus was given to evaluating cities rather than rural areas.
- **Availability of curbside recycling** - It is generally agreed that curbside recycling programs have better results than drop-off facilities because they are more convenient to residents. Availability of curbside recycling is essential for improving recycling capture rates.
- **Municipal run programs** - Just as curbside recycling has higher capture rates than drop-off facilities, universal curbside collection programs have better capture rates than areas where residents' contract services individually.
- **Clean-up days** - Presently, often run once or twice a year by cities or counties, residents are given the opportunity to recycle or safely dispose of material not normally accepted in their regular service. Accepted items often include motor oil, yard waste, electronics and appliances, or household hazardous waste.
- **Drop-off facilities** - The availability of drop-off facilities, especially in areas too rural to accommodate curbside collection programs, is a good indication of a county's dedication to recycling. Many local government officials interviewed feel the facilities are well used.

## ALLEGAN COUNTY

### Overview:

Allegan County has a population of 112,761, and offers public recycling services available in four cities and sixteen townships. All of their programs are run through contracts with private waste haulers, with most contracts going to Allied Waste.

County officials are very active in promoting recycling in Allegan County. The county allows local governments to raise money for recycling by adding a twenty-five dollar surcharge to residents' taxes. This money is held in trust by the county to be applied towards a local recycling program. Local governments can choose their own programs to implement (common choices are curbside collection, drop-off facilities, or hazardous waste disposal days) and the county assists with contract negotiation, handles much of the administrative and financial details, and provides oversight and advice. The county feels this dedicated assistance has made it easier for local governments to start recycling programs and cite the twenty active programs in the county as evidence that their strategy is effective.

Allegan County also operates a very well organized website with recycling information. (<http://www.allegancounty.org/Government/HD/EH/Recycling.asp?pt>) The site includes links to each individual city and township offering recycling services, has a detailed list of materials accepted and sorting procedures for each location, and has information on hazardous waste and electronics disposal. There is also a link available for educators, which links them to sites with instructional materials on recycling and environmental conservation for the classroom.

County officials hope that improving environmental awareness among local children will help increase recycling in the future.

### Private Waste Haulers in Cities of Allegan County:

Allied Waste was reported to be the predominant waste hauler in Allegan County, running most universal recycling programs in the area.

### Services in Cities of Allegan County:

City	Population	City Run Curb-side Recycling Program	Residents Contract with Private Hauler for Curb-side Recycling	Clean-up Days	Waste Haulers in Area
Allegan	4,838	Yes, contracted with Allied Waste	No	N/A	Allied
Douglas	2,377	Yes, contracted with Allied Waste	No	N/A	Allied
Otsego	3,933	Yes, contracted with Allied Waste	No	N/A	Allied
Plainwell	3,933	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Saugatuck	1,065	No	Yes	N/A	N/A
Wayland	3,939	Yes, contracted with Allied Waste	No	N/A	Allied

**Drop-Off Facilities in Allegan County:**

Allegan County has several drop off facilities available to residents. The county also has information available on its website about disposal of hazardous waste and electronics.

Location	Address	Materials Accepted for Recycling
Allegan Township	3037 I 18 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Casco Township	69 <sup>th</sup> St, ¼ mile North of 103 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1&2
Cheshire Township	Transfer Station at 4120 106 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Dorr Township	4196 18 <sup>th</sup> Street	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Hopkins Township	N. Franklin Street	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Manlius Township	130 <sup>th</sup> Ave, between 57 <sup>th</sup> and 58 <sup>th</sup> Street	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Martin Township (2 locations)	10 <sup>th</sup> Street (south of light) Weicks Food Town, 124 <sup>th</sup> St.	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Monterey Township	Township Hall, 130 <sup>th</sup> Ave. and 30 <sup>th</sup> Street	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Valley Township	2054 M-40	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7
Wayland Township	Township Hall, 129 <sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bradley	Paper, Paperboard, Kitchen Metal, Glass (clear, green and brown), Batteries, Plastic 1-7

## BARRY COUNTY

### Overview:

Barry County has the second smallest population in West Michigan with 59,188 residents; the majority of whom live in rural villages or townships. Its sparse population makes it difficult to establish recycling programs in the County. The City of Hastings, with a population of 7,095, has a municipal run curbside collection program. The city grants exclusive contracts to Waste Management and Les's Waste Disposal who, as part of their contracts, must provide curbside recycling services to city residents.

Community leaders in more rural areas have been trying to develop new recycling programs using the fee for service program authorized by Barry County officials. This program, authorized through Michigan's PA7 of 1967, which allows counties to enact the program and then municipalities to charge a fee of up to \$25 per resident per year for recycling services. Under its most current amendment the surcharge may be between \$25 and \$50 if approved by a vote of municipal residents.

Despite these measures, developing rural recycling programs is still largely unsuccessful. Bids from private waste haulers to provide recycling services have been too high, with most companies citing the distance to the nearest processing center as the reason. Some townships offer drop-off locations for recycling, but the distance to a processing center and rising fuel costs have deterred many of them as well.

Additionally, some officials in this area state they are becoming tired of sorting material not properly sorted by residents. Despite these setbacks, there are still efforts in the region to promote recycling by government and community leaders to expand recycling in the county.

### Private Waste Haulers in Cities of Barry County:

Les's Sanitation Service and Waste Management are currently the only two service providers with contracts to operate in the City of Hastings.

### Materials accepted by waste haulers in the City of Hastings

Product	Waste Management	Les's Sanitation Service
Paper	Yes	N/A
Plastic	Yes	N/A
Glass (clear)	Yes	N/A
Metal Cans	Yes	N/A
Appliances	No	N/A
Tires	No	N/A
Motor Oil	No	N/A

*\*Other haulers in the county include Jim's Pickup Service, Green Valley Disposal Service, Sherrodd's Refuse Service, Sunny Bay Disposal, Republic Waste Services, and Allied Waste Services*

**Services in Cities of Barry County:**

City	Population	City Run Curb-side Recycling Program	Residents can Contract with Private Hauler for Curb-side Recycling	Clean-up Days	Waste Haulers in Area
Hastings	7,095	Yes	No	N/A	Les's Sanitation Service, WM

**Clean-up Days**

Barry County runs two county wide clean-up days each year, in the spring and fall. The events take place at the Barry County fair grounds and give residents a chance to safely dispose of household hazardous waste, used tires, motor oil, and excess medications. The county contracts with private companies to recycle the tires and motor oil while the chemicals and medications are disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

**Drop-Off Facilities in Barry County:**

Facility Name	Address	Materials Accepted for Recycling
City of Hastings Transfer Station	East State Street, just south of Industrial Incubator	Newspaper; Commingled clear, green, and brown glass; Aluminum, metal, and tin cans; Plastic beverage containers; Commingled plastic #1 and #2
Barry County Christian School	2999 McKeown Road (corner of M-79 and McKeown)	Newspaper
Barry Township Transfer Station	155 E. Orchard Street Delton (Township Hall)	Newspaper; Plastic
Hope Township Recycling Station	5463 S. M-43 Highway, Hastings (Township Hall)	Newspaper; Clear & colored glass; Plastic
Barry, Hope & Johnstown Township Transfer Station	Osborne Road, west of Banfield	Glass; Tin; Metal; Plastic
Orangeville Township Transfer Station	7350 Lindsey Road., Orangeville (New Township Hall)	Newspaper; Magazines, Junk mail, Cardboard; box-board, Styrofoam, Glass, Kitchen Metals; Plastic; Appliances
Prairieville Township Transfer Station	10115 S. Norris Road, Delton	Newspaper; Cardboard; Box-board; Clear Glass, Plastic
Yankee Springs Transfer Station	248 N. Briggs Road., Middleville	Newspaper; Magazines; Junk mail; Cardboard; Clear glass; Plastic
Barry County Household Hazardous Waste Collection	Barry Expo Center, 1350 N. M-37, Hastings	Oil based paints; Household batteries, aerosol cans, pharmaceuticals, mercury products, fluorescent lights, pesticides, and household chemicals; Automotive liquids (except oil); *Tires (spring only); *Electronics (fall only)

\*Indicates fee for collection

## IONIA COUNTY

### Overview:

Ionia County has a population of 64,053 people. More than one quarter of county residents (27.6%) live in the three cities of Belding, Ionia and Portland; with populations of 5,990, 7,900 and 3,789 respectively. These cities all have well established recycling programs. Granger Waste has exclusive waste disposal contracts in the cities of Ionia and Portland. In Ionia, the company offers curbside recycling to all residents as part of its municipal contract. Residents of Portland\* have the option of paying an extra .75 cents each month for recycling but this fee allows them access to a drop-off location rather than curbside collection. Residents of Belding\*\* can choose from four major waste haulers to contract with individually, all with curbside recycling options.

### Private Waste Haulers in Cities of Ionia County:

Material Collected	Granger	Allied Waste	Waste Management
Paper	N/A	Yes	Yes
Cardboard	N/A	Yes	Yes
Plastic	N/A	Yes	Yes
Glass	N/A	Yes	Yes
Kitchen Metal	N/A	Yes	Yes
Yard Waste	N/A	No	No
Motor Oil	N/A	No	No
Appliances	N/A	\$\$	No

### Services in Cities of Ionia County:

City	Population	City Run Curbside Recycling Program	Residents can Contract with Private Hauler for Curbside Recycling	Clean-up Days	Waste Haulers in Area
Ionia	10,900	Yes, contracted through Granger	No	Spring Clean	Granger
Portland	3,789	No*	No	Spring Clean April 24-25 <sup>th</sup> , Hazardous Waste Disposal day May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Granger
Belding	5,990	No	Yes	Spring Clean	Allied Waste, Waste Management, Sidney's Disposal Service, Green Valley Disposal

\*The City of Portland has an exclusive contract with Granger to provide waste disposal for city residents but recycling must be taken to a drop-off facility rather than being collected curbside.

\*\*The City of Belding used to subsidize 50% of residents cost to purchase recycling through one of the waste haulers in the area but it was decided they could no longer afford to maintain this subsidy and the Spring Clean-Up program together. Residents preferred to keep the Spring Clean and forfeit the subsidy.

### Drop-Off Facilities in Ionia County:

Requests to Ionia County officials for information on drop-off facilities were not responded too.

## KENT COUNTY

### Overview:

Kent County has a well-established recycling infrastructure but can still improve its available services, especially outside the City of Grand Rapids. With nine cities and a total population of over 600,000 residents, Kent County is the fourth largest population center in the state. This population demographic lends itself to recycling since recycling programs function on an economy of scale and work best in urban areas.

The city-run curbside collection program in Grand Rapids is particularly successful. The program services all Grand Rapids residents living in single or multi-family homes. Participating residents are allocated free disposal bins for recycling and material is collected on a bi-weekly basis. The city currently recycles 16,000 – 18,000 tons of trash per year and is planning to expand their capture rates by offering larger bins to residents. Kent County is building a new, single stream recycling center, which the city will participate in. Kent County officials estimate the new program will increase capture rates to 30,000 tons per year within three-years.

Kent County is also home to West Michigan’s only Waste to Energy (WTE) facility. Located in Grand Rapids, the facility receives residential waste and incinerates it to produce electricity. The facility is particularly effective because Kent County uses flow control policies to promote the program. These rules specify all residential waste generated in East Grand Rapids, Grandville, Grand Rapids, Kentwood, Walker and Wyoming that is capable of being incinerated must be taken to the WTE facility rather than a landfill, even though disposal at the WTE facility is more expensive.

Despite these examples of progressive policy towards recycling, there may be room for improvement. Of the nine cities located in the county, only two offer universal curbside recycling programs. The rest of the cities, as well as the townships and villages, rely on private waste haulers to provide recycling services, where available, on a subscription basis. Many community and business leaders would also like to see the county go further to support businesses that use recycled material in their products.

### Private Waste Haulers in Cities of Kent County:

Material	Waste Management (WM)	Allied	Herringtons	Arrow Waste	Advanced Waste Disposal	Duncan
Paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Corrugated Cardboard	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	N/A	No
Plastic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Glass (clear)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Glass (colored)	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	N/A	No
Metal Cans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
Appliances	No	\$\$	\$\$	No	N/A	No
Tires	No	No	No	No	N/A	No
Motor Oil	No	No	No	No	N/A	No

**Services in Cities of Kent County:**

City	Population	City Run Curbside Recycling Program	Residents can Contract with Private Hauler for Curbside Recycling	Clean-up Days	Waste Haulers in Area
Cedar Springs	3,112	No*	Yes	Earth Day	Duncan, Allied, WM**
East Grand Rapids	10,764	No	Yes	Spring Clean	Advanced Disposal, Arrowwaste, Ed's Rubbish Removal, Waste Management
Grand Rapids	193,083	Yes	No	N/A	N/A
Grandville	16,846	No	Yes	Spring Clean/ Fall Leaf Collection	Allied, WM, Arrow Waste
Kentwood	48,000	No	Yes	No reply	Bob's Disposal, Knight Transfer, Allied, Advanced Disposal, WM
Lowell	4,031	Yes, contracted with Allied Waste	No	No	No reply
Rockford	5,187	No	Yes	Spring Clean	Allied, WM, Herringtons
Walker	22,000	No	Yes	No	WM, Allied, Arrowwaste, Pot Luck, Green Valley, Red Creek, Duncan
Wyoming	70,000	No	Yes	No	List Pending

\*Cedar Springs does not offer a city-run program but does have a non-exclusive, preferential agreement with Duncan Disposal

\*\*Waste Management and Allied Waste do not offer recycling in Cedar Springs.

**Drop-Off Facilities in Kent County:**

Kent County maintains three facilities to collect post consumer products for recycling. The South Kent landfill accepts limited items for drop-off by residents as well. Along with these facilities the county also provides several drop-off sites for batteries and household hazardous material. The following websites offer more information on battery and hazardous waste drop:

<http://www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/PublicWorks/Guide/Batteries.htm#household>

[http://www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/PublicWorks/recycle\\_household.htm](http://www.accesskent.com/YourGovernment/PublicWorks/recycle_household.htm)

<http://www.accesskent.com/recycle>

<http://www.accesskent.com/hhw>

<http://www.accesskent.com/wasteguide>

Facility Name	Address	Phone Number	Materials Accepted for Recycling
North Kent Transfer Station	2908 10 Mile Road Rockford, MI 49341	(616) 866-5070	Paper, Cardboard, Glass, Metal, Plastic, Electronics, Appliances (\$\$), Tires* (\$\$), Propane Tanks (\$\$)
Kentwood Recycling Center	5068 Breton Road Kentwood, MI 49508	(616) 336-2570	Paper, Cardboard, Glass, Metal, Plastic
South Kent Landfill	300 100 <sup>th</sup> Street SW Byron Center, MI 49315	(616) 877-4092	Electronics, Appliances (\$\$), Tires (\$\$), Propane Tanks (\$\$)

\*Tires collected at all stations are sent to a private company that recycles them into fuel.

## MONTCALM COUNTY

### Overview:

Of the three cities in Montcalm County, only Greenville offers universal curbside recycling to residents. Carson City and Stanton, as well as several smaller townships, are serviced by a unique moving recovery facility. Operated through a partnership between the Montcalm County and Michigan State University, the facility travels to different cities and townships on a set weekly schedule to collect recyclable material from residents. Greenville's universal curbside collection program is serviced through an exclusive contract with Waste Management.

### Materials collected by Waste Management in Greenville

Product	Waste Management (WM)
Paper	Yes
Plastic	Yes
Glass (clear)	Yes
Metal Cans	Yes
Appliances	No
Tires	No
Motor Oil	No

### Services in Cities of Montcalm County:

City	Population	City Run Curbside Recycling Program	Residents can Contract with Private Hauler for Curbside Recycling	Clean-up Days*	Waste Haulers in Area
Carson City	1,190	No	No	No	N/A
Greenville	7,900	Yes, contracted through WM	No	Spring/Fall	Waste Management
Stanton	1,508	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*In addition to any clean-up days run by individual cities, the County of Montcalm also runs a house hold hazardous waste clean-up day on April 25<sup>th</sup> of each year.

### Drop-Off Facilities and schedule in Montcalm County:

The drop-off facilities listed here are part of Montcalm County and Michigan State University's mobile recovery center, not permanent fixtures. Residents may drop-off material to be recycled during the days and hours specified. To verify the schedule or to view items accepted visit: <http://www.montcalm.org/recycling.asp>.

Location	Days Available each Month	Hours Available	Address
Eureka Township	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	10am-4pm	9481 Jordan Road
Montcalm Township	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	10am-4pm	1880 S. Greenville Road
Howard City	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> Saturday	10am-4pm 9am-3pm	125 E. Shaw Street
Sheridan	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10am-4pm	Corner of M-66 and Evergreen
Lakeview	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	10am-4pm	9800 N. Youngmans Road
Stanton	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday	9am-3pm	Corner of Walnut and Camburn

## MUSKEGON COUNTY

### Overview:

Muskegon County is home to several forward thinking businesses and community groups dedicated to promoting a more sustainable living and working environment in the area. One group in particular, the Muskegon Area Sustainability Coalition, has already commissioned a baseline study of recycling in Muskegon County, which was completed by the Woods Consulting Group. This in-depth study looked extensively at recycling in the area. Much of the following information for Muskegon County was directly from their findings.

At almost 175,000 residents, the county is the third most populated in West Michigan and a large proportion of those people reside in urban areas. This combination of higher population densities and progressive policies has made it possible to establish several successful recycling programs in the county. Currently the cities of Muskegon and Roosevelt Park have universal curbside collection programs for garbage and recycling and the majority of residents in all cities of Muskegon County have the option to contract curbside recycling services through a private waste hauler. Unlike Kent County, however, most waste haulers in Muskegon take their recyclables to the CRS facility, operated by Allied Waste, rather than a government operated facility.

### Private Waste Haulers in Cities of Muskegon County:

Private waste haulers collect the majority of garbage and recycling in Muskegon County. This list represents the major waste hauling companies identified in the Woods Consulting Report on Recycling in Muskegon County. Information on city services and transfer stations was taken from the same report.

Product	Allied	Ames	Kuerth's	RMS	Waste Management
Paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cardboard	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plastic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Glass	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Metal Cans	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Appliances	\$\$	\$\$	\$\$	No	No
Tires	No	No	No	Yes, if cut	No
Motor Oil	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

### Services in Cities of Muskegon County:

City	Population	City Run Curbside Recycling Program	Residents can Contract with Private Hauler for Curbside Recycling	Waste Haulers in Area
Muskegon	39,608	No (updated 8/20/09)	No	Allied
Muskegon Heights*	12,049	No	No	Allied
Muskegon Township**	17,737	Partial	Partial	Multiple Haulers
Norton Shores	22,527	No	Yes	Multiple Haulers
North Muskegon	4,031	No	Yes	Multiple Haulers
Roosevelt Park	3,890	Yes, contracted with RMS	No	RMS

\*Muskegon Heights currently contracts with a single waste hauler that collects all waste in the city. Under the current contract the hauler does not collect material for recycling, leaving residents little option for curb-side service. The city is thinking of adding recycling to the next contract but a decision is still pending.

*\*\*Muskegon Township provides some residents with waste collection services; however, most contract with a private hauler.*

**Drop-Off Facilities in Muskegon County:**

Location	Waste Collection	Recycling Services
Cedar Creek	Waste Only	N/A
Dalton	Waste & Recycling	Paper, Metals, Plastics, Organics, Others
Fruitland	Waste & Recycling	Glass, Plastic, Paper, Corrugated, Waste Oil, Metal, Tires, Others
Holton	Separate Transfer Station for Recycling	Full Range of Items
Muskegon	Waste Only	N/A
Whitehall	Waste & Recycling	Full range, Includes Waste oil and Appliances

## NEWAYGO COUNTY

### Overview:

Newaygo is the least populated county in West Michigan and has only four cities. These cities also have small populations, none of which has over 5,000 residents. Fremont and the City of Newaygo run city wide garbage disposal programs through exclusive contracts with Cartwright Waste Disposal and A-Waste Disposal Services respectively. Both companies offer curbside recycling as part of their contracts. Residents can also take recyclables to several drop-off facilities throughout the county. Local officials feel these drop-off facilities are well utilized.

An interesting note for Newaygo County is that all of the drop-off facilities are run by a local nonprofit group rather than the county. Recycling for Newaygo County (<http://www.recyclingfornewaygocounty.org/index.php?pagesKey=408>) runs seven drop-off facilities in the county and funds its operations through dues and donations, as well as the sale of reprocessed material. The group also promotes the establishment of businesses in the county that use recycled material in their products. Current low commodity costs for reprocessed material has made financing their operation more difficult and also forced them to reduce the variety of products they accept. The group also tracks the amount of material they collect, making them a good source of information on participation rates. Recycling for Newaygo County can be reached at (231) 924-5822.

### Private Waste Haulers in Cities of Newaygo County:

The cities of Newaygo and Fremont have exclusive contracts with for waste disposal and curbside recycling collection with A-Waste and Cartwright Disposal respectively. In Grant and White Cloud city officials reported that A-Waste serviced the majority of residents, though they did not have exclusive contracts with either city.

### Services in Cities of Newaygo County:

City	Population	City Run Curbside Recycling Program	Residents can Contract with Private Hauler for Curbside Recycling	Clean-up Days	Waste Haulers in Area
Newaygo (1)	1,600	Yes, contracted though A-Waste	No	Spring and fall brush collection	A-Waste
Fremont (2)	4,500	Yes, contracted through Cartwright	No	No, stickers available for large items	Cartwright
Grant (3)	900	No	No	No	A-Waste
White Cloud (4)	1,420	No	Yes	No	A-Waste

1. City of Newaygo also offers residents a free pick up service for large items, such as furniture, the 1<sup>st</sup> pick up of every month

2. Fremont charges residents for recycling regardless if they use the service and estimates 700-800 households participate on a weekly basis

3. The City of Grant has an exclusive contract with A-Waste to collect residential garbage but recycling is not included. This means residents do not have an option for curb-side recycling. There is a transfer station in Grant that accepts limited material for recycling and the Recycling Center in Fremont is only 20 minutes away and often utilized by Grant residents.

4. White Cloud is the county seat and therefore gets many commuters who travel to the city for work but live in the surrounding areas. These commuters often bring their recycling with them. City officials say the drop off facility is very well used, serving as many as 10,000-12,000 people annually, despite a city population of only 1420.

**Drop-Off Facilities in Newaygo County:**

All recycling drop-off facilities located in Newaygo County are run by Recycling for Newaygo, a local environmental nonprofit. Information on facility hours and material accepted can be found by contacting them at (231) 924-5822.

Facility Name	Address
Freemont Collection Center	113 E. Cherry Street, Fremont, MI 49412
Grant Elementary School	160 E. State Street, Grant, MI
Brooks Township Hall	490 Quarterline Road, Newaygo, MI
City of White Cloud	Old Mill Square on Newell Street, White Cloud, MI
Village of Hesperia	West of U.S. Post Office in DPW parking lot
Garfield Township Hall*	7190 S. Bingham Avenue, Garfield, MI
Holton Township Hall*	East Whitehall Road, Holton, MI

\*Drop off centers at Garfield and Holton Township Halls are for township residents only.

## OTTAWA COUNTY

### Overview

Ottawa County operates a progressive recycling program available to all county residents. For an annual fee of \$40 dollars, residents gain access to four material recovery centers where they can recycle traditional solid waste such as paper and plastic, as well as safely dispose of hazardous waste, used motor oil, and consumer electronics.

The county also has a special program to help small businesses safely dispose of toxic waste, providing consulting on proper disposal and disposal facility access on a fee per use basis. The county health department has initiated a medical sharps program to give special containers to residents who use needles for medical reasons. Once these containers are full, residents may drop them off at the health department in exchange for a new container. The used containers are then disposed of by the county through a licensed medical waste disposal company. Finally, Ottawa County operates a thermometer exchange program that allows households to exchange old mercury thermometers for a digital one. County officials report feeling all programs are well used.

In addition to programs run by the county, some cities have also elected to implement their own curbside collection programs. Of the six cities in Ottawa County, two reported running universal curbside recycling programs, two reported not having programs (in part because of their close proximity to county recycling facilities) and two did not respond to requests for information. The City of Holland, which straddles both Allegan and Ottawa County, was also the only city in West Michigan that reported having a mandatory recycling policy for residents.

### Private Waste Haulers in Ottawa County:

The Ottawa County website (<http://www.miottawa.org/HealthComm/Health/Waste.htm>) lists several private waste haulers in the county that offer recycling services. Their contact information is listed below.

Company Name	Phone Number
Potluck Pickup	(616) 895-6399
Sunset Waste	(800) 882-9565
Waste Management	(800) 538-3750
Chef Container	(616) 494-0561
Everkept Inc.	(616) 669-2047

### Services in Cities of Ottawa County:

Location	Population	Universal Curbside Recycling Program Available	Residents Contract Individually with Private Waste Haulers for Curbside Recycling	City Clean-up Days Available
Coopersville	3,912	Yes, Contracted though Allied Waste	No	No
Ferrysburg	3,040	No	Yes	Yes, clean-up days in Spring and Fall
Grand Haven	11,168	N/A	N/A	N/A
Holland*	35,048	Yes, Contracted through Chef's Container*	No	Yes, community clean up day in Spring
Hudsonville	7,160	No	Yes	Fall Leaf Day (drop-off service)
Zeeland	5,805	No	Yes	Yes, Spring Clean and Fall Leaf Collection

\*The City of Holland has a mandatory recycling policy for city residents.

### Drop-Off Facilities in Ottawa County

There are four drop-off facilities that accept material for recycling in Ottawa County. Each facility accepts the following products:

Paper including: newspaper, brown paper bags, magazines, catalogs, discarded mail, fliers, paper, cereal boxes (with liner removed) and office paper.

Plastic bottles, jars and jugs made from #1 & 2 HDPE. Please rinse clean and remove lids.

Tin, Steel and aluminum. (cleaned with no labels or lids)

Glass-All Colors. (cleaned with no lids)

Corrugated cardboard

Phone books

### Location,Address, and Hours of Operation of Recycling Drop-off Facilities in Ottawa County

Materials accepted at each site	Facility	Address	Hours of Operation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper including: newspaper, brown paper bags, magazines, catalogs, discarded mail, fliers, paper, cereal boxes (with liner removed) and office paper.</li> <li>• Plastic bottles, jars and jugs made from #1 &amp; 2 HDPE. Please rinse clean and remove lids.</li> <li>• Tin, Steel and aluminum. (cleaned with no labels or lids)</li> <li>• Glass-All Colors. (cleaned with no lids)</li> <li>• Corrugated cardboard</li> <li>• Phone books</li> </ul>	Coopersville	15600 68 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	T,Th 8-1, 2-5 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sat, 8-Noon
	Georgetown	6693 Roger Drive	T,Th 8-1, 2-5 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sat, 8-Noon
	Grand Haven	16850 Comstock Avenue	M,W 8-1, 2-5 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sat 8-Noon
	Holland	14053 Quincy Street	M,W 8-1, 2-5 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat 8-1, 2-5

## Section 2: Best Practices

Research for this report identified several best practices for recycling in West Michigan and others that could be implemented here to improve capture rates.

### Local Best Practices:

- **Pay-As-You-Throw Garbage Disposal:** Pay-as-you-throw garbage disposal systems, such as the one used in Grand Rapids, encourage residents to both recycle and reduce the amount of waste they generate. The system works best in areas that have universal curbside recycling programs because free recycling provides residents with direct savings over traditional disposal.
- **Universal Curb-side Collection Programs:** Many people interviewed for this report felt waste management and recycling programs work best when they are contracted at a government level rather than individually by residents. Private waste haulers usually treat recycling as an additional service, charging extra money to participants and the varying policies on materials accepted for recycling and sorting procedures make it difficult to educate the public on proper recycling practices.

Universal programs, on the other hand, often provide residents with an economic incentive to recycle. Because the service has already been paid for, usually through taxes, the actual collection of garbage and recycling comes at no weekly charge. Universal recycling programs are especially effective when combined with a pay-as-you-throw trash system.

Universal programs are more efficient because trucks from multiple companies are not operating on the same streets. Their standard policy on material accepted and separation procedures also make them more user friendly.

- **Innovative Rural Collection Programs:** The Mobile Recovery Facility in Montcalm County and the drop-off locations run by Recycling for Newaygo are two examples of successful recycling programs in areas without the population density to support curbside collection programs. Montcalm's program conserves money by using the same collection facility to service multiple areas of the county, while the program in Newaygo should be noted because it is run by a nonprofit, reports high capture rates, and records data about usage.
- **Waste to Energy:** There is much debate over classifying waste to energy programs as recycling. This paper includes the waste to energy facility in Grand Rapids as a best practice for recycling for the following reasons: Waste is diverted from landfills, garbage is converted to energy for the county, high-tech filters help capture pollution, and the facility actively encourages the separation of recyclable materials before incineration. Until recycling technology improves, these types of facilities can serve as a stop gap for waste heading towards landfills. They also help displace some need for energy created at traditional power plants.
- **Comprehensive Website:** The recycling information website run by Allegan County should serve as a model for other counties to build from. The site is easy to navigate, covers detailed recycling services available in each township and city, has information on how to safely dispose of hazardous waste and electronics, and has an education link to connect teachers to academic resources on environmental issues.

## Best Practices from Other Areas:

- **Materials Exchange Program:** Providing a forum for companies to trade their waste products to other companies to use as a feed-stock in new products has been very successful in some areas. Reducing the amount of waste generated by businesses or reusing waste in its existing form is much cheaper and less energy intensive than recycling.

Chicago's Waste to Profit Program connects local manufacturers and allows them to buy, sell, or trade their waste products with other companies. The program is collaboration among the Chicago Manufacturing Center, State of Illinois, City of Chicago, and Region Five of the EPA.

Since 2007, the program claims to have diverted 67,000 tons of waste material from landfills, offset 50,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and generated \$5.5 million dollars in economic impact. Over 175 businesses participate in the program, each paying an annual fee to participate. This fee helps cover the cost of administering the program and also pays for dedicated consultants to work with businesses to maximize the program's efficiency. (Google: Chicago waste to profit network)

- **Mandatory Data Reporting for Waste Haulers:** Ohio and Wisconsin have both successfully implemented mandatory data reporting laws on all private waste haulers operating within their borders. Both states have a strategy to help mitigate private waste haulers concerns about proprietary information.

In Ohio, haulers are required to report the amount of material they collect for land filling and recycling but the data is published on a county-by-county basis, making it more difficult to determine exact amounts hauled by each company. Wisconsin takes a more local approach and requires haulers to report to their local government unit only if directly requested by local officials. Again, these municipalities report capture rates for their region, not per waste hauler.

Officials from both states say having this data available is very beneficial for tracking and improving recycling operations.

- **Recycle Bank:** Recycle Bank is a program that allows residents to earn points towards consumer purchases by recycling. Participating households receive a Recycle Bank bin to store all their recyclable material. The bins are then collected by a Recycle Bank truck that uses radio frequency identification technology (RFID) to record the weight of the bin and the information of the participating resident. Users then accumulate points, based on the total weight of material recycled, to use towards purchases at participating businesses.

This type of program is beneficial to participating residents, businesses, and the environment. Residents receive rewards for participating, the program diverts waste from landfills, and companies that participate in the rewards program have a new marketing tool for attracting business.

## Section 3: SWOT Analysis

Based on the information gathered for this report the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) regarding recycling in West Michigan have been identified.

### Strengths:

- **Availability of Curbside Recycling:** The vast majority of city residents living in urban areas of West Michigan have access to curbside recycling in one form or another. Several cities are offering municipal run programs and many others are looking to either develop municipal programs or create stronger guidelines and regulations for private waste haulers. This should make recycling more attractive to citizens.
- **Large Manufacturers Recycling:** West Michigan, especially in Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Allegan counties, has a very large, forward thinking manufacturing base. Some companies, such as Steelcase, are establishing themselves as global leaders in sustainable manufacturing. Other companies, such as Alticor, are starting to integrate better recycling programs to save money on waste disposal. Padnos, a global leader in metal recycling, also calls West Michigan home.
- **Strong Municipal Programs:** A few major metropolitan areas, such as Grand Rapids, Muskegon, and Holland are taking progressive steps to increase recycling. All three cities have large populations and universal curbside collection programs. Holland goes a step further and mandates residents recycle, while Grand Rapids uses a pay-as-you-throw trash disposal system to encourage recycling. Grand Rapids is also building a new single-stream recycling facility and burns a large portion of its garbage at their Waste to Energy plant.
- **Access to Chicago's Markets:** Many experts believe West Michigan's proximity to Chicago and existing rail infrastructure will allow local manufacturers that use recycled material in their products to access Chicago's commercial markets. Some experts also felt West Michigan manufacturers could eventually plug into Chicago's Waste to Profit program in the future.
- **Market for LEED Certified Products:** West Michigan's growing focus on LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) buildings is providing a market incentive for companies to create and use construction material made with recycled inputs. The system, which gives financial incentives to buildings that become LEED certified, creates an atmosphere where construction products containing recycled material can be competitive with traditionally manufactured items, even if they have not reached exact cost parity. Examples of LEED Certified buildings in West Michigan are the Michigan Alternative & Renewable Energy Center in Muskegon or the new art museum in Grand Rapids.
- **Strong Community Organizations:** West Michigan has an excellent base of community organizations working to promote recycling. Some examples are the Muskegon Area Sustainability Coalition, which sponsored an in-depth study of recycling in Muskegon County; Recycling for Newaygo County, which runs several drop-off facilities for residents with no access to curbside programs; or The West Michigan Strategic Alliance, who undertook this study and is active in expanding recycling services in the region.

## Weaknesses:

- **Data:** A significant weakness in West Michigan's recycling infrastructure is the lack of quantitative data on current recycling practices. There is no efficient way for the region to improve recycling without knowing what is currently being recycled. Collecting standardized data would allow the region to determine current recycling capture rates, implement targeted and effective new programs, and track the success of existing programs.
- **Education:** Education centered around recycling in West Michigan is sporadic at best, with many residents unaware of the importance of recycling or the recycling options available to them. Many West Michigan residents interviewed reported disposing of items that could be recycled or, worse, recycling inappropriate items; something that can contaminate an entire load of recycled material.
- **Confusion about Available Services:** Closely related to the issue of education is the disparity between the services of private waste haulers that offer recycling. Different companies accept different material for recycling and have different sorting procedures. This makes recycling confusing for most residents and also makes it difficult to mount a regional educational campaign to promote proper recycling procedures.
- **Small Businesses Excluded from Municipal Collection Programs:** Small businesses were not included in any of the universal curbside recycling programs run by cities in West Michigan. Several private companies offer commercial recycling services but many businesses interviewed found the price prohibitive.
- **Lack of Support for Sustainable Manufacturers:** There is very little support for businesses that use recycled material in their products on a regional level. Business and government leaders interviewed for this report noted there is no priority given in government contracts to companies that use recycled material in their products. Support for such businesses would help create a market incentive to sustainable manufacturers until their products reach cost parity.
- **Large Rural Population:** Residents in rural areas have very limited access to recycling. Curbside collection, if available, tends to be cost prohibitive. Many rural residents simply have no option to recycle at all. This is especially concerning given the large amount of people in West Michigan that live in rural areas. Extra support should be given to expanding recycling options available to rural residents through new and creative strategies.

## Opportunities:

- **Regional Strategy:** West Michigan should expand upon the recycling programs established by individual counties and form a regional strategy for expanding recycling services.
- **Development of Materials Exchange Program:** Many of the region's largest manufacturers have realized the value of recycling. There is now an opportunity to create a materials exchange program in which participating companies can sell their waste products to other companies to use as a feed-stock in their finished products.
- **Development of Recycling Based Businesses:** As recycling in West Michigan increases there will be new opportunities for businesses that collect, sort or process recycled material – as well as those that use recycled material in the finished products – to establish in the region.

**Threats:**

- **Low Commodity Prices for Reprocessed Material:** The global economic downturn poses a serious threat to recycling efforts. Demand for reprocessed material has declined in recent months, which has made collecting and processing recycled material less profitable.
- **Reduced Government Expenditures:** Due to the economic crisis, local governments have less money and more financial obligations. Since recycling programs are often not viewed as essential to communities they are at serious risk of having their budgets reduced or eliminated. This topic was brought up in several interviews with local officials, as well as in interviews with officials from other states.

## Section 4: Recommendations

Based on the results of the SWOT analysis above, several changes in the West Michigan's recycling policies are recommended. Some of these changes can be implemented quickly with little cost while others would require a more significant investment of time and money to put in place.

### Short-Term Recommendations:

- **Expand Baseline Report:** This report summarized recycling in West Michigan by looking at recycling resources available in West Michigan cities. This information should be expanded to detail the exact recycling options available in all areas of the region, including townships and villages.

Further information that should be collected in these areas includes details of any universal recycling programs in each area, an updated list of private waste haulers that offer recycling and their sorting policies, drop-off facilities located in each area, and places residents can take specialized waste for safe disposal.

- **Create a Regional Website for Recycling:** Using the information collected from an expanded baseline report, West Michigan should develop a regional website to inform all citizens of recycling options available to them. This site could be accessed directly or through links placed on all county, city, township, and village websites in West Michigan.

By placing all recycling information for West Michigan on one site, the region can more efficiently promote existing recycling programs. Rather than individual counties, cities or townships disseminating local information, all areas could contribute to the cost of a synchronized advertising campaign for the website.

A website could also be easily updated as new programs become available and could also contain educational information on the importance of recycling, strategies for reducing waste, and also offer resources for teachers. Finally, a website could offer a platform for tracking the number of people in West Michigan interested in recycling by monitoring visits to the site.

- **Develop a Regional Strategy:** A multidisciplinary panel of government, business, and community leaders from each county in West Michigan should gather to establish a unified strategy for improving recycling in West Michigan. This strategy should expand the use of current best practices, facilitate joint investments for new processing facilities and transfer stations, develop a standard set of data to measure progress, unify the collection policies of private waste haulers that offer recycling services in West Michigan, and establish a coordinated recycling education campaign for the region.
- **Improve Availability of Data:** West Michigan needs to develop a standard set of data for measuring the capture rates of different recycling programs. The region should track both the total capture rates of recycling programs and the capture rates among different socio-economic groups. In the short-term, this quantitative data could be obtained through statistical measures such as surveys or trash digs. Surveys could also help measure more abstract data, such as peoples' or businesses' desire to recycle.

- **Improve Education:** Most experts agree there is a high correlation between educational campaigns about recycling and capture rates of recycled materials. Local governments and community organizations need to work together to create educational resources about local recycling policies. These resources should stress both the importance of recycling and inform citizens what materials can be recycled and how they should be sorted. Improving education would be easier and more cost effective if all information was published on a common platform, such as the website discussed earlier.
- **Include Small Businesses in Universal Curbside Collection:** All universal curbside collection programs discussed in this paper provided residential services only. These services should be extended to small businesses located within the participating cities. Businesses such as small retail stores, bars, and offices, generate several times more waste than individual households. They also tend to be located in close proximity to each other and to city centers, making them easily accessible on existing collection routes. Several businesses interviewed for this paper said they were willing to recycle if a cost effective option was available.
- **Increase Tipping Fees:** West Michigan should increase the cost of waste disposal at landfills. Increasing the cost of land filling garbage makes recycling more attractive, both to waste generators and haulers. As landfill space becomes scarce the price for disposal will naturally increase, making recycling more cost competitive. Increasing tipping fees accomplishes the same result but does so at a faster pace. Revenue generated from the extra fee could also be used to increase the recycling infrastructure of the region.
- **Increase Government Support for Recycled Products:** All levels of government in West Michigan should leverage their buying power to support businesses that use recycled material in their products. Giving these manufacturers preference in government contracts, provided their products meet quality standards and are priced within a specified range of traditional products, would provide a market incentive for sustainable manufacturing in the region.

#### **Long-term Recommendations:**

- **Increase Number of Universal Curbside Collection Programs:** More local governments in West Michigan should contract universal garbage disposal and curbside recycling programs. These contracts often reduce per person cost of garbage disposal and recycling, increases capture rates, and reduce confusion among residents about what material is accepted for recycling and how it should be sorted. Cities with these contracts also have more leverage to require waste haulers collect and report data regarding their operations.
- **Convert to Pay-As-You-Throw Garbage System:** Converting more areas to pay-as-you-throw disposal systems, especially in areas with universal curbside recycling programs, should be a priority for local governments. This change would not only give residents a financial incentive to recycle but also to generate less waste in the first place.
- **Improve Availability of Data:** In the long-term, West Michigan should move beyond surveys and trash digs to improve the availability of quantitative data on recycling in the region. To get continuous data on recycling, government leaders need to require all waste haulers, drop-off facilities, transfer stations, and reprocessing centers report the volume of material they collect.

Many other states have successfully implemented data reporting regulations on private waste haulers, using a variety of tactics to help protect their proprietary information concerns. It is also important to have representatives from each county tasked with using the available data to track program success and develop ways of improving capture rates among different socio-economic groups.

- **Stricter Licensing Regulations for Waste Haulers:** Aside from enforcing stricter regulations on data reporting, governments should also start working to mandate private haulers offer recycling services, unify their collection policies, and keep better track of where waste is taken in rural areas.
- **Develop a Materials Exchange Program:** A materials exchange program for manufacturers, similar to the Waste to Profit program in Chicago, would help divert waste from landfills and generate profit for participating manufacturers. As virgin materials become scarcer, this alternative source of product feed-stock will increase the region's manufacturing competitiveness. Companies in West Michigan might also be able to expand the market for their waste by tapping into Chicago's Waste to Profit Program.
- **Expand the Bottle Bill:** The State of Michigan needs to expand its bottle bill to include plastic water bottles. These bottles make up a growing percentage of municipal solid waste each year and, as the infrastructure for the program already exists, could be incorporated into the current collection program.
- **Expand Mandatory Recycling Programs:** As recycling programs in West Michigan become more available and efficient, more areas should adopt mandatory recycling policies. The City of Holland is the only area in the region that currently has a mandatory recycling program.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Interview Summaries

Art Tannis – Kent County Commissioner

Douglas Wood – Department of Public Works, Director

- Wanted to focus county's recycling efforts on residential waste because they felt commercial/industrial need was better met by private sector.
- Believe it is vital to expand education on recycling. Educational component being built into new recycling facility and county is expanding education programs at schools.
- Disappointed that all equipment for the county's new recycling facility had to be ordered from out of state. Believes Michigan could develop a competitive advantage in manufacturing equipment for recycling facilities.
- Large problem for manufacturers to use recycled material as feed-stock in products is fluctuating commodity costs for reprocessed material.
- New single-stream recycling facility will eliminate need for curb-side separation of materials and double efficiency. Same number of trucks could collect twice as much material per day.
- Want to issue Grand Rapid's residents larger recycling bins, which can be stored outdoors, to make recycling more convenient.
- The City of Grand Rapid's Waste Not Program currently captures 16,000 to 18,000 tons of waste per year for recycling. Believe with new facility and larger bins capture rates will increase to 30,000 tons in three years.
- Believe best way to promote manufacturers to use recycled material in their products is to increase supply of reprocessed material available.
- Feel Michigan is at a disadvantage to states such as Florida or Minnesota because we have no state wide policy or target goals for recycling. Need better state leadership in recycling.
- Question DEQ resource allocations. Feels too much spent on enforcement and monitoring of existing rules rather than expanding programs.
- Private waste haulers make more land filling than they do recycling waste.
- Counties need to better regulate waste haulers.

Joanne Barnard – Barry County, Green Infrastructure Leadership Council

- City of Hastings requires licensed haulers to provide recycling.
- Does not believe Hastings program is well used.
- Difficult to establish curb-side collection programs in Barry County because most residents live in rural areas.
- Barry County has tried to promote recycling using Michigan's PA 7 of 1967. This act allows a county to enact the program and then individual municipalities may charge residents up to \$25/year for recycling programs. In its most recent amendment a municipality may charge between \$25 and \$50 per year if approved by a vote of the municipal residents.
- Bids to establish curb-side recycling in most places far exceed \$50 per year. Waste haulers mostly cite rising fuel costs and distance to nearest processing facility for high bids.
- Has worked extensively with the Villages of Middleville and Thornapple to initiate curb-side collection program but was unsuccessful.
- Believes many areas in Barry County want to recycle. Has consulted with other townships and villages on use of the surcharge program but is unsure if they will pursue new programs.

Tim Byerly – Ottawa County; Padnos Recycling, Operations Coordinator

Jim Fisher – Ottawa County; Padnos Recycling, Subject Expert in Recycling

- Padnos is one of the largest scrap metal recycling operations in the country. Will not give exact volume of material reprocessed every year.
- Primarily deals with industrial clients. Leaves most of commercial and residential market to counties or small businesses.
- Has diversified into other forms of recycling, including paper, plastic, and electronics.
- Not currently interested in entering commercial pick-up business but believes commercial and residential market could be a large input to their business. Believes there is room for other companies to cooperate with Padnos by collecting material from this market and delivering to Padnos.
- Believes in expanding education about recycling and helps support this effort.
- So far does not view expanding county programs, such as new processing facility being built in Kent County, as competition.
- Believes information on volume of material is proprietary and having to share such information would adversely affect company operations. Opposes idea of mandatory data reporting laws being enacted by local governments.
- Tries to view recycling as long-term commitment regardless of economic conditions. Family privately owned company that truly believes in the social benefit of recycling.
- Feels their large market share and budget help them weather fluctuating commodity prices. Voice concern that smaller companies operating in the recycling arena will not be able to adapt to economic downturn as easily.
- Believe in this economy recycled material will only be attractive if cost competitive with virgin material.
- Grant programs would be a good way for government to expand recycling without interfering in market principals. Does not like the idea of heavy government subsidies for recycled products.

Bill Allen – Kent County Waste to Energy Facility, Director

- Kent County generates approximately 950,000 tons of waste per year.
- Waste to Energy receives approximately 235,000 tons, of which 187,000 are burned.
- County promotes recycling before material arrives to facility and also separates 4 to 5 tons of ferrous metal from post burned ashes. Facility intended to compliment recycling programs, not compete with them.
- Kent County thinking of adding third unit to facility to increase its capability.
- Costs about \$72.25 per ton to burn waste at facility, only \$35 per ton to dump waste in landfill.
- County uses flow controls to direct waste to facility despite higher costs. Have 40 year contracts with six cities specifying all non-recyclable waste be brought to facility. Contracts expire around 2025.
- Facility will be debt free in 2010. At this point some form of cost reduction will be passed on to consumers.
- Facility still finds material in waste stream that could be recycled but feels the problem is not significant and is getting better each year.
- Facility uses advanced technology to reduce pollution from burning operations.
- Believes there are certain things governments do better than private industry and waste management is one of them.

- Facility receives less than 1/3 of all county waste so expanded recycling will harm program.
- DTE Energy receives green credits for purchasing energy from facility.

Chris Harkema – Kent County; Harkema Ltd., Founder (company no longer in business)

- Used recycled glass as a component in concrete cinder blocks.
- Thought business would be very successful because cinder blocks comprise a very large portion of new buildings and the high recycled content in each block would help builders meet LEED certification.
- Bought equipment to process 50,000 tons of recycled glass annually.
- Had trouble securing supply of recycled glass.
- Found it difficult to penetrate existing relationships local construction contractors had with long-term suppliers, even though he felt his product was superior in quality and price.
- Feels local and county governments could be more supportive of sustainable manufacturers.
- Questions why tipping fees are so low in West Michigan if counties really want to promote recycling.
- Access to railroads greatly reduces cost to startup companies vs. the price of importing and exporting goods with trucks. Believes this will be a more significant factor in future as fuel prices increase. Also believes railroads can connect local businesses to larger markets, such as Chicago.

Matthew Fletcher – Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

- One of the largest problems regarding recycling is lack of data. Hard to tell if goals are being met or to improve programs without data.
- State should raise tipping fees for land filling to promote recycling.
- Current market price for depositing trash in landfills does not reflect the true costs to society, such as loss of land, pollution, and long-term care of the landfill after it has been capped.
- Taxes or tipping fees on waste disposal just expedites the natural correction of market prices that would occur as landfill space becomes scarce.
- Prefers market incentives instead of mandatory programs. Feels mandatory programs are ineffective without proper enforcement and currently there is no budget for enforcement.
- Believes public investment is needed to expand recycling efforts.
- Education is essential to expand recycling programs. Advertising costs are prohibitive for most municipalities.
- Feels West Michigan has the opportunity to not only expand recycling but brand itself a “recycling hub” and the payoff for doing so would be huge.
- Local governments should partner with universities to help reduce the cost of creating advertising campaigns. Good internship opportunities for marketing and media majors.
- Believes the bottle bill should be expanded to include water and other non-carbonated beverage bottles.
- Entrenched interests are actively opposing progressive legislation towards recycling. Discussed waste haulers opposition to data reporting laws and retailers opposition to expanding the bottle bill as examples.

Laura Rauwerda – Kent County; Green Supplies Network, Project Manager

- Products that use recycled material are not yet cost competitive and there is not enough consumer education to promote.
- LEED certification is helping because it offers tax incentives to use green materials.
- Strong advocate of a waste commodity exchange between businesses, much like Chicago's Waste to Profit Program. Feels West Michigan may be able to tap into Chicago's market as well because of proximity and rail access.
- Would like to see a ban on plastic bags at grocery stores.
- Government spending could be a huge boost for products that use recycled material as feed-stock. Procurement contracts should give some preference to green products.

Tom Heil – Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection, Waste Management Division

- Kentucky currently requires waste haulers and recycling haulers/processors to report the volume of material they haul/recycle.
- Information is reported county-by-county which helps alleviate proprietary information concerns.
- Concerns some recyclables are double counted.
- Kentucky has three state grant programs, totaling over 3 million dollars, to promote recycling.

Carl Hursh – Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Recycling Coordinator

- Pennsylvania requires municipalities to compile recycling data but does not have a state-wide policy requiring waste haulers to report data. Municipalities in the State can make this a requirement of licensing.
- State has struggled with waste haulers over issue of recycling customer list confidentiality.
- Gives out performance grants to municipalities based on recycling results. The more material an area recycles and markets, the more money they receive.
- Grant receivers must submit to an audit, giving incentive for them to collect data on recycling and Mr. Hursh believes data from audit reports are of better quality.
- Pa DEP uses a two dollar/ton surcharge on waste disposal to raise money for recycling.

Chet Chaney – Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Grants Section Administrator

- Information on recycling collected through annual district reports.
- Part of licensing requirement for waste haulers is information reporting.
- Reports published at district level, not per company, to reduce concerns over proprietary information.
- Recycle Bank Program in City of Montgomery caused dramatic increase in capture rates of recycled material.
- Problem with industrial reporting as factories are only requested to give information on material recycled, not required.
- State supports several innovative programs including a food waste collection program, a program to convert old tires into an additive for asphalt, and Recycle Bank.

Sarah Murray – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Interim Recycling Coordinator

- Recycling efforts in Wisconsin very localized with strong state goals and support.
- Recycling efforts divided into “responsible units” which vary in size from a village to a county. 1060 total responsible units in the state.
- Material recovery facilities that reprocess recycled material must report tonnages.
- Waste haulers must report volume of material collected for recycling only if asked by their local government or responsible unit.
- Estimates state budget for recycling in 2006 was around 25 million dollars.
- State maintains a web based resource on how well each community recycles at [www.recyclemorewisconsin.org](http://www.recyclemorewisconsin.org)
- Feels the website has had a positive effect on recycling in Wisconsin.

## Appendix B: Contact Information for Private Waste Haulers Listed in Report

Below is a listing of the private waste haulers listed throughout this report to include their contact information and the counties they service.

Company Name	Counties Served	Contact Information
A-Waste, Inc.	Newaygo	231-234-9913
Advance Disposal Services	Kent	616-669-7077
Allied Waste	Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Muskegon	800-698-7274
Ames Disposal	Newaygo	231-744-4967
Bob’s Disposal, Inc.	Kent	616-455-1155
Cartwright Disposal	Newaygo	
Chef Container	Ottawa	616-494-0561
Duncan Disposal	Kent	616-363-4999
Ed’s Rubbish Removal, Inc.	Kent	616-677-5433
Everkept, Inc.	Kent, Ottawa	616-669-2047
Green Valley Disposal Service	Ionia, Kent	616-647-1400
Granger	Ionia, Ottawa	517-372-2800
Herrington’s	Kent	616-874-9115
Knight Transfer	Kent, Ottawa	616-748-9876
Kuerth’s Disposal, Inc.	Muskegon	231-744-4967
Les’s Sanitation Service	Barry	269-945-3134
Potluck Pickup	Kent, Ottawa	616-895-6399
Priority Arrow Waste	Kent	616-748-1955
Red Creek Waste Services, Inc.	Kent	616-682-2806
RMS Recycling & Disposal, Inc.	Muskegon	231-788-5096
Sidney Sanitation	Ionia	989-248-3404
Sunset Waste Disposal	Ottawa	800-822-9565
Waste Management	Barry, Kent, Montcalm, Ottawa	800-538-3750

## **Appendix C:**

### **Contact Information for Cities Listed in Report**

#### **Allegan County:**

- Allegan: 269-673-5511
- Douglas: 269-857-1438
- Otsego: 269-692-3391
- Plainwell: 269-685-6821
- Saugatuck: 269-857-2603
- Wayland: 269-792-2265

#### **Barry County:**

- Hastings: 269-945-2468

#### **Ionia County:**

- Belding: 616-794-1900
- Ionia: 616-527-4170
- Portland: 517-647-7531

#### **Kent County:**

- Cedar Springs: 616-632-7590
- East Grand Rapids: 616-949-2110
- Grand Rapids: 616-456-3000
- Grandville: 616-531-3030
- Kentwood: 616-698-9610
- Lowell: 616-897-8457
- Rockford: 616-866-1537
- Walker: 616-453-6311
- Wyoming: 616-530-7226

#### **Muskegon County:**

- Montague: 231-893-1155
- Muskegon: 231-724-6908
- Muskegon Heights: 231-733-8820
- North Muskegon: 231-744-1621
- Norton Shores: 231-798-4391
- Roosevelt Park: 231-755-3721
- Whitehall: 231-893-4708

#### **Montcalm County:**

- Carson City: 989-584-3515
- Greenville: 616-754-5645
- Stanton: 989-831-4440

**Newaygo County:**

- Fremont: 231-924-2101
- Grant: 231-834-7904
- Newaygo: 231-652-1657
- White Cloud: 231-689-1194

**Ottawa County:**

- Coopersville: 616-997-9731
- Ferrysburg: 616-842-5803
- Grand Haven: 616-842-3210
- Holland: 616-355-1300
- Hudsonville: 616-669-0200
- Zeeland: 616-772-6400