



Draft: For Community Review and Input

## COMMUNITY ISSUES, CONCERNS, PRIORITIES: RECYCLING IN MANISTEE COUNTY

### - Preliminary Project Report -

#### Background

At the request of the Manistee County Recycling Committee, the Manistee-based Alliance for Economic Success (AES) began a project to gather information from throughout the County to help determine Manistee County's direction for recycling. To complete this project, the AES:

- Contacted all County Townships, Villages and the City of Manistee to determine the current status of recycling in each governmental jurisdiction.
- Held nine meetings throughout the county to gather information about:
  - The current state of recycling
  - Issues and concerns about recycling
  - Community recycling preferences
  - Who should pay for recycling
  - What people want for the future of recycling

(Meetings were held in Stronach Township, Charter Township of Filer, Manistee Township, Onekama Township, Cleon Township, County Commissioner's Meeting, Brethren, Manistee Townships Association)

- Visited and gathered information about recycling programs outside of Manistee County, looking at the best practices state-wide.

#### Purpose of This Report

Participation in the nine meetings and the input and ideas received were significant: about 150 people participated, including local government officials, private citizens,

business interests, manufacturing interests and others. A meeting was also held with the owner/operator of the local landfill to obtain background information about practices and objectives and to welcome their participation in the project.

**In these meetings, we promised to share with all participants this preliminary report to ensure that we have fully and accurately captured input. Two additional open public meetings are scheduled to review this report and gather comments or additional ideas and input as follows:**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
April 2, 2008	Filer Township Hall	6:30 PM
April 3, 2008	Cleon Township Hall	6:30 PM

### Summary of Input

Attachment A includes the notes from each of the nine community meetings. We have attempted to summarize the input in the following. Attachment B is the handout used at all of the meetings.

**1. Community Participation.** All interests want to participate and provide input in determining the recycling goals, objectives and programs for their communities. Many are interested in working toward a solution that is county-wide or regional in scope. The process to develop and implement recycling options and programs must be open and inclusive, welcome input from all interests and take advantage of best practices used in other communities.

**2. Education.** The need for education about the availability and accessibility of recycling programs was emphasized in each of the meetings. In nearly every meeting, people talked about recycling opportunities that they were using that were unknown to other meeting participants. Many expressed a common sentiment: as we develop a path toward a recycling “program”, we should also implement a sound, community-wide education program that reaches all interests (including, specifically, our schools and youth) and encompasses:

- A. Why people, organizations and businesses should recycle.
- B. How people, organizations and businesses can be “good” recyclers and understand/accept responsibilities for being “good” recyclers.

- C. Examples of how people, organizations and businesses are recycling today, including manufacturing.
- D. How people can recycle through public and private programs. (Locations, times, types of items, costs, limitations)
- E. The options and costs in each of our communities for recycling programs, recognizing that the options and costs vary widely across our county.
- F. How the Manistee landfill handles materials picked up or delivered for recycling and what are the uses for recyclables
- G. How communities, organizations, businesses and individuals can take low-cost or no-cost steps to improve recycling practices.
- H. Other

**3. General Support for Recycling.** There was support for recycling in every meeting. However, it was consistently emphasized that any county-wide initiative needed to reflect and respect:

- A. There may be no “one-size fits all” solution
- B. There should not be an unfair cost burden upon any single interest, group of interests or political subdivision to support a county-wide initiative
- C. The significant difference in “ability to pay” among and between local governmental units
- D. The need to encourage discussions and consideration of options for sharing recycling assets and programs between and among local governmental units

**4. Recycling Program Attributes.** People generally said the following about the desired components of a recycling program:

**A. Sustainability of Recycling.** There was consensus that a county-wide program needs to be sustainable at several levels, including:

- Households - easy, affordable, offering incentive to continue
- Businesses – fair cost structure
- Funding entity – needs ongoing revenue stream, easy way to receive funds
- Ideal is if it is making money, but self-sustaining is a realistic goal
- Maintenance – volunteers, schools, townships cannot be counted on to continue unless “recyclers” accept responsibility for how they recycle

**B. Convenience.** The easier it is for the community to recycle the more likely they are to participate. If it is not easy, people will not do it. In general, curb-side pick up

was favored at meetings throughout the county, recognizing that, in some cases, “curb-side” may mean a curb side community collection point for recycling.

**C. Incentives.** Community ideas and perspectives on the costs and economics of recycling were as follows:

- With no economic incentive, it is much easier and sometimes cheaper to just throw everything away.
- The “Pay As You Throw” funding mechanism was generally viewed as a desirable and fair approach to recycling.

(Note: This funding mechanism operates by charging based on the amount of trash generated. Many felt this was a fair way to pay for recycling since it places the emphasis upon paying for waste disposal, as opposed to focusing the costs on recyclers.)

- Creating true economic viability around recyclables would form an incentive for recycling handlers and waste disposers alike. With increased energy costs, many believe that recycling is the wave of the future and that Manistee County’s economic development strategy should give priority to development of emerging recycling technologies, businesses and jobs.

**D. Regional Solutions.** Meeting participants supported an assessment of regional options to achieve recycling goals, particularly given the overarching need to create economies of scale in northern Michigan. On one sense, a county-wide program may be a “regional” initiative since it would encompass a number of communities that could potentially work toward shared goals, recognizing that there are many different “starting points” for each community.

An assessment of multi-county options and solutions for recycling was supported as part of this effort. The Alliance for Economic Success has scheduled a meeting with county administrators from throughout the region to have a preliminary discussion about interest and opportunities in developing regional solutions.

**E. Industry Should Not Bear The Costs.** There was a clear consensus that industry/manufacturing (or any other entity or groups of entities) should not pay the costs of a recycling program beyond the cost of recycling and/or waste disposal that is created by other interests. There was clear recognition of the importance of

sustaining jobs and businesses in the county and not creating disincentives for county employers.

**5. Landfill – Allied Waste.** Our discussions with Allied Waste can be summarized as follows:

- A. They support this effort and want to be a full partner in this project and subsequent phases, should they occur.
- B. They are interested in knowing what more they can do to meet the need and demand for recycling education.
- C. They welcome the opportunity to educate the community about their recycling programs and options, including on-site tours.
- D. They have plans for improving control of odor at the landfill and they want to openly share those plans with the community.

## **6. Other**

### **- Solid Waste Management Plan**

When asked, most people were not aware of a Solid Waste Management Plan for Manistee County. Those that were aware of it did not feel that it had any strong value or relevance to current issues.

### **- Why recycle when we still have to live with the landfill?**

The question was raised, “If we recycle like responsible citizens, the landfill will still be bringing in trash from other counties. We still live with the odor, the trucks on the roads, and the landfill in our backyard... so why bother?”

### Current State of Recycling in Manistee County

Waste management practices are highly varied in Manistee County, with responsibility resting with municipalities and, in some cases, residents. Recycling is handled at the municipality level as follows:

	FUNDING
● City of Manistee – Dropoff certain days of the week	(part of the millage)
● Arcadia Twp. – Once a month dropoff	(general fund)
● Bear Lake Twp. & Pleasanton– Shared 24/7 Dropoff	(general fund)
● Brown Twp. – 24/7 Dropoff	(general fund)
● Cleon Twp. & Springdale Twp. – Shared 24/7 Dropoff	(general fund)
*Close to ending program due to lack of funding	
● Dickson Twp. – 24/7 Dropoff	(special assessment)
● Filer Twp. – None, unless residents subscribe to curbside	
● Manistee Twp. – 24/7 Dropoff	(general fund)
● Maple Grove – 24/7 Dropoff	(part of millage)
● Marilla Twp. – None	
● Norman Twp. – 24/7 Dropoff	(special assessment)
● Onekama Twp. – 24/7 Dropoff	(general fund)
● Stronach Twp. – Manistee County Landfill Dropoff (Accessible to all Manistee County)	

(NOTE: Villages fall within township jurisdiction.)

### Examples of Recyclers in our Community

#### **Packaging Corporation of America –**

PCA recycles about 500 tons per day of old corrugated containers from a variety of sources. Paper is recycled internally, wood waste is sold to TES Filer City Station, and scrap metal is recycled. PCA supports local schools by paying them for collecting cardboard and other recycling. The following schools participate:

Benzie High School  
Brethren High School  
Frankfort High School  
Kennedy Elementary

Manistee Catholic Central  
Onkama Schools  
Wellston Elementary

**T.E.S. Filer City Station –**

During a typical year, T.E.S. recycles approximately:

128 tons of scrap steel and other metals

7,800 tons of tire chips

53,600 tons of wood waste from PCA

(\*All of which would end up in a landfill if not recycled.)

This facility also consumes 39,000 tons of Petroleum Coke annually, an industrial by-product from the refining industry. When used in facilities that have advanced pollution control equipment it allows environmentally friendly use of this fuel (such as T.E.S.). It is viewed with increasing favor by energy and environmental groups due to its classification as an industrial by-product.

**Russ Edenburn –**

A private recycler located on M-55 that recycles much of the paper that is collected by Allied Waste. More information is needed to understand the extent and the materials that this facility recycles.

**Dr. Shrink –**

Dr. Shrink offers a REBAG recycling program, allowing users to recycle their shrinkwrap scraps or entire covers. A bag is offered with a prepaid UPS return label which makes it easy for the consumer to discard the shrinkwrap. The material does not get returned to Dr. Shrink, but is sent to the recycler of the material. Dr. Shrink offers this with the intent that the material is reused rather than ending up in a landfill. An estimated 250,000 pounds of shrinkwrap are recycled through this system annually.

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**Attachment A**

Summary of Recycling Project Meeting Notes

**Attachment B**

Meeting Handout/Questionnaire

\* To view these attachments please go to [www.allianceforeconomicsuccess.com](http://www.allianceforeconomicsuccess.com) or call the contact below.

**Questions or Comments?**

Please direct them to:

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