

# **RECYCLING HISTORY**

## **Pilot Program:**

The Recycling Pilot Program began in Columbus in late 1992. It consisted of four (4) areas with one thousand homes in each area. The initial purpose of this program was to gather information and determine the best collection method to be of most benefit, what materials to recycle, what the collection days would be for the different areas and what type container to use for collection.

Collection methods tested were:

1. Blue bags with recyclables separated by the homeowners.
2. Three small plastic containers for the homeowner to separate the recyclables.
3. One 18 gallon container for the homeowner to commingle the recyclables to be separated by collection personnel at the curb.

*The system with the best participation rate was the larger 18 gallon container.*

The program was originally scheduled to last one year and at the end of this year a review of the program and it's effectiveness would be conducted. The results of this review determined whether or not to continue and or expand the program. In 1993, before the scheduled end of this "Pilot Program", we added thirteen new subdivisions as well as a voluntary recycling program outside the "Pilot Program" area. In January of 1994, the City of Columbus implemented it's city wide recycling program.

## **Recycling Partnership**

The Columbus Consolidated Government (CCG) contracted with Goodwill Industries to establish a Material Recovery Facility (MRF). The CCG and Goodwill Industries split the profit (50/50). Goodwill Industries is responsible for the sale and marketing of all recyclables taken to them by the CCG, Recycling Division.

## **Recyclables Collected:**

1. Newspaper
2. #1 (PET) Plastics
3. Glossy Print Magazines
4. Ink Cartridges
5. Rechargeable Batteries
6. Auto Fluids (Used Oil, Transmission Fluid & Anti Freeze)
7. Aluminum/Metal Cans (Food & Drink Containers)
8. #2 (HDPE) Plastics
9. Phone Books
10. Toner Cartridges
11. Old Cell Phones

### **Cost Calculations:**

Many different factors have to be considered in calculating recycling cost. We have to figure in landfill space saved due to owning/operating our own landfill. Our annual recycling budget averages about \$550,000.00. After the 50/50 profit split with Goodwill Industries, we make an average of approximately \$50,000.00 annually on the sale of the recyclables. Landfill space cost approximately \$400,000.00 an acre. We save approximately one (1) acre of landfill space per year. We also save \$42,000.00 in disposal cost because we don't dispose of approximately 3000 tons of material annually. Instead we recycle them.

### **Approximate Annual Cost:**

Approximately \$58,000.00 is spent annually over and above the amount of revenue generated by the Recycling Program and the amount of Landfill space saved by recycling goods that would otherwise be disposed of in the Landfill.

Also, approximately \$100,000.00 is spent annually from the recycling budget to co-sponsor a household hazardous waste collection day with Keep Columbus Beautiful. The collection of hazardous waste keeps dangerous chemicals out of the landfill. The special collection days allow home owners a way of disposing hazardous material legally. These hazardous waste are hauled outside the county or state to a landfill permitted to accept them. The hauling away of the waste accounts for the majority of the costs for the project.

### **Conclusion:**

We have a cost effective and fairly successful recycling program. Our program is voluntary and has a very good participation rate of approximately 55%. Mandatory programs are not overly effective and are difficult to enforce.