

Decatur County

Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region

2008 and 2009 Qualitative Review



Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
Division of Solid Waste Management
Solid Waste Assistance Programs
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Introduction

Tennessee's *Solid Waste Management Act of 1991* (SWMA) required solid waste regions to achieve a twenty-five percent (25%) waste reduction and diversion goal for solid waste going into Class I landfills by December 31, 2003. Under T.C.A. § 68-211-861, the basis for determining compliance with this reduction and diversion goal was based on a per capita reduction measurement that may be adjusted for economic or population trends, or by a qualitative assessment that evaluates whether the region had comparable progress to those of similar regions that made the diversion goal. Until 2003, the need to define the qualitative assessment was not necessary since there were no regions out of compliance. After the 2003 reporting period, 34 regions failed to meet the 25% waste reduction and diversion goal, which necessitated the promulgation of rules describing the methodology for qualitative assessment of regions failing to meet the per capita base year reduction and diversion. These rules became effective August 6, 2006.

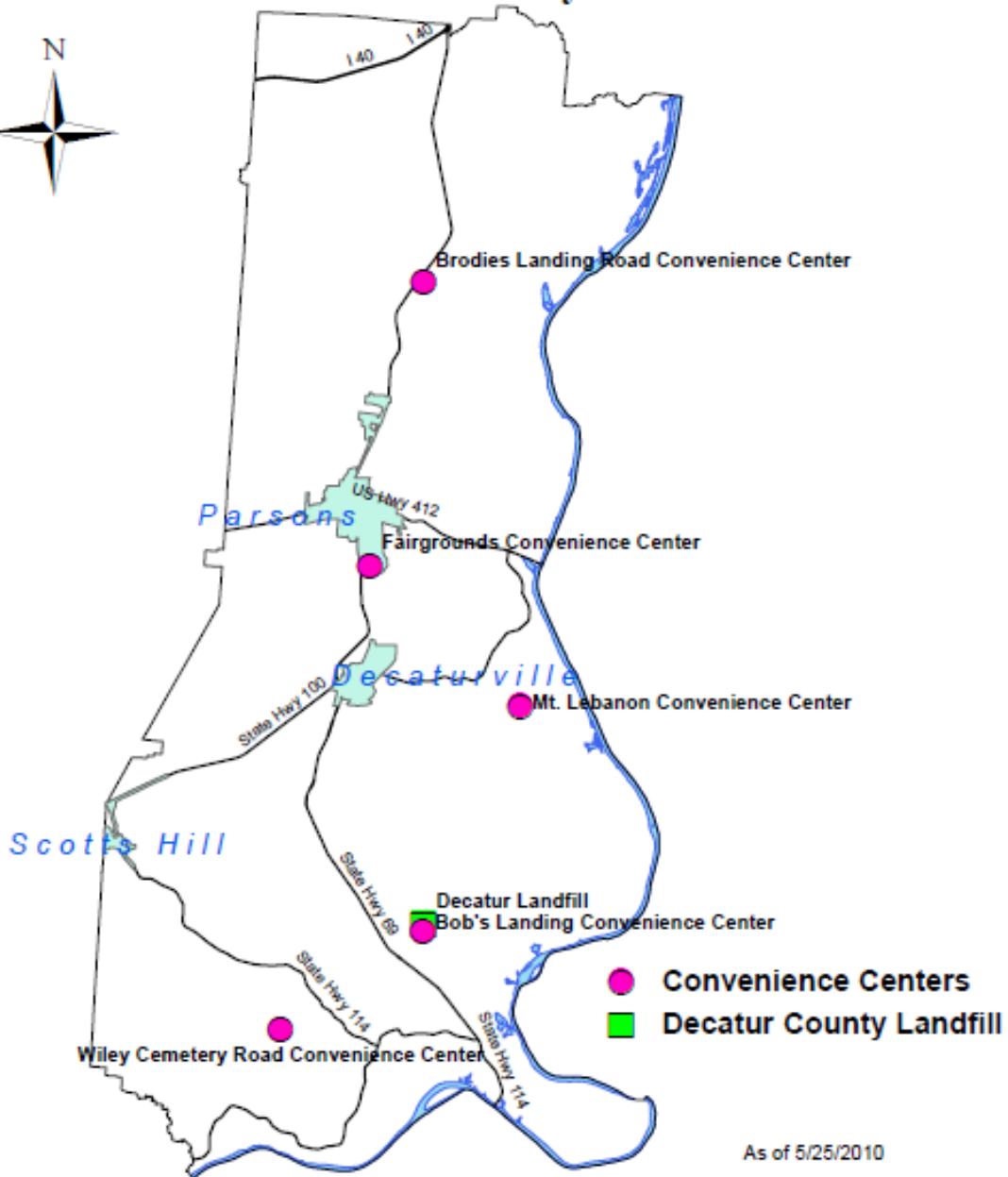
The first step in the qualitative assessment process is to determine if the failing region met the waste reduction and diversion goal using the real-time methodology. This method is calculated annually by dividing the total amount recycled or diverted from Class I landfills by the total generated waste stream. If the region did not meet the 25% goal through this process, the region is then reviewed in order to determine if a "good faith" effort was made toward compliance and if their programs and solid waste infrastructure are qualitatively equivalent to like regions of similar population and economic characteristics who have achieved the goal.

In 2008, seven regions failed to meet the goal by either base year or real-time methods. With a base year reduction of -44% and a real-time diversion rate of 17%, Decatur County was one of those regions. The regions selected for Decatur's comparison were Humphreys and Sequatchie.

In 2009, five regions failed to meet the goal by either base year or real-time methods. With a base year reduction of -7% and a real-time diversion rate of 17%, Decatur County was one of those regions. The regions selected for Decatur's comparison were Chester and Lewis.

On March 10, 2010, Division of Solid Waste Management staff members Nick Lytle and Ashby Barnes, visited Decatur County Solid Waste Director Robert Haynes and Joint Economic and Community Development Executive Director, Bob Newberry to discuss all facets of the solid waste management program. The county mayor and solid waste planning board chairman were unavailable during our visit. Visits were made to each convenience center and the landfill. The equipment and facilities at each of those sites were examined and noted. Future facility and equipment needs for the program were reviewed with Robert Haynes at the time of the visit and a statement of the county's solid waste income verses expenses was obtained.

Decatur Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region Solid Waste System



Solid Waste Facilities and Infrastructure

Every county in Tennessee is required by law to provide a minimum level of waste reduction and waste collection assurance. Decatur's solid waste collection and recycling programs serve a population of 11,288 and an area of 333 square miles. The minimum number of convenience center sites required by state statute, based on Decatur County's population, is calculated at one location. The county operates five convenience centers at the following locations:

- Bob's Landing Road in Bath Springs, open Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, 1 pm to 5 pm, and Saturday, 8 am to 5 pm
- Fairgrounds Road in Parsons, open Monday through Saturday, 7 am to 5 pm and Sunday, 1 pm to 5 pm
- Broadies Landing Road in Parsons, open Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, 1 pm to 5 pm, and Saturday, 8 am to 5 pm
- Mt. Lebanon-Visetown Road in Decaturville, open Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, 1 pm to 5 pm, and Saturday, 8 am to 5 pm
- Wylie Cemetery Road in Bath Springs, open Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, 1 pm to 5 pm, and Saturday, 8 am to 5 pm.

The convenience centers are well maintained, each equipped with a compactor and sufficient receptacles to handle the waste. When the compactors are full the county takes them to the Decatur County landfill. Waste Industries, Inc. owns and operates this Class I landfill. The county disposes of residential waste free of charge. The county residents that haul and dispose their own waste at the landfill are charged a tipping fee.



Photograph 1: Hours for Broadies, Bob's Landing, Mt. Lebanon and Wylie Gardner Convenience Centers. The compactor shown was paid for in part by a Recycling Equipment Grant from the Division of SWM.

Recyclables collected at the convenience centers include corrugated cardboard, scrap metal, white goods, used oil, and scrap tires. The corrugated cardboard is hauled to the county's Fairground Convenience Center where it is baled and stored until the bales are shipped to market. Scrap metal and white goods are both collected by CSC Recycling located in Camden, Tennessee. Used oil is collected by H & H Oil Recovery located in Camden, Tennessee. Scrap tires are sent to the Mt. Lebanon-Visetown Road Convenience Center where they are stored in a trailer until they are picked up by Mac Tire Recycling and processed for beneficial end uses.

The Fairgrounds Convenience Center utilizes a horizontal baler, forklift, roll-off truck, and open top roll-off receptacles to handle collected materials.

The Decatur County Solid Waste Department has a full-time solid waste director providing the county with management of the day-to-day operation of the solid waste system including: direct oversight of routes, collection schedules, materials marketing, and public education. The county employs 15 part-time convenience center operators. Decaturville, Parsons, and Scotts Hill are the only municipalities in the county. These municipalities all provide residential solid waste collection which is managed by their public works departments without a dedicated solid waste director.



Photograph 2: Fairground Convenience Center, showing the newer roll off container as well as an older "green box", and uncovered corrugated cardboard stored waiting for pick up.

The city of Decaturville provides curbside disposal pick-up for residents as well as businesses with two full-time employees and one part-time employee. Residents pay \$5 a month and businesses pay \$10 per month. Decaturville takes their solid waste directly to the landfill and receives free disposal. The city does not have any recycling programs.

The city of Parsons runs one garbage truck that does curbside disposal pickup for residents with two full-time employees. Parsons takes the waste directly to the landfill and receives free disposal. The city of Parsons owns five dumpsters located throughout the city and collects corrugated cardboard and hauls to the Fairground Convenience Center where it is baled and recycled.

The city of Scotts Hill provides curbside disposal pick-up of household waste for its residents. They have four employees involved in the collection system, one full-time and three part-time. The employees collect waste with pickup trucks. When these trucks are full, the waste is loaded into a sanitation truck and hauled directly to the Waste Services of Decatur County landfill. Since only part of Scotts Hill is in Decatur County, a tipping fee of approximately \$23.00 per ton is charged. The city of Scotts Hill does not have a recycling program.



Photograph 3: Used Oil container at the Fairground's Convenience Center.

Financial Information

T.C.A. § 68-211-874(a) states that each county, solid waste authority and municipality shall account for financial activities related to the management of solid waste in either a special revenue fund or an enterprise fund established expressly for that purpose. According to the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Annual Financial Report of Decatur County, Tennessee, performed by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, Decatur County operates a special revenue fund to account for its solid waste program. The solid waste financial information for Decatur County was examined by Department staff. The Solid Waste/Sanitation fund for Decatur County had a deficit in the unreserved fund balance of \$42,335 as of June 30, 2009 (end of Fiscal Year 2008-2009).

According to the financial report there were two findings that involved the Solid Waste/Sanitation Fund. The County Commission approved an allocation of property tax funds to the Solid Waste Fund and “increased projected revenues so revenues would be sufficient to fund appropriations”. However, revenues failed to meet projections. The second finding was that the Solid Waste/Sanitation Fund borrowed \$20,000 in 2008 and \$75,952 in 2009 from the General Debt Service Fund to provide cash for operations. The 2008 note was to be retired as of June 30, 2008 and the 2009 note was to be retired as of June 30, 2009. However, the audit report stated, “It should be noted that these notes have not been retired as of January 6, 2010.” Furthermore, “the deficiency in revenue resulted from management’s failure to reduce expenditures while revenues failed to meet projections.”

Revenues

Local Taxes (County Property)	\$91,093
Current Services	\$95,235
Sale of Recycled Material	\$15,826
State of Tennessee Grants	\$5,348
Total	<u>\$207,502</u>

Expenditures

Sanitation Management	\$153,944
Convenience Center Operation	\$58,525
Other Charges	\$30,360
Employee Benefits	\$25,872
Total	<u>\$268,701</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues	(\$61,199)
Fund Balance, July 1, 2008	\$18,864
Fund Balance, July 1, 2009	\$(42,335)

The Solid Waste/Sanitation Fund contained a balance at the beginning of Fiscal Year 2008-2009 of \$18,864. The Fund had an end of year deficiency of (\$61,199).

Decatur County’s estimated total expenditures for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 were \$12,042,762 and the total revenues were \$7,595,578. The county’s solid waste expenditures were \$268,701 and the solid waste revenues were \$207,502. The solid waste expenditures were 2.7% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 2.2% of the total county revenues. Deficits in the fund balances have been carried over since Fiscal Year 2007-2008 and as of this report, remain unresolved.

Solid Waste Planning Board

The Solid Waste Management Act of 1991 states that every municipal solid waste planning region in the state must appoint a solid waste planning board, composed of representatives of each county and each city which participates in the solid waste planning region. The Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region Board is responsible for accurately reviewing and approving Annual Progress Reports and is instrumental in the approval process for any new solid waste permits for the region. At a minimum, having an active board that meets with regularity is vital to complete these tasks. The planning board is also responsible for developing municipal solid waste plans, assessing disposal capacity, collection assurance, providing solid waste education, and assisting in other aspects of an integrated solid waste management system. Duties and powers of the solid waste planning board are spelled out in T.C.A. § 68-211-813 thru 815.

Decatur County Solid Waste Director Roger Haynes stated that the region's solid waste planning board meets infrequently and only when called to consider solid waste activities of the region. According to Mr. Haynes, there have been no recent meetings, no resolutions, nor any recent record of solid waste planning board accomplishments.

Analysis of Local Conditions

In 1995, the State of Tennessee averaged 1.3 tons per capita of municipal solid waste placed into Class I landfills. By contrast, in the same year, the Decatur County Municipal Solid Waste Region reported 6,758 tons of waste going into Class I landfills, or 0.62 tons per person. A 25% reduction of this value would require a disposal rate of 0.45 tons per person per year. In 2003, the goal's effective year, the region reported 6,815 tons of Class I waste or 0.59 tons per person. Decatur's reported Class I waste was 10,182 tons (0.90 tons per person) in 2008 and 7,758 tons (0.67 tons per person) in 2009. In 2008, the State of Tennessee averaged 1.05 tons per capita and 0.98 tons per capita in 2009.

In 1999, Decatur County saw a significant decrease in the amount of Class I disposal as reported in the Annual Progress Report. This correlates to the same year that Waste Industries, Inc., took over ownership and operation of the Decatur County Landfill. In 2008, Decatur County saw another significant increase in reported Class I waste. According to Mr. Bob Newberry, a new manager assumed control of operations at the private landfill in early 2008. These significant changes in disposal numbers could suggest flaws in record gathering or reporting. There are no records of any events in 2008 that would account for such a large increase in disposal.

Decatur County does not contain the abundance of businesses seen in many urban areas and, as a result, does not have large scale commercial or industrial recycling programs to boost their progress toward the 25% waste reduction and diversion goal. Four of the county's five convenience centers are closed three days a week and only open part-time the other days. By limiting hours of operation at the convenience

centers, residents are less able to utilize the recycling options provided at these locations.

With the exception of the city of Parsons collecting and hauling corrugated cardboard to the Fairgrounds Convenience Center, the Decatur County solid waste program receives no physical or monetary assistance from the three municipalities in the county.

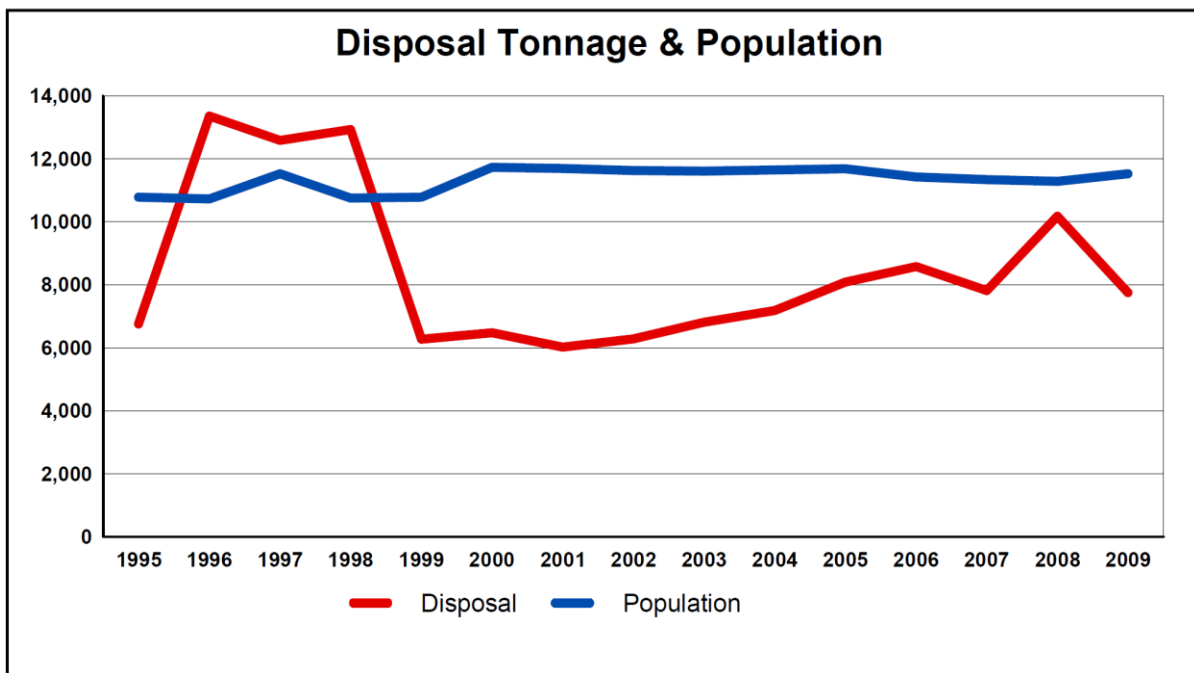
Except for the residents and businesses of the city of Decaturville, citizens don't realize what they are paying to dispose of their waste. The residents of Decatur County have less incentive to reduce or recycle because waste collection charges are embedded in property taxes. Additionally, due to storage capacity and space limitations, the county has limited options on what materials they can recycle.



Photograph 4: Horizontal Baler inside the shed at the Fairground Convenience Center.

Statistics

Year	Population	Disposal	Tons Per Capita
1995	10,788	6,758	0.63
1996	10,731	13,360	1.24
1997	11,532	12,589	1.09
1998	10,760	12,930	1.20
1999	10,788	6,273	0.58
2000	11,731	6,481	0.55
2001	11,697	6,027	0.52
2002	11,629	6,282	0.54
2003	11,610	6,815	0.59
2004	11,650	7,186	0.62
2005	11,686	8,090	0.69
2006	11,426	8,580	0.75
2007	11,339	7,822	0.69
2008	11,288	10,182	0.90
2009	11,525	7,758	0.67



Environmental Field Office Report

According to records of the Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste Management, there are no notices of violation (NOVs) pending for Decatur County.

Comparison Counties

Based on Decatur County's reported Class I disposal and tons diverted, the region failed to meet the mandated 25% waste reduction and diversion goal in 2008 and 2009. Therefore, the Department is required to assess the activities and expenditures of the region, and local governments in that region, to determine whether the region's solid waste programs are qualitatively equivalent to other regions that met the goal, and whether the failure was due to factors beyond the control of the region. This qualitative assessment method, prescribed by the Department and approved by the Municipal Solid Waste Advisory Committee, was promulgated as a rule in accordance with the provisions of the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in Title 4, Chapter 5. The two counties selected for the 2008 comparison are Humphreys and Sequatchie and the two counties selected for the 2009 comparison were Chester and Lewis.

HUMPHREYS COUNTY surpassed the goal in 2008 with a base year reduction of 38% and a real-time diversion rate of 68%. This was achieved with a 0.8 tons per capita disposal ratio and a gradual reduction of Class I disposal from 21,000 tons in 1999 to 14,000 tons in 2008.

Humphreys' solid waste program includes five convenience centers with an additional location planned, a recycling drop-off site, a waste tire collection center, three used oil collection sites, and a Class III/IV landfill. In addition, a non-profit organization, James Developmental Center, Inc., operates a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) collecting, processing, and marketing the county's recyclables. James Developmental Center is a sheltered workshop, utilizing developmentally challenged personnel in the operation. The center serves as the official recycling facility for Humphreys County, picking up recyclable materials from the county's convenience centers, processing them, and marketing them. These materials include: paper, corrugated cardboard, metals, plastics, used oil, auto fluids, and lead-acid batteries.

Humphreys County employs two full-time solid waste directors: one to handle the convenience centers and transportation of Class I waste and the other to oversee the operation of the Class III/IV landfill. The staff also includes a part-time recycling coordinator, a part-time litter program manager, a scale operator, an equipment operator for the Class III/IV landfill, six convenience center operators, and four truck drivers. The recycling coordinator, together with a part-time litter program manager, present educational programs throughout the schools system, aided by Tennessee's Department of Transportation Litter Grant Education Program, and the county's

recycling program. The general public is targeted for waste reduction education during 'Earth Day' and 'Music on the Square Day'.

Humphreys County's estimated total expenditures for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 were \$12,851,634 and the total revenues were \$11,412,178. The county's solid waste expenditures were \$620,933 and the solid waste revenues were \$666,342. The solid waste expenditures were 4.8% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 5.8% of the total county revenues.

SEQUATCHIE COUNTY achieved the 25% waste reduction and diversion goal in 2008 with a real-time diversion rate of 38%. This was achieved with an extremely low 0.29 tons per capita disposal ratio. Sequatchie County has had consistently low Class I disposal numbers over the past ten years.

Sequatchie County maintains five convenience centers, with one part-time and six full-time operators, strategically located throughout the county to maximize access to all residents in the unincorporated areas. Each location is open from 8 am to 5 pm weekdays and 7 am to 5 pm on Saturday and offers recycling collection for corrugated cardboard and mixed metals. The county operates two roll-off trucks, both with full-time drivers, to service these convenience centers and transport the waste to the Marion County Sanitary Landfill in adjoining Marion County. Dunlap, the county seat and only incorporated municipality, contracts with Allied Waste to provide curbside waste collection for its residents, which is also transported to Marion County Sanitary Landfill. Lesser amounts of commercial waste (50 tons combined) were disposed in Rhea County Landfill and Middlepoint Landfill by private haulers. All county and city residents utilize the convenience centers for their recyclable materials.

A compactor and receiver at the Dunlap Convenience Center are dedicated to corrugated cardboard received from throughout the county. The other materials collected at the five centers are sold unprocessed to various markets around the area, e.g., Chattanooga Paper Board and Phillips Metals in Chattanooga, and C&D Recycling in South Pittsburg. The county's solid waste director/sanitation supervisor oversees the entire solid waste program including convenience centers, waste transportation, recycling collection and marketing. Waste reduction and recycling programs are presented regularly in the schools system in grades K-12.

Sequatchie County's estimated total expenditures for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 were \$8,229,506 and the total revenues were \$8,706,399. The county's solid waste expenditures were \$426,917 and the solid waste revenues were \$442,791. The solid waste expenditures were 5.2% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 5.1% of the total county revenues.

CHESTER COUNTY achieved the 25% waste reduction and diversion goal in 2009 with a real-time diversion rate of 53%. This was achieved with an extremely low 0.33 tons per capita disposal ratio. The county has had consistently low Class I disposal numbers over the past ten years.

Chester County maintains five convenience centers, one recycling center, and one transfer station with six full-time and 19 part-time employees. The main convenience center is located in Henderson and is open from 8 am to 6 pm Monday through Saturday and from 1 pm to 5 pm on Sunday. The other four locations are open from 7 am to noon Monday and Tuesday, noon to 5 pm Wednesday and Friday and 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday. Each convenience center offers recycling collection for corrugated cardboard, mixed paper, aluminum, #1 and #2 plastic, mixed metals, batteries, used oil, paint, tires, and used clothing. The county also collects corrugated cardboard from 52 businesses located in Henderson. Chester County operates two roll-off trucks, both with full-time drivers, to service their convenience centers and bring the waste from the outlying sites to the centrally located transfer station adjacent to the convenience center in Henderson. The county no longer hauls the waste to Waste Services of Decatur County landfill. Waste Services hauls waste from the Chester County transfer station to the Waste Services landfill.

The city of Henderson is the only incorporated municipality and the county seat. Henderson has seven full-time staff and four trucks. The city provides curbside waste collection as well as leaf and brush pickup for residents. Henderson charges a \$15 per month sanitation fee and pays the county \$25.95 a ton to accept its waste at the transfer station.

Chickasaw State Park is located in western Chester County and their waste is collected by Waste Management, Inc. Park rangers collect plastic bottles, corrugated cardboard, mixed paper, aluminum cans and scrap metal and take these commodities to the Chester County convenience center located on Highway 100.

Freed-Hardeman University (FHU) is located in the city of Henderson. They collect corrugated cardboard and office paper for recycling. The collected commodities, as well as FHU's Class I waste, are taken to the convenience center and transfer station in Henderson. Chester County has an agreement with FHU whereby FHU provides the truck to haul the material and the county pays the driver's salary.

Chester County's recycling facility is adjacent to the Henderson convenience center. The commodities collected at the five centers are transported to the recycling facility, processed, and sold to various companies around the area, e.g., Smith Metals in Selmer and Creative Recycling in Nashville (electronic scrap) or marketed through the Recycling Marketing Cooperative for Tennessee, Inc. (RMCT). Paint is reused by the county or sent to Hardin County. In exchange for paint management, Decatur County bales Hardin County's corrugated cardboard. Chester County's solid waste director oversees the entire solid waste program including convenience centers, waste transportation, and recycling collection.

Chester County's estimated total expenditures for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 were \$4,248,624 and the total revenues were \$4,391,659. The county's solid waste expenditures were \$830,241 and the solid waste revenues were \$807,014. The solid

waste expenditures were 19.5% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 18.4% of the total county revenues.

The solid waste financial information for Chester County was examined by Department staff. The county's solid waste revenues and expenditures were found to be financially solvent. The deficiency in revenues shown above was covered by the existing fund balance for Solid Waste/Sanitation Fund of \$294,804.

LEWIS COUNTY recorded a 33.96% real-time diversion rate in 2009. It has also had a consistent low per capita disposal rate over the past ten years.

The county operates one convenience center and transfer station in Hohenwald, the county seat, which is both the population and geographic center of the county. This convenience center is operated full-time, 8 am to 5 pm Monday through Friday, and 8 am to 2 pm on Saturday, and accepts most recyclable materials. In addition to the one permanent convenience center, the county operates a mobile center which moves about the county to nine different locations during each week. The route is well established and convenient to the residents. There are three trailers dedicated to corrugated cardboard recycling that are rotated around the county at designated collection sites. Lewis County also operates a Class III/IV landfill and utilizes materials diversion, along with recycling, in order to reach the State's 25% waste reduction and diversion goal. Some recyclables are marketed locally but most are handled by RMCT. The city of Hohenwald provides curbside waste pick-up service with the cost covered by a solid waste disposal fee billed directly to the residents. For those residents who prefer, there are a couple of private haulers who offer back-door waste collection service.

The county's solid waste educational program is designed to improve recycling and diversion methods, educate the public on the available facilities in the county, and improve the collection and management of problem and hazardous waste.

Lewis County's estimated total expenditures for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 were \$3,900,092 and the total revenues were \$3,772,988. The county's solid waste expenditures were \$472,975 and the solid waste revenues were \$518,490. The solid waste expenditures were 19.5% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 18.4% of the total county revenues.

The solid waste financial information of Lewis County was examined by Department staff. The county's solid waste revenues and expenditures were found to be financially solvent. The deficiency in General Fund total revenues shown above was covered by the existing fund balance of \$736,149.

Qualitative Equivalency

As stated earlier, T.C.A. § 68-211-861 requires each municipal solid waste region to achieve a twenty-five percent (25%) waste reduction and diversion goal for solid waste going to Class I landfills. Decatur's failure to realize this goal caused the Department to assess Decatur County's solid waste reduction program activities and expenditures to determine if they were qualitatively equivalent to other comparative counties that did reach the reduction goal. The Department found that Decatur was qualitatively equivalent to comparative regions. Decatur County and its municipalities have viable waste collection and disposal systems and infrastructure with an adequate number and location of collection facilities. Department staff determined some areas of the system that can be improved. These areas are discussed further in the "Recommendations for Improvement" section of this document. These recommendations should be incorporated into the existing system to insure continued compliance in the future.



Photograph 5: Fairground Convenience Center showing a newer roll off container with a former "green box" being re-used to increase the amount of material taken in at the Convenience Center.

Needs Assessment

T.C.A. § 68-211-811 requires the development districts to submit a District Needs Assessment for each county in the district by September 30, 1992. These Needs Assessments, to be conducted by the development district staff, shall be revised to reflect subsequent developments in the district by April 1, 1999, and every five years thereafter. Decatur County's Needs Assessment was completed by the Southwest Tennessee Development District. The Decatur County Needs Assessment, revised for 2009, reports that the county's economy has been, and remains, relatively weak with unemployment averaging 12.9% (as of July 2009) and residents having to seek

available jobs in surrounding counties. Local governments, including Decatur County, are left evaluating alternative funding mechanisms to cover the increasing costs of important services such as developing public works infrastructure.

According to the Needs Assessment, costs of operating the solid waste management program in Decatur County totaled \$268,701 in 2008; revenues totaled \$207,502. The discrepancy in these two amounts was made up by transfers to the Decatur County Solid Waste Department from the county’s general funds. It is anticipated that costs for the Decatur County solid waste management program will continue to rise each year; especially in areas such as employee salaries, collection, fuel, other transportation costs, equipment, and in maintenance costs.

According to local solid waste officials, there are very few citizen complaints concerning solid waste services, considering the number of households that are served each year by the local government’s solid waste collection and disposal systems. No major capital projects are planned over the next five years for the local collection and disposal systems.

The Needs Assessment states that the region’s total waste stream will continue to be managed over the next five years with little, if any, change in structure to the solid waste system. The current solid waste collection provided by the municipalities and the county collection provided by the five convenience centers available to all residents is sufficient.

Due to budget concerns, the Budget Committee of the Decatur County Commission voted in July 2009 to close four of the five convenience centers located in Decatur County; keeping only the Fairgrounds Convenience Center outside Parsons open. However, the Budget Committee, in a subsequent meeting, voted to keep all five convenience centers open, making cuts in other areas of county expenditures.

It is possible that the Budget Committee’s option of closing convenience centers to save money could be revisited in the future as the county’s budget becomes more and more constrained.

The Needs Assessment provides lists of potential equipment and facilities for continued and expanded operation of the integrated solid waste management program:

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Facilities</u>
Additional collection containers for the convenience centers.	Upgrade and expand existing centers to allow for the recycling of additional commodities.
Forklift	A new service shed is needed to house the cardboard baler at the Fairgrounds Convenience Center.

Even though Decatur County has a special revenue fund, general funds have also been used to cover the increasing costs of managing the solid waste collection, recycling, and disposal services.

Recommendations for Improvement

The county continues to promote recycling through newspaper advertisements and radio announcements. However, there needs to be an increased amount of coordination between Decatur County and its municipalities in recycling matters. There needs to be increased support of schools, institutions and local businesses in the county's recycling efforts.

- The region's solid waste planning board needs to take a much more active part in the county's waste management effort, as provided by T.C.A. §68-211-813(a)(4)(b)(1). In addition, the board should adopt resolutions prioritizing materials that should be recycled instead of landfilled as well as improving current solid waste disposal infrastructure and programs.
- Expand the scope of the existing recycling program to include other commodities in addition to corrugated cardboard. A phased-in aluminum, sorted office paper, newsprint, and mixed paper recycling program would bring the best return on efforts.
- Provide additional covered storage space to benefit the storage and processing of commodity materials. Sheltering the collected materials from the elements will limit contamination and increase the market value of the commodities.
- Begin collecting information from all generators of waste earlier in the year so that as much recycling information as possible can be included in the Annual Progress Report. Frequent communication with businesses and citizens will provide current information and aid the county in its reporting requirements.
- Work with local schools to educate students and teachers about the benefits of recycling, in waste reduction and resource sustainability and begin school programs of source separation of high dollar commodities such as aluminum and sorted office paper.
- Access and utilize the use of free social networking sites to help educate and inform others of the county's message concerning the county's recycling programs, facility hours, and other program related information.
- Increase operating hours of convenience centers to provide convenient waste disposal and recycling opportunities for residents in more remote areas.

- Train the solid waste staff to educate the public about proper recycling and disposal behaviors, and how to minimize the contamination of recyclable materials to achieve greater commodity market value.
- The cities of Decaturville and Scotts Hill should establish a partnership with the county and its recycling program to provide recycling collection sites and educational opportunities throughout the county. The University of Tennessee's County Technical Assistance Service consultants can assist with program design and site selection as needed to assist Decatur County in this process.
- Work with local business and industry to collect, at a minimum, corrugated cardboard and aluminum from any high volume generators. Additionally, these commercial and industrial entities need to report their waste disposal and recycling efforts to the county for inclusion in the county's Annual Progress Report.
- Decatur County and its local governments should contact RMCT for technical assistance in improving commodity collection, quality, improve marketing, and expand availability of recycling opportunities. RMCT can also provide further analysis of the local government's recycling systems and provide helpful recommendations towards meeting the 25 % waste reduction and diversion goal.
- Improvement of the financial system related to solid waste management and the recycling program should be addressed immediately to insure collection assurance for the county. Implementing programs like Pay as You Throw, increasing recycling commodity marketing, and cooperative efforts between local governments to eliminate duplication of services will assist in this effort. Technical assistance for these programs is available from the development district, the University of Tennessee's County Technical Assistance Service, and RMCT.

Conclusion

T.C.A. § 68-211-861 requires each municipal solid waste planning region to achieve a twenty-five percent (25%) waste reduction and diversion goal for solid waste going to Class I landfills by December 31, 2003. Based on Decatur County's reported Class I disposal and tons diverted, the region failed to meet the required reduction goal in calendar years 2008 and 2009. This failure caused the Department to qualitatively assess Decatur County's Solid Waste Planning Region's solid waste reduction program's activities and expenditures to determine if it was qualitatively equivalent to other comparative counties that did reach the goal. Decatur County Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region possesses programs, finances, infrastructure, education and staffing consistent with comparison regions.

Decatur County has the potential for a successful solid waste reduction and recycling program. The county has five well maintained and equipped convenience centers, although the hours of operation at four of the convenience centers should be extended, and storage space for commodities needs to be increased. There is also a need for expansion of collection of commodity types in the future.

The municipalities in the county provide door-to-door collection of solid waste along with some business waste collection. However, the county has limited support and coordination with the municipalities regarding diversion and recycling activities.

More involvement by the planning board and increased community interest and acceptance of the program will be the main catalysts to improving the solid waste management system. The program needs to be “sold” to the residents and promoted vigorously and continuously.

After full review of the Decatur County Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region, it has been determined that the solid waste department is making a good faith effort towards waste reduction but due to economic constraints at the county and municipality levels, it is unable to get the financial or material support that it needs. Improvement of the financial mechanisms for solid waste and waste reduction should be a priority for the municipal solid waste planning board to address in the near future.



Photograph 3: Brodies Lane Convenience Center in the northern portion of the county, which has a newer roll off container on the right, a compactor, a former “green box” on the left, and a trailer for corrugated cardboard collection. The compacter was paid for in part by a TDEC Grant.