



August 30, 2001

Ms. Weslee Ann Clapper
Mayor
McKean Borough
8952 Main Street
P.O. Box 195
McKean, PA 16426

Subject: Establishing a Drop-Off Recycling Program in McKean Borough

Dear Weslee:

This letter is to provide McKean Borough (Borough) with the results of R.W. Beck's study to evaluate options for a drop-off recycling program for the Borough.

The Borough's population as of the 2000 Census is 389, so the Borough is not mandated to recycle under the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101). Given the state's new goal of 35 percent recycling by 2003, however, the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is encouraging counties and municipalities to recycle more materials. The Borough has expressed interest in the possibility of making recycling available to its residents. Given that curbside recycling is not required, drop-off recycling, given the population and size of the Borough (less than one square mile) is the preferred alternative.

The Borough has requested assistance to evaluate the kind of recycling program that would best suite the needs of its population.

ESTABLISHING A DROP-OFF RECYCLING PROGRAM IN MCKEAN BOROUGH

This report is broken down as follows:

- Demographics and materials estimates
- Drop-off recycling options
- Other recycling options
- Public education
- Enforcement
- Grant funding
- Conclusions and Recommendations

The following issues are considered:

- Approaches to drop-off recycling that will maximize the material collected and minimize the efforts of and cost to the municipality.
- Pay-As-You-Throw

- Other recycling options
- Public education efforts that will build enthusiasm among residents for recycling and encourage them to recycle.
- Use of Act 101 Section 902 Recycling Program Grants to fund the Borough's recycling efforts.
- Determining the level of interest among Borough residents

DEMOGRAPHICS AND MATERIALS ESTIMATES

McKean Borough is located in central Erie County. Its population of 389 persons is concentrated in an area that is less than one square mile. Because of its size, the Borough is not required to recycle under Act 101, but its compact size makes the establishment of a drop-off recycling program an attractive option for the Borough. With the population concentrated in such a small area with only one major road passing through (Rt. 99), it should be possible to establish a drop-off location that is easily accessible to all residents of the Borough. The greatest challenge is to establish a location that will be accessible but will not cause major traffic congestion during collection efforts.

Because the Borough's municipal waste is collected under an individual subscription system, with residents responsible for making their own arrangements for waste collection, the Borough does not know the weight or volume of municipal waste generated in the Borough. The state's average generation rate, based on municipal waste generated statewide, is 0.8 tons per person per year, and this is the figure used to estimate waste generation in the Borough. With a population of 389, municipal waste generation would be approximately 311 tons per year. It is this figure that is used in Table 1 to estimate the amount of recyclable materials that are potentially available in McKean Borough.

It should be noted that this is what is *potentially* available. Recycling rates in rural areas are traditionally lower than in urban and suburban areas, and the rates are also lower in drop-off programs vs. curbside programs. The actual rate at which materials might be collected in a drop-off program would be significantly lower, and would depend on the mix of materials that are collected. Table 2 provides estimates of the amount of material that might be expected in a drop-off program in McKean Borough based on the experience of the drop-off program operated by West Mead Township in Crawford County.

Based on these estimates, Washington Township might expect a recycling rate of 2.5 percent (low estimate) to 5 percent (high estimate) through a drop-off recycling program. It should be noted, however, that the West Mead model is based on one-day drop-offs in each of the drop-off locations. A permanent site or more frequent drop-off opportunities than one per month at a staffed site located in a high traffic area may yield more material than the estimates presented above.

DROP-OFF RECYCLING OPTIONS

The basic options available to McKean Borough are as follows:

- Permanent or temporary drop-off site operated by the Borough

TABLE 1
ESTIMATED RECYCLABLE MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN MCKEAN BOROUGH

Material	Percent of MSW	Tons in MSW
Corrugated Paper	10%	31.1
Newsprint	10%	31.1
Glass(Clear and Colored)	9%	28.0
Yard Waste	9%	28.0
Office Paper	6%	18.7
Appliances	4%	12.4
Wood	4%	12.4
Plastic (PET, HDPE only)	3%	9.3
Steel and Bimetallic Cans	2%	6.2
Tires	2%	6.2
Aluminum Cans	1%	3.1
TOTALS	60%	186.6

TABLE 2
PROJECTED TONNAGES FOR MCKEAN BOROUGH RECYCLING DROP-OFF PROGRAM
POTENTIAL BASED ON CRAWFORD COUNTY (WEST MEAD) EXPERIENCE

Estimated Drop-Off in Tons (1)		
Low	Medium	High
7.8	11.7	15.6

(1) Estimated annual per capita generation: Low = 40 lbs.; Medium = 60 lbs.; High = 80 lbs.

- Permanent or temporary drop-off site operated by the private sector
- Drop-off program operated by volunteers
- Coordination with an existing drop-off program in another municipality

It should be noted that the third option—a site operated by volunteers or a non-profit organization—is an option that has often been difficult or problematic in other municipalities throughout Pennsylvania. The option is generally attractive only when revenues from recyclables are sufficient to maintain the interest of a non-profit organization, or as long as the original volunteers remain interested. Many have discovered that recruiting volunteers on an ongoing basis has been difficult.

It should be noted that regardless of the option selected, any drop-off collection site(s) should be:

- Easily accessible to the public
- Convenient to use

- Designed to limit the potential for contamination and/or illegal dumping
- Attractive and well-maintained

Before getting into the specific options, it may help to look into what is involved with regard to volumes of materials expected. Table 3 illustrates estimated tonnage by material for the materials most likely to be included in a drop-off recycling program at the low, medium, and high diversion estimates. Table 4 estimates the number of pulls required for commingled materials at the medium diversion level—all cans, glass, and plastic containers—for 8 cubic yard and 10 cubic yard containers. Table 5 estimates the number of pulls required for paper products collected separately at the medium diversion level—corrugated cardboard, mixed paper and newsprint. If all materials are collected, the estimated number of pulls is 22 for 8 cubic yard containers, which averages to less than two pulls per month, or 19 for 10 cubic yard containers, which averages to slightly less than 1 ½ pulls per month.¹ This scenario is not likely to occur at the time a program is implemented, but if containers are placed at a prominent, convenient site and used by more than Borough residents, these are probably not unreasonable estimates.

It should probably be noted, given the location of the Borough, that it is likely that any drop-off containers would be used by more than Borough residents. If this is the case, there could be far more material available than the estimates provided here. Any additional materials would add to the number of pulls required, and therefore the cost for having the materials moved.

Operation by the Township

This option would involve the Borough: (1) establishing a site in the Borough; (2) purchasing the necessary equipment; (3) providing personnel to service and maintain the sites; and (4) finding markets for the materials collected.

This is not an attractive option for McKean Borough, because the Borough does not have the personnel resources to operate a site. Unless a municipality has personnel that could be used without adding new persons to carry out this function, the cost to operate a program could be prohibitive.

Operation by the Private Sector

This option would involve the Borough contracting with the private sector to provide the service for Borough residents, either through a monthly recycling day or a permanent drop-off site or sites.

Table 6 provides estimates for the cost to contract for this service. This is based on the experience in the Tri-County area (Clarion, Forest and Venango Counties) using Tri-County Industries to provide containers and pull them. They are paying \$100 per pull for two 8 cubic yard containers at a site, so it is assumed that the cost would be \$50 per container per pull.

¹ All estimated pull numbers are rounded to the next highest number since materials will eventually need to be pulled even if the containers are not full.

TABLE 3
ESTIMATED TONNAGE BY MATERIAL

Material	Percent of Recyclable Materials (1)	Tonnage Available	Estimated Tonnages Collected		
			Low	Medium	High
Corrugated Paper	21.1%	31.1	1.64	2.46	3.28
Newsprint	35.9%	31.1	2.79	4.19	5.59
Glass (Clear and Colored)	19.0%	28.0	1.48	2.22	2.96
Office Paper	4.5%	18.7	0.35	0.53	0.70
Plastic (PET, HDPE only)	6.2%	9.3	0.48	0.72	0.96
Steel and Bimetallic Cans	12.3%	6.2	0.96	1.44	1.91
Aluminum Cans	1.0%	3.1	0.08	0.12	0.16
TOTALS	100.0%	127.5	7.78	11.68	15.56

(1) Based on the experience of West Mead Township; percent breakdown for materials actually collected

TABLE 4
ESTIMATED PULLS FOR COMMINGLED MATERIALS (1)

Material	Lbs./cu.yd.	Tons Collected	Lbs. Collected	% by Weight	Cubic Yards	% by cu.yd.
Aluminum	50	0.12	233	2.60%	4.67	5.30%
Steel	80	1.44	2,871	31.95%	35.89	40.77%
Glass	500	2.22	4,435	49.35%	8.87	10.08%
Plastics	37.5	0.72	1,447	16.10%	38.59	43.85%
TOTALS		4.49	8,986	100.00%	88.01	100.00%
Estimated pulls based on 8 cubic yard container (2):						11.00
Estimated pulls based on 10 cubic yard container (2):						8.80

(1) Assumes medium level of diversion
(2) Assumes full containers

TABLE 5
ESTIMATED PULLS FOR PAPER PRODUCTS (1)

Material	Lbs./cu.yd.	Tons Collected	Lbs. Collected	Cubic Yards	Estimated Pulls (8 cu. yd) (2)	Estimated Pulls (10 cu. yd) (2)
Newsprint	400	4.19	8,379.1	20.9	2.6	2.1
Corrugated	90	2.46	4,924.7	54.7	6.8	5.5
Office Paper	400	0.53	1,050.3	2.6	0.3	0.3
TOTALS		7.18	14,354.1	78.3	9.8	7.8

(1) Assumes medium level of diversion
(2) Assumes full containers

TABLE 6
ESTIMATED COST FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PULLS (1)

Material	Estimated Pulls (8 cu. yd) (2)	Estimated Cost (8 cu.yd) (3)	Estimated Pulls (10 cu. yd) (2)	Estimated Cost (10 cu.yd) (3)
Commingled	11.0	550	9.0	450
Newsprint	3.0	150	3.0	150
Corrugated	7.0	350	6.0	300
Office Paper	1.0	50	1.0	50
TOTALS	22.0	\$1,100	19.0	\$950

- (1) Assumes medium level of diversion
- (2) Assumes full containers
- (3) Assumes \$50 per pull

Only experience will determine what the actual cost will be. Depending on usage, the Borough could contract for collection on a weekly basis, similar to what Tri-County has done, or could possibly arrange for collection to be done on-call. The cost for the service will depend on the level desired and what the Borough is able to negotiate with a hauler. The Borough should check into the possibility of revenue—some return—for the materials recycled, though in a drop-off program like this, negotiating revenues is unlikely.

One option that would limit costs considerably would be to collect only commingled containers and newsprint. Corrugated cardboard is a high volume material and as illustrated in Table 6, would require a significant number of pulls in comparison to the other materials. Table 7 provides estimated costs based on collecting only commingled materials and newsprint.

The Borough could still offer the option to recycle corrugated cardboard and office paper by negotiating with a local business that already recycles these materials or wants to recycle them to accept them from the public. This may be an attractive option to a business that receives revenues for the sale of the materials. Another option would include Borough management of these materials, though this would be difficult given the unavailability of personnel. However, possible scenarios include:

TABLE 7
ESTIMATED COST FOR PRIVATE SECTOR PULLS (1)
COMMINGLED MATERIALS AND NEWSPRINT ONLY

Material	Estimated Pulls (8 cu. yd) (2)	Estimated Cost (8 cu.yd) (3)	Estimated Pulls (10 cu. yd) (2)	Estimated Cost (10 cu.yd) (3)
Commingled	11.0	550	9.0	450
Newsprint	3.0	150	3.0	150
TOTALS	14.0	\$700	12.0	\$600

- (1) Assumes medium level of diversion
- (2) Assumes full containers
- (3) Assumes \$50 per pull

- Providing permanent containers at the Borough building to collect these materials. The Borough could potentially market them to a broker for some revenue.
- In another scenario, the Borough could offer monthly or quarterly drop-off collection for these materials, and possibly for other difficult to recycle materials. The Borough could: (1) manage the programs and market the materials on its own; (2) establish a cooperative effort with another municipality to do this; or (3) contract with the private sector to provide equipment and haul the materials on these days.

Volunteer Recycling Program

An option discussed during a meeting with the Borough on June 6 appears to be a strong possibility for the Borough, provided that all necessary details can be arranged. This involves the Borough establishing a permanent drop-off recycling site in a prominent location. This site could be open continuously, depending on the location, or only open during set times. In this scenario, the Borough would purchase recycling equipment (collection bins) using a Section 902 Recycling Program Grant from the state, make arrangements for the hauling of the materials from the site, and would enlist assistance from local organizations to staff the site.

Because of space limitations at most businesses in the Borough, the only location where there appears to be enough room is at the school. Of course, use of the school grounds for recycling collection would require permission from the school for use of the property and some guarantee that the recycling area is closely monitored and maintained. The advantage to this site is that there appears to be sufficient room to operate on site without interfering with local traffic. Figure 1 illustrates how traffic might flow in a volunteer drop-off program held at the school.

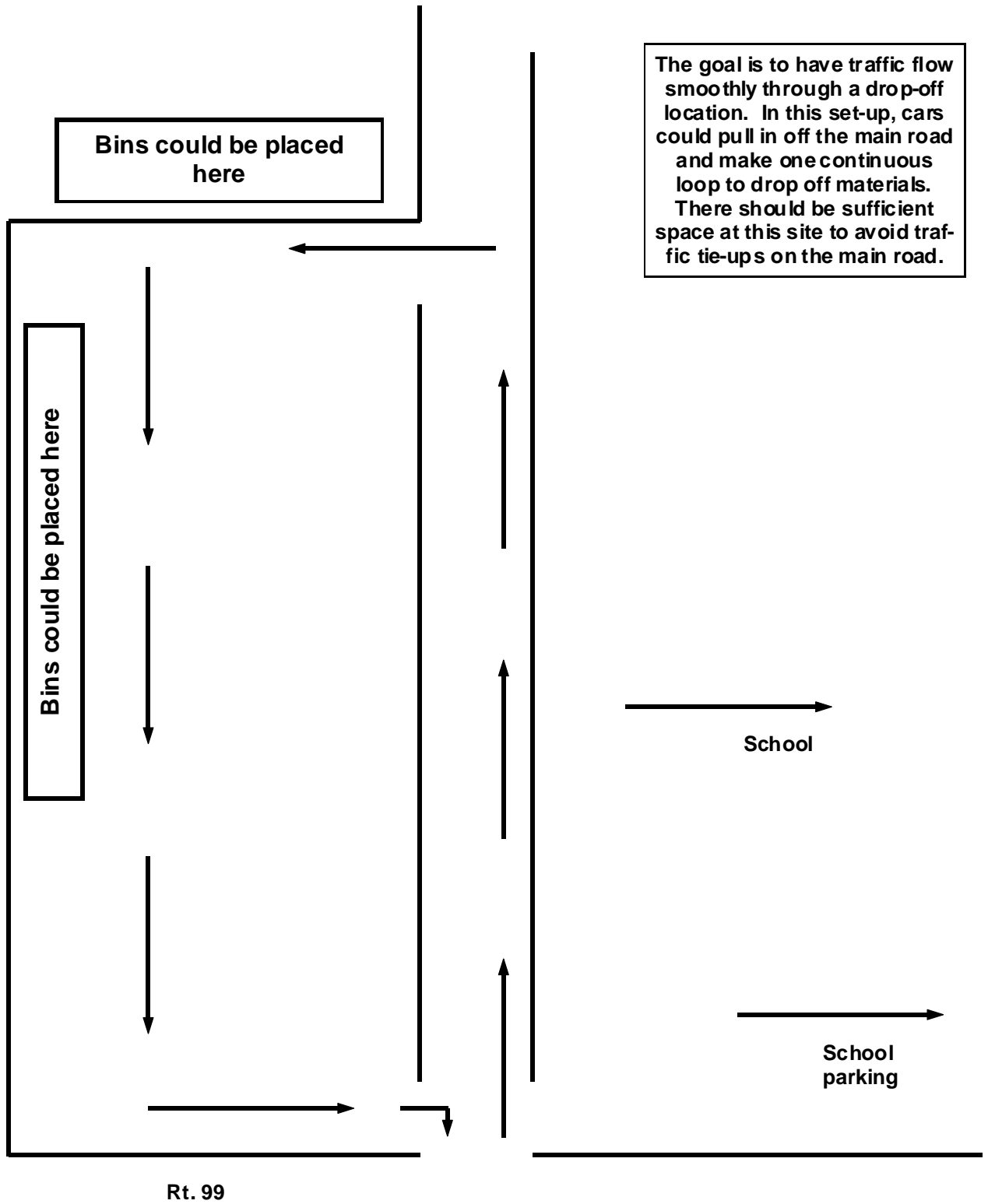
The Borough suggested that there are several organizations in the Borough that might be able to assist with such an effort. The Boy Scouts are already doing an aluminum can drive every two months, so they may be willing to staff a drop-off site every other month in exchange for keeping the proceeds from the aluminum as they have in the past. Other groups include:

- Lions Club
- Lionesses
- Garden Club
- Core Committee—St. Francis Church

While the Borough has expressed interest in having weekly drop-off events, this is probably not a workable option given the experience of other communities in Pennsylvania. There are drop-off recycling efforts managed by volunteers or non-profits throughout Pennsylvania. While many of these efforts are highly successful, they have often presented problems for the individuals or organizations that run them.

In a recent study conducted for Wilmington Township in Lawrence County, the Township operated a very successful monthly drop-off program. As participation grew, the Township encountered traffic problems with vehicles arriving to drop-off materials, illegal dumping of materials before and after the collection event, and difficulty in having sufficient volunteer help for the events. This was also the case in Peters Township (Washington County) several years ago when the success of the drop-off plastic collection effort overwhelmed the ability of the volunteers and Township to manage it. In Elk County, the Benedictine sisters that

FIGURE 1
McKEAN BOROUGH RECYCLING SITE LAYOUT AND TRAFFIC FLOW
(Suggested)



Not to scale

managed a long-term recycling effort suddenly notified the County that the program would be discontinued, leaving the County scrambling to find a way to manage the sites that had been operating for several years.

What these cases illustrate is that maintaining volunteer assistance could be difficult. A better approach may be to start modestly with a monthly drop-off event. If several organizations are involved, it would limit the obligation for any one organization to a couple of events per year. It is unlikely that the Borough would be able to sustain weekly collection using volunteers because of the high burnout factor. If more frequent collection proves to be necessary, the Borough could consider adding days at that time.

The other option is to have a site that is available continuously, and to ask that interested/sponsoring organizations participate by monitoring the site on a regular basis to ensure that the site stays clean, materials are not contaminated, and that the materials are pulled when a container becomes full. This may be less onerous than supplying a group of personnel at a regular collection event.

It should be noted that Crawford County is implementing a County-wide recycling program that makes use of a drop-off system manufactured by Haul-All, and sold by VQuip throughout Pennsylvania. This system employs the use of attractive containers and signage that allow for the collection of materials by type using material specific openings that inhibit contamination. This type of system could easily be operated on a continuous basis, using volunteers to monitor to ensure that the area around the containers remains clean with no dumping of garbage. West Mead Recycling Corporation (WMRC) will collect materials from all Crawford County locations using specialized equipment designed to collect from these containers. WMRC is interested in working with other municipalities and counties to collect their recyclables for processing and marketing at the West Mead processing facility near Meadville. This may be an attractive option for McKean Borough, as WMRC is a non-profit operation that will base its fees on covering cost and not earning profit. This system has been operating successfully in several counties throughout the state. The containers and site development can be funded using a Section 902 Recycling Program grant, and the 10 percent match that would be required can be covered using the lease value of the site. The Borough may wish to contact WMRC (at West Mead Township in Crawford County) to discuss the potential for this type of effort.

Cooperative Program

The Borough may want to investigate the potential for cooperation with another municipality or municipalities. Given the size of the Borough and its lack of staffing to operate a program, such an arrangement may benefit all municipalities involved.

Washington Township, just south of the Borough, was looking into establishing a recycling program. If this happens, the Borough may want to work with the Township, perhaps entering into some kind of cost sharing arrangement based on population. Given the difference in size, the cost should be minimal to the Borough, and administration of the program could be managed by a municipality that has the staffing to do it.

Conversely, if the Borough were to implement a drop-off program in the Borough so as to provide a convenient recycling opportunity for residents and businesses, it could investigate

the potential for developing a cooperative arrangement with a neighboring municipality or municipalities since most do not have recycling programs and at least some residents would make use of a site in the Borough. This could offset some of the cost to the Borough for hauling of the materials to a processing facility.

PAY-AS-YOU-THROW

Also known as unit-based or variable rate pricing, customers in a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) system pay for municipal waste management services per unit of waste collected rather than through a fixed fee. PAYT takes into account variations in waste generation rates by charging residents or households based on the amount of refuse they place at the curb, thereby offering residents an incentive to reduce the amount of waste they generate and dispose of. Well over 125 municipalities in Pennsylvania have implemented some form of a PAYT program. There is more information about PAYT available on the DEP website at www.dep.state.pa.us.

Potential Benefits of PAYT. Municipalities that have implemented PAYT programs have reported a number of benefits, including: (1) waste reduction; (2) reduced waste disposal costs; (3) increased waste prevention; (4) increased participation in recycling and composting programs; (5) a more equitable waste management fee structure; and (6) increased understanding of environmental issues in general.

PAYT programs encourage residents to generate less refuse by charging them based on the amount of waste placed out for disposal. Setting costs according to generation encourages residents to become more conscious of disposal habits and to look for opportunities to generate less waste or divert a greater portion of the waste stream through alternative management practices such as recycling and composting. The key is that residents become more conscientious, and thereby more understanding of environmental issues and the impact of their behavior on the environment. PAYT also provides a mechanism that ties the rate paid per household to the level of service, similar to other utilities. Households that generate smaller amounts of refuse pay a lower rate than those generating larger amounts.

Potential Barriers/Issues Associated with PAYT. While there are clearly benefits associated with PAYT programs, there are also potential barriers/issues that must be overcome or addressed to successfully implement this system. These potential barriers/issues include: (1) illegal dumping; (2) ensuring full recovery of expenses; (3) controlling/covering administrative costs; (4) perception of increased cost to residents; and (5) building public consensus.

While communities throughout Pennsylvania have experienced some or all of the barriers/issues identified above, most have been able to take appropriate measures to overcome them. For example, the City of Wilkes-Barre experienced illegal disposal of household refuse in commercial dumpsters. Many businesses placed locks on their dumpsters to combat this problem. Stopping other illegal dumping may require stricter enforcement of existing ordinances and greater penalties for violations. Cost issues can be resolved with careful planning, a clear understanding of total service cost and demonstrating to the public that the program is likely to reduce the cost of service for many households. Including public input early in the process can help to build public consensus and understanding of the real benefits to the residents.

OTHER RECYCLING OPTIONS

Yard Waste. Composting or land application of leaf and yard waste has the potential to divert large volumes of waste, though this is generally a less critical issue for rural municipalities. Because there are no personnel available to operate a collection program, one option for diverting this material is to develop an agreement with a local farmer, landscaper, nursery, cemetery or similar business to accept the material for land application or composting. The DEP has guidelines available both for yard waste composting and for land application that would need to govern any of these activities.

Regardless of whether or not the Borough decides to implement any collection of yard waste, it should consider promoting home composting by residents. The Borough could work with the County Recycling Coordinator and/or County Cooperative Extension office or garden clubs to provide an educational program, and purchase of home compost bins is eligible for funding under Section 902 Recycling Program grants.

Other Materials. There are usually other opportunities throughout a county or region for recycling. Other materials that can be recycled include, but are not limited to, used oil, tires, automotive batteries, textiles, and appliances. There may also be opportunities to partner with other municipalities to sponsor periodic events to collect some of the larger, more difficult to recycle items. The Borough should consult with the County Recycling Coordinator to determine what other options exist and provide the information to residents.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

There is no specific “recipe” for public education that is guaranteed to work for every municipality. The variety of programs and vehicles is just about as numerous as the number of recycling programs in the state. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to size, demographics, geographic location, whether the area is urban, suburban or rural, type of program, mix of housing (single/multi-family, permanent vs. transient) proportion of residences to businesses/institutions. What works for a given area is a function of matching the type and size of effort to the target audiences in that area. McKean Borough has a very small population and is very compact.

There is a need for a heavy focus on education in the implementation phase of a program in order to promote participation and train program participants about how to recycle. As programs mature, some level of educational efforts must continue, but they can continue at a more moderate level. The typical citizen will do his or her duty, but usually needs regular reminders about the hows and whys of a program.

Brochures

The Borough should develop a recycling brochure that explains how the program works, including when and where, materials collected, preparation of materials, and why the program is important. This should be distributed to all residents of the Borough. Given the size of the Borough, distribution may be best accomplished by door-to-door distribution. It may be possible to enlist the help of the Boy Scouts or one of the other organizations to manage the distribution, which should include businesses as well as homes.

Reminders

If a drop-off collection option is chosen, it is important that residents be reminded which day is recycling day. Missing recycling day means having to store recyclables until the next recycling day. Some residents may not be willing to do this and may dispose of additional recyclables when storage space is tight or if they prefer not to have these materials sitting around for any length of time.

There are several reminder options that might be considered, some passive and some active. A passive option would be to distribute a recycling calendar that is small enough to be posted on the refrigerator, but distinctive enough to stand out among all the other materials that tend to be posted there as well. This could be distributed along with the Borough's recycling brochure. A more active option would be use of a reusable banner placed in a prominent location. This would involve a one time cost and volunteer assistance to hang it before recycling day and remove it once collection has been completed.

Other options might include working with a local publication to provide regular reminders, working with local churches to provide reminders in bulletins, working with local businesses, and working with the schools and civic organizations.

The Borough could also consider making available promotional items made from recycled materials—preferably something that would be used by residents so it remains in view as a reminder—to serve as constant reminders about the Borough's recycling program. The Borough could probably arrange for the distribution of these items by local merchants and at recycling events. Promotional items could include a range of products, from inexpensive pens, pencils, rulers, and refrigerator magnets to note pads or even tote bags. Any items purchased are eligible for funding through the Section 902 Recycling Program grants.

Ongoing Education

Sometimes residents forget or do not completely understand which materials are acceptable and which are not, or exactly how to prepare materials. In either case, friendly reminders may help to set these residents on the right track. This could be done through production of a new brochure that is distributed annually or through joint efforts with a local publication to include ongoing recycling information for residents.

Education in the Schools

Educating students in grades K-12 may be a very effective way of reaching Borough residents both now and for the future. Students often become the strongest advocates of recycling, and will ensure that recycling is happening in their homes. The DEP has recycling curriculum materials available, and the County Recycling Coordinator usually has resources available to assist with education in the schools as well.

ENFORCEMENT

If the Borough decides to implement a drop-off recycling program, it may want to review any current solid waste ordinances to ensure that the Borough has the authority to take action in the event of illegal dumping. Wilmington Township (Lawrence County) found that some residents were leaving materials at the collection site before and after the event, and sometimes

they would leave trash or unacceptable materials. In some cases when the site was especially busy, residents would pull in, dump materials, and drive off. For Wilmington Township, it was suggested that having visible law enforcement officials available, or simply more volunteers, might help. Illegal dumping can also become a problem at permanent drop-off sites when residents do not take the time to load materials into the collection containers, or use the sites as a place to dump garbage.

It is important to have language in a local ordinance that allows the Borough to take action if necessary for such offenders. Such language is useful even if there is no recycling program. However, the effectiveness of any prohibitions concerning illegal dumping requires the cooperation of (1) law enforcement personnel in responding to calls and tracking down illegal dumpers, and (2) the court system in prosecuting these offenders. Individuals and haulers will continue to dump if it is clear that they will not be punished for the activity.

The County Recycling Coordinator should be able to provide samples of appropriate ordinances if an ordinance is needed.

GRANT FUNDING

A number of recycling options and educational programs and materials have been described throughout this report. All of the equipment and materials described, plus staff time and expenses (with the exception of postage, which can be used at match) in planning/preparing/purchasing the equipment, materials and programs, is eligible for funding by a Section 902 Recycling Program grant. These grants will pay for up to 90 percent of eligible costs. Fundable materials, containers and activities described throughout this report include:

- Recycling planning and implementation efforts, including public education
- All public education printed materials for a recycling program, including: brochures; recycling calendar (perhaps a magnet); banners; promotional items
- Recycling equipment, including: containers to collect materials through a drop-off program; containers for drop-off collection of yard waste; home composting bins
- Planning for and implementing educational programs in the schools
- Purchasing equipment to implement or expand recycling in the schools

Application forms for Section 902 grants are available from the DEP Northwest Regional Office in Meadville. DEP requests that applicants schedule pre-application meetings to discuss proposals prior to submitting applications to ensure that applicants are submitting applications that include only fundable activities and equipment and to avoid duplication of efforts.

The Borough is also eligible for funding through the Section 904 Performance Grant program, which rewards municipalities based on tonnage recycled and waste diversion rate. Under this program, municipalities can receive \$5.00/ton for every ton of residential waste recycled and for every ton of commercial waste up to the amount of residential waste recycled, plus \$1.00 additional for every percentage point of diversion. In addition, municipalities receive \$10.00 for every ton of commercial recyclables above the 1:1 ratio with residential materials. The state uses a standard generation rate of 0.8 tons/person/year to determine the recycling rate.

For example, if the Borough recycled 10 tons of residential material and 20 tons of commercial materials, it could combine 10 tons of the commercial materials with the residential, and use the 20 tons to determine a recycling rate. If the Borough generates 311 of waste based on the 0.8 tons/person/year generation rate, the calculated recycling rate would be 6.4 percent. The Borough would receive \$11.40 per ton for the 20 tons--\$5.00 per ton flat rate, plus \$1.00 for each percentage point of diversion, which is \$6.40 for 6.4 percent diversion. For the 10 tons of commercial material that could not be counted toward the recycling rate, the Township would receive a flat \$10.00 per ton. Based on these numbers, McKean Borough would receive a Performance Grant of \$228 for the first 20 tons of residential and commercial materials, and \$100 for the additional commercial materials.

DETERMINING RESIDENT INTEREST

It is important that the residents of a municipality support their local recycling program. Because recycling is not mandatory for the Borough, it may be beneficial to determine the level of interest in recycling among residents. Probably the best method for doing this is to ask residents to complete a survey that contains information that makes it possible to make an informed decision about recycling. Like public education materials, a survey might best be distributed door-to-door. It may be best to have volunteers speak directly to residents and assist them in completing the survey, rather than just leaving the surveys without explanation, but a survey could simply be dropped off, with residents asked to return them to the Borough office. The results could be used to: (1) determine whether or not to establish a program; and (2) if residents support a program, determine the type of program that residents would prefer.

A sample survey is included as Attachment 1.

CONCLUSIONS

- The Borough has expressed interest in implementing a drop-off recycling program. Because the population is under 5,000, recycling is not mandatory.
- The Borough is small and compact, a feature that may make drop-off recycling viable and successful. There are multiple options for implementing drop-off recycling.
- A Pay-As-You-Throw program for municipal waste collection and disposal may be an approach to encourage recycling.
- Implementation of any recycling efforts should involve a comprehensive and sustained public education program.
- Legal enforcement will be important to address any illegal dumping activities that may arise from the implementation of a drop-off recycling program. Implementing some type of illegal dumping enforcement program should probably be done regardless of whether or not the Borough implements recycling if one doesn't already exist.
- Grant funding is available to pay for the cost of any recycling planning and implementation undertaken by the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Borough should consider implementing a drop-off collection program for its residents. The approach should be one that is attractive to residents and can be sustained.
- The Borough should survey its residents to determine interest in establishing a recycling program and the preferred method among residents.
- The Borough should explore the possibility of establishing a Pay-As-You-Throw program.
- If the Borough does not implement a recycling program, it should consult with the County Recycling Coordinator to provide information to residents about any recycling opportunities in the County or region.
- If the Borough decides to implement a drop-off recycling program, it should:
 - Plan for and implement a comprehensive recycling public education program.
 - Review its ordinances to ensure that any necessary enforcement language/ mechanisms are in place, and if needed, adopt appropriate language/mechanisms.
 - Apply for Section 902 grant funding for all eligible activities and equipment.
 - Work with the County Recycling Coordinator to obtain information about other recycling opportunities in the County.
- The Borough should work closely with the County Recycling Coordinator to design and implement whatever option it chooses.

Many municipalities in the state have chosen to implement some type of recycling program, even though they are not mandated to do so. There are certainly favorable conditions in McKean Borough that could make recycling viable and cost-effective. Even if the Borough chooses not to implement recycling, there are options available to the Borough to educate its residents about recycling opportunities throughout Erie County and the region, and the Borough should obtain this information by contacting and working with the County Recycling Coordinator.

Sincerely,
R.W. BECK, INC.

Sandra L. Strauss
Environmental Analyst

cc: Kathleen Kilbane, SWANA
Carl Hursh, DEP
Kathy Jones, Erie County