

**Hancock County**  
**Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region**  
**2007 & 2008 Qualitative Review**



**Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation**  
**Division of Solid Waste Management**  
**Solid Waste Assistance Programs**  
**401 Church Street, 5th Floor**  
**Nashville, Tennessee 37243**

## Introduction

Tennessee's *Solid Waste Management Act of 1991* (SWMA) required solid waste regions to achieve a twenty-five percent (25%) waste reduction/diversion goal for solid waste going into Class I landfills by December 31, 2003. Under TCA § 68-211-861, the basis for determining compliance with this 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 goal based on the per capita methodology. 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/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/diversion. These rules became effective August 6, 2006.

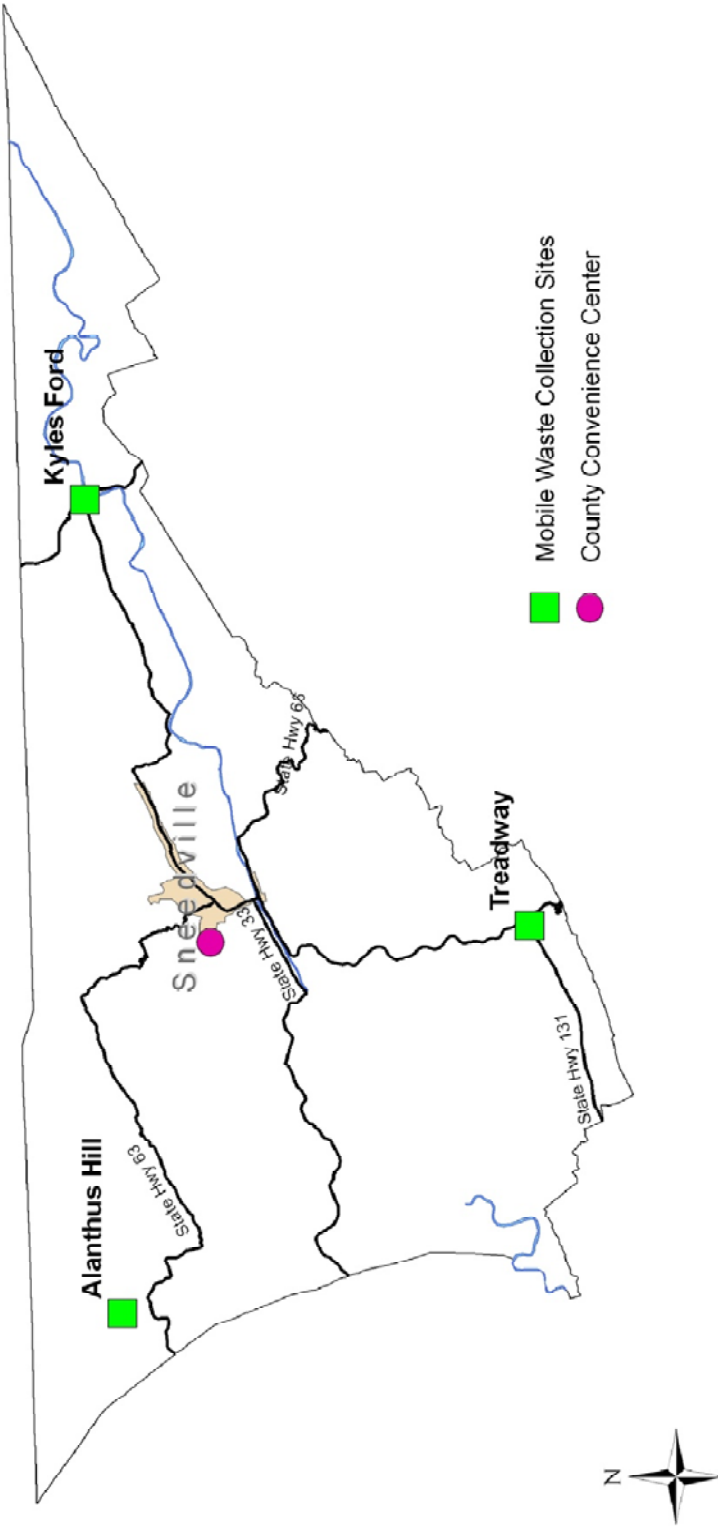
The first step in the qualitative assessment process is to determine if the failing region met the 25% waste reduction/diversion goal using the real-time methodology. This method is calculated annually by dividing the total amount recycled or diverted from Class I landfills by the total generated waste stream. If the region did not meet the 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 2007, five regions failed to meet the goal by either base year or real-time methods. With a base year reduction of 10% and a real-time comparison of 4%, Hancock County was one of those regions. Hancock County, along with the four other regions which failed to meet the goal, were compared to regions that met the goal on a base year (per capita) method in 2007 and have similar population size and economic characteristics. The regions selected for Hancock's comparison were Grainger and Lewis.

In 2008, seven 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 comparison of 2%, Hancock County was again one of those regions. The pool of possible comparison counties was expanded by including those who had made the goal by the real-time method in addition to the base year (per capita) method. This allows for the selection of even more similar counties to compare. The regions selected for Hancock's comparison in 2008 were Morgan and Perry.

On October 2, 2009, Division of Solid Waste Management staff member Matt Maynard visited with Hancock County Mayor Greg Marion and Sneedville Mayor Dean Rhea to discuss all facets of the solid waste management programs. A visit was made to the County's sole convenience center. The equipment at this facility was examined and noted.

# Hancock Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region Solid Waste System



As of 10/2/2009

## 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. Hancock's solid waste collection and recycling programs serve a population of 6,693 and an area of 224 square miles. The minimum number of convenience center sites required by state statute, based on Hancock County's population, is calculated at one location. The County has one convenience center located at 1663 Campbell Drive in Sneedville. It is open 8 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday and 8 am to noon on Saturday. The convenience center is well maintained and is equipped with a compactor and sufficient receptacles to handle the waste. After compaction, the waste is hauled to the Carter Valley Landfill in Hawkins County. Also located on-site are several compartmentalized roll-off containers for recyclables. These roll-offs are not currently being used as the county does not operate a recycling program for such commodities. The only county run recycling opportunity at the convenience center is a container to collect used oil. This equipment was purchased using a grant in 2007. Sword's Service Station in Sneedville picks up the oil and burns it in a used oil heater at their facility. At the discretion of the convenience center operator, aluminum cans may be accepted for recycling. The marketing of any such cans becomes the responsibility of the operator.



**Figure 1: Hancock County Convenience Center**

In addition to the convenience center, the county also collects waste at three other locations throughout the week. On Mondays from 9 am to 4 pm, a roll-off container sits at the old Flat Gap Elementary in Treadway. Two members of the solid waste staff stay

with the roll-off the whole day. At the end of the day, the load is taken back to the convenience center for compacting. On Wednesdays and Fridays, a container and staff are made available between 9 am and 4 pm to the Kyles Ford and Alanthus Hill communities respectively. After compaction, the waste is hauled to the Carter Valley Landfill in Hawkins County.

Sneedville, the only municipality in Hancock County, has a population of 1,312. The municipality provides curbside collection of solid waste for its residents and businesses. A compactor truck runs routes five days a week. When full, the truck delivers the waste directly to the Carter Valley Landfill in Hawkins County. The city does not collect yard waste.

The Hancock County Solid Waste Department does not employ a solid waste director. County Mayor Greg Marion oversees the day-to-day operations of the solid waste program. The county employs two full-time convenience center operators and one part-time operator as well as two truck drivers. Likewise, Sneedville Mayor Dean Rhea oversees the municipality's solid waste operations. Sneedville employs two full-time solid waste staff members for the curbside collection program.

### **Solid Waste Planning Board**

The Solid Waste Management Act states that every solid waste region in the state must appoint a solid waste planning board, composed of representatives of each county and each city which participates in a 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 MSW solid waste plans, assessing disposal capacity and collection assurance, providing for solid waste education, and assisting in other aspects of integrated solid waste management. Duties and powers of the solid waste planning board are spelled out in T.C.A. §§ 68-211-813 thru 815.

Hancock County Mayor Greg Marion stated that the County Commission acts as the region's solid waste planning board. The Commission holds quarterly meetings and the solid waste program is always discussed.

### **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 Annual Financial Report of Hancock County Tennessee performed by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, Hancock County

operates a special revenue fund to account for its solid waste program. The solid waste financial information of Hancock County was examined by department staff. From a solid waste management standpoint, the expenditures and revenues appear to be in line with state mandates. Hancock County's solid waste revenues and expenditures were found to be financially solvent. The deficiency in revenues shown below was covered by an existing fund balance of Solid Waste/Sanitation Fund.

**Revenues**

Local Taxes (County Property Tax)	\$206,267
Current Services (Tipping Fees)	\$9,635
State of Tennessee (Grants)	\$6,692
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$222,594</u></b>

**Expenditures**

Sanitation Management	\$238,067
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>\$238,067</u></b>

\* Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues.....(\$15,473)

Hancock County's estimated total expenditures for Fiscal Year 2007-2008 were \$8,598,848 and the total revenues were \$10,170,493. The county's solid waste expenditures were \$238,067 and the solid waste revenues were \$222,594. The solid waste expenditures were 2.8% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 2.2% of the total county revenues.

**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 1995, the Hancock County Municipal Solid Waste Region reported 3,332 tons of waste going into Class I landfills, or 0.49 tons per person. A 25% reduction of this value would require a disposal rate of 0.37 tons per person/per year. In 2003, the goal's effective year, the region reported 2,211 tons of Class I waste or 0.33 tons per person. Hancock's reported Class I waste was 2,962 tons (0.44 tons per person) in 2007 and 3,037 tons (0.45 tons per person) in 2008. In 2007, the State of Tennessee averaged 1.09 tons per capita and 1.05 tons per capita in 2008.

Hancock County, located in Appalachia, is comprised of a series of mountain ridges. The highest quality and most direct route into the county is State Highway 31. This highway traverses Clinch Mountain and is not accessible by large trucks.



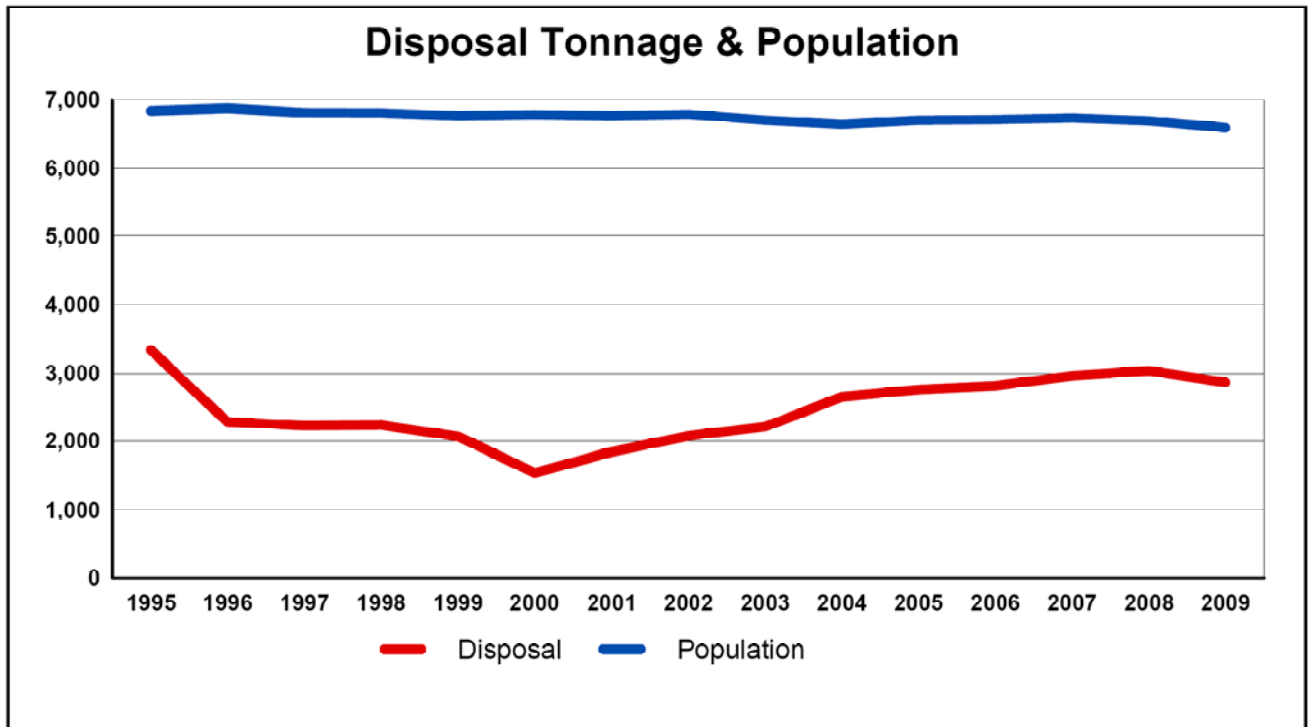
**Figure 2: View of Hwy 31 from Clinch Mountain**

Hancock County does not contain the abundance of businesses seen in many urban areas and, as a result, does not have large scale commercial recycling programs to boost their progress toward the 25% waste reduction/diversion goal.

These issues, in conjunction with the fact that the county does not operate a recycling program, led the Division to request that the Recycling Market Cooperative for Tennessee (RMCT) conduct an audit to determine if they could assist the county with finding markets for recyclable material. RMCT determined that due to extremely difficult transportation issues and low volumes of material, practical markets could not be found to partner with Hancock County at this time (attachment 1).

## Statistics

Year	Population	Disposal	Tons Per Capita
1995	6,844	3,332	0.49
1996	6,879	2,285	0.33
1997	6,812	2,228	0.33
1998	6,808	2,234	0.33
1999	6,767	2,065	0.31
2000	6,786	1,537	0.23
2001	6,768	1,840	0.27
2002	6,793	2,073	0.31
2003	6,702	2,211	0.33
2004	6,643	2,651	0.40
2005	6,704	2,757	0.41
2006	6,713	2,811	0.42
2007	6,733	2,962	0.44
2008	6,693	3,037	0.45
2009	6,588	2,863	0.43



## **Environmental Field Office Report**

The Knoxville Environmental Field Office has inspected the Hancock County Convenience Center four times from 2006 to 2009. In June of 2009, a minor violation was documented relating to proper care of the used oil tank and its containment.

## **Comparison Counties**

Based on Hancock County's reported Class I disposal and tons diverted, the region failed to meet the 25% waste reduction/diversion goal in 2007 and 2008. 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 program is 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 2007 comparison were Grainger and Lewis and the two counties selected for the 2008 comparison were Morgan and Perry.

GRAINGER COUNTY achieved the goal in 2007 with a base year reduction of 74% and a real-time comparison of 39%. The county has a very low per/capita disposal rate; however, Grainger's rate has remained fairly constant over the past eight years, which is reflective of the consistent Class I landfill volume reported each year.

Grainger County maintains eight (8) convenience centers located strategically throughout the county, each with active recycling collection facilities. These centers are open and manned 6-8 hours daily, 5-7 days per week, depending on the community location. Two of the county's three municipalities, Blaine and Rutledge, participate in the cost of maintaining the county's solid waste program by providing an operator and sharing maintenance costs at the convenience center located in their respective municipality.

Grainger County's MSW Program utilizes newspaper ads to keep the public informed on the advantages of recycling, and meets, at least annually, with local industry and business members to their waste diversion efforts. Also, quarterly meetings are held with county and city government officials to keep them apprised of the solid waste program's activities. Recycling is promoted in the school system by way of periodic flyers and poster contests, and having recycling containers located in the schools to collect paper. Regular meetings are held with members of local civic organizations to inform them of local efforts in recycling. Throughout these efforts, emphasis is focused on *landfill cost avoidance* as a way to relieve the cost of operating a recycling program.

The county's solid waste expenditures were \$759,967 and the solid waste revenues were \$797,574. The solid waste expenditures were 6.0% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 5.8% of the total county revenues.

LEWIS COUNTY achieved the goal in 2007 with a base year reduction of 32% and a real-time comparison of 33%. It also has had a consistent, low per capita disposal rate over the past ten years.

The county operates one (1) 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-Friday, and 8 am to 2 pm 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 (9) 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 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 still 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/hazardous waste.

The county's solid waste expenditures were \$497,739 and the solid waste revenues were \$515,157. The solid waste expenditures were 6.3% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 6.1% of the total county revenues.

MORGAN COUNTY achieved the goal in 2008 with a base year reduction of 11% and a real-time comparison of 33%.

Morgan County operates four convenience centers located in the Wartburg, Sunbright, Coalfield and Oakdale communities. Each location utilizes municipal solid waste compactors with receiver boxes to collect waste from the public. After collection and compaction the municipal solid waste is taken to the county's transfer station for consolidation and transportation to Volunteer Landfill located in Scott County. Corrugated cardboard (OCC), scrap metal, aluminum cans and used oil are accepted at all the convenience centers. OCC is collected in metal pens atop of trailers which are hauled back to the material recovery facility (MRF) for processing. Mixed metals are placed on the ground in designated areas and collected by a local scrap dealer. The dealer is awarded an annual contract with the condition that he provides for all the collection and transportation of the material. In turn, the dealer keeps the profits from the sale of the material. Aluminum cans were collected in small receptacles and

transported to the MRF for baling. Used oil is collected in TDEC funded tanks and serviced by a contractor when full.

The remainder of the county is covered by five public collection or “green box” sites which are fenced and manned during hours of operation. These sites are located in the Brewstertown, Deer Lodge, Chestnut Ridge, Lancing and Frankford communities. Each of the sites provides for collection of municipal solid waste through the use of front-end loader boxes. Each site provides for OCC, mixed metals and aluminum can recycling. All sites were fenced and manned with signage stating policies and operating hours.

The City of Sunbright provides curbside waste collection for its residents through a city-owned and operated program consisting of one employee and a truck. Sunbright’s maintenance garage collects and burns used oil for heat. The City of Oakdale contracts with Evergreen Environmental Services for curbside waste collection for its city residents with the cost for this service included in the city’s property tax. The City of Wartburg provides curbside waste collection to its residents through the use of a city-owned and operated truck with two full-time employees. Wartburg also has a seasonal chipper and yard waste collection service.

In addition to the public collection facilities, the county operates a MRF in conjunction with the convenience center and transfer station located in Wartburg. This facility is conveniently located for the processing of materials from all areas of the county. The MRF houses a single vertical baler used primarily to bale OCC, as well as a small amount of aluminum cans. Bales are stored outside until a full load is assembled for market.

The County Solid Waste Department employs a full time solid waste director and a recycling coordinator. By employing both a solid waste director and a recycling coordinator, Morgan County is able to have a greater level of management over the day-to-day operations of all aspects of their solid waste systems. Direct oversight of routes, collection schedules, materials marketing and public education allows the program to operate more efficiently and aids in financial stability. The municipalities in the region that provide for residential solid waste collection are managed by the public works departments without a dedicated solid waste director.

Morgan County’s municipal solid waste planning board meets at least quarterly to consider the solid waste activities of the region.

The county’s solid waste expenditures were \$1,034,210 and the solid waste revenues were \$1,058,191. The solid waste expenditures were 8.8% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 8.9% of the total county revenues.

PERRY COUNTY achieved the goal in 2008 with a base year reduction of 41% and a real-time comparison of 36%.

Perry County operates a combined transfer station and convenience center in Linden, and an additional convenience center located in Lobelville. Each location utilizes front-end loader boxes to collect municipal solid waste. After collection and compaction, the municipal solid waste is taken from the convenience centers to the transfer station for further consolidation. The waste is then transported to Waste Services of Decatur Landfill located in Decatur County. The county accepts OCC, mixed metals, tires, and used oil in addition to municipal solid waste. Mixed metals and bulk items are collected in a large roll-off at the transfer station. Cardboard is collected and transported to the transfer station where it is prepared for market through the use of a vertical baler. Both convenience centers have used oil collection tanks. Tires are accepted at the Linden Convenience Center and Transfer Station.

Additionally, the county operates public collection or “green boxes” sites located in the Cedar Creek, Rock House, Deer Creek, Lick Creek and Roans Creek communities. These sites offer no recycling options, are unmanned, have no fencing and consist of several front-loader boxes. The sites have a significant problem with users of these boxes disposing of waste outside of the receptacles.

In addition to the public collection facilities, the county operates a Class III/IV landfill located between Lobelville and Linden. The landfill accepts waste from county residents only.

The Cities of Lobelville and Linden operate curbside waste collection routes inside the city limits, each utilizing one ton rear-loader packer trucks and two man crews. The collected waste is transported to the county’s transfer station and merged with that of Perry County. This is the extent of the municipalities’ handling of municipal solid waste. Neither city operates any recycling programs.

The County Solid Waste Department employs a full time solid waste director. By employing a solid waste director, Perry County is able to have a greater level of management over the day-to-day operations of all aspects of their solid waste system. Direct oversight of routes, collection schedules, materials marketing and public education allows the program to operate more efficiently and aids in financial stability. The municipalities in the region that provide for residential solid waste collection are managed by the public works departments without a dedicated solid waste director.

Perry County’s municipal solid waste planning board holds called meetings at an interval of two to three times a year as needed to consider solid waste matters.

The county’s solid waste expenditures were \$454,501 and the solid waste revenues were \$449,781. The solid waste expenditures were 6.6% of the total county expenditures and the solid waste revenues were 5.9% of the total county revenues.

## **Qualitative Equivalency**

As stated earlier, TCA § 68-211-861 requires each municipal solid waste region to achieve a 25% waste reduction/diversion goal for solid waste going to Class I landfills. Hancock's failure to realize this goal caused the Department to assess the County's solid waste reduction program activities and expenditures to determine if it was qualitatively equivalent to other comparative counties that did reach the reduction goal. As Hancock County does not have a functioning waste reduction program, the Department found that the region was not qualitatively equivalent to comparative regions; however, this failure was due to factors beyond the control of Hancock County. Extremely difficult transportation routes and small volumes of potential commodities make finding end markets very problematic. These circumstances are possibly the toughest in the state to overcome in order to initiate and maintain a recycling program.

## **Needs Assessment**

T.C.A. §68-211-811 required 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 (5) years thereafter. Hancock County's Needs Assessment was completed by the First Tennessee Development District. The Needs Assessment, revised in 2008, reports that as a small, extremely rural county, Hancock does not experience the population fluctuations and growth that other more metropolitan counties do. Therefore, population growth over the next 5 years is not significant enough to impact solid waste generation rates for the County. Existing major infrastructure is believed to be suitable for the next five years based on current population projections.

Since 2001, Hancock County has not met the 25% waste reduction/diversion goal using the real-time method. Due to the lack of strongly established recycling or waste reduction programs in the county, a real-time comparison of waste reduction progress will likely never benefit Hancock County. There is no infrastructure in place to implement a Class III/IV waste diversion program and therefore nearly all waste is landfilled. According to the Needs Assessment, one issue that may benefit the county in its efforts to achieve the goal using the real-time method is to continue to expand a business and industrial recycling/waste reduction program and therefore report as much waste reduction activities as possible each year.

From 2001-2003, Hancock County achieved the 25% waste reduction/diversion goal using the per capita methodology. In 2000, Hancock County was granted a variance from the 1995 base year disposal tonnage. Documentation provided by the Hancock County Regional Solid Waste Planning Board showed the 1995 base year disposal tonnage should be 3,332.41 tons. This variance allowed the Region to reach the 25% waste reduction/diversion goal for several years after. Since 2003, the Region has failed to meet the goal for a variety of reasons. Costs to expand waste reduction

programs and initiate a public education campaign have been prohibitive for Hancock County. Unfortunately, based on the above mentioned obstacles, the prospects for obtaining the goal in Hancock County are relatively low. The county has been interested in receiving grant funds to purchase a vertical baler that would allow additional processing of materials and make the program more sustainable. This is one of the infrastructure needs identified in the Needs Assessment.



**Figure 3: Used Oil Collection Tank at Hancock Convenience Center**

Other solid waste needs in Hancock County include an additional convenience center to serve residents living the furthest distances from Sneedville. Without a doubt, illegal disposal of wastes continues in Hancock County as is does in other rural counties across the State. An additional solid waste drop-off site would not completely eliminate this problem, but would provide residents in the most remote areas of the county, an approved method of disposal versus burning or dumping. As with many other counties, Hancock County would greatly benefit from a county-wide solid waste/recycling educational program. This includes an additional staff person to oversee the program and make presentations to school classes, civic clubs, businesses and industries. Although the county has tried on numerous occasions to provide educational materials, i.e. brochures to residents, a successful program needs to have a full-time staff person dedicated to the process.

Public attitude towards recycling, waste diversion and waste disposal varies by individual in Hancock County. According to the Needs Assessment, most of the residents of the County are relatively apathetic towards recycling and waste reduction. In recent years, more residents are becoming interested in recycling and waste

reduction opportunities. New residents to Hancock County are increasingly interested in recycling offered by the county. There has been no surveying of the general public concerning this issue, but it is speculated that more than 75% of residents are indifferent about recycling/waste reduction.

There is currently no organized educational effort in Hancock County to change negative behavior toward waste reduction or solid waste management in general. However, in 2007, the Adult Hancock County Leadership Program began a project to obtain funding for purchasing recycling processing equipment and implement a public education project. Although the project was never completed, interest levels in waste reduction and recycling are increasing as more residents become aware of the need to reduce landfilled wastes which saves natural resources and local tax dollars.

Without understanding the specific issues residents are most concerned with and the specific attitude of a majority of the population, it is difficult to determine the approach method needed to change behavior. The Needs Assessment indicates that a county-wide survey needs to be conducted to better understand the attitude of the populous. Generally, an apathetic behavior exists with the current population and the best approach may be to target the younger population less than 25 years old to change future outcomes in the recycling and waste reduction program.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

It is unlikely that Hancock County can develop a productive waste reduction program in the short term. However, there are steps that the county can take to lay the groundwork for one in the future. The county should work to develop an understanding of the importance of waste reduction among its citizens. Convenience Center operators and drivers at the mobile collection sites who are collecting aluminum cans should have collection containers prominently displayed and discuss this option with the user. Partnering with local civic organizations to collect aluminum cans at the annual Jimmy Martin Memorial Bluegrass Festival or Hancock County Fall Festival would be good way to increase awareness.

Waste reduction education programs in the local schools today can help create recycling tax payers of tomorrow. If students have the opportunity to participate in recycling paper at school, they frequently become invested and encourage their parents to recycle at home.

Explore partnerships with neighboring counties, such as Hawkins, in which small amounts of commodities collected from events or initial programs could be processed.

The county, with help from First Tennessee Development District and RMCT, needs to annually evaluate its collection, transportation, and storage opportunities for a recycling program. Potential markets should be explored to locate buyers willing to pay the best price for commodities collected.



**Figure 4: Unused Commodity Sorting Bins at Convenience Center**

## **Conclusion**

T.C.A. § 68-211-861 requires each municipal solid waste region to achieve a twenty-five percent (25%) waste reduction/diversion goal for solid waste going to Class I landfills by December 31, 2003. Hancock County Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region failed to meet the required goal in calendar years 2007 and 2008. This failure caused the Department to qualitatively assess the Region's solid waste reduction program activities and expenditures to determine if it was qualitatively equivalent to other comparative counties that did reach the goal.

After reviewing the Hancock County Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region's programs, finances, infrastructure, education and staffing; it is the opinion of the Department that Hancock County and the city of Sneedville are lacking in waste reduction program design and implementation, and are not qualitatively equivalent to comparative regions. Comparison regions of similar population and economic characteristics that were able to achieve a 25% waste reduction/diversion goal were consistently found to have more recycling and waste reduction options for their residents than the Hancock County Municipal Solid Waste Planning Region. Furthermore, programs in these like regions were widely publicized and promoted to the users of the solid waste systems as a preferred alternative to landfilling. However, this failure was due to factors beyond the control of Hancock County. As such, no enforcement action will be taken, but the Region is strongly encouraged to seek waste reduction opportunities where ever possible.

# RMCT

## Recycling Marketing Cooperative For Tennessee

P.O. Box 1522 ~ Lexington, TN 38351  
Toll Free: 1-877-873-7628 ~ Local 731-967-1799 ~ Fax 731-967-7599

[www.rmct.org](http://www.rmct.org)

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James T. Aydelott ~ Executive Director ~ Office Phone/Fax 931-729-0578 ~ Cell 615-418-2683  
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2/25/2010

Mr. Larry Christley, Manager  
Planning and Financial Assistance Section  
Department of Environment & Conservation  
401 Church Street  
Nashville, TN 37243-1535

Mr. Christley;

At your request, I have visited Hancock County, TN and the town of Sneedville to make observations concerning their abilities to collect, transport and market recyclables. Hancock County is quite unique due to its location and natural terrain. These factors appear to rule many vital needs and functions of the county and its handling of local issues.

Within a fifty mile radius of Sneedville, TN, markets for recyclable materials can be found. However, these would primarily be secondary markets such as buy-back centers and small brokers buying and re-selling small volumes of materials. Small volumes also add to the cost of transportation due to light or partial loads of recyclables.

Travel to Hancock County is interesting to say the least! While the area is absolutely a wonder to behold, roads are nightmares. Consistent 8% grade elevations on both sides of the mountains do not lend themselves to good truck transportation! This added to the fact that continuous hair pen / switch back curve orientation is the means of ascending and descending the terrain. In short, this area is not feasibly accessible for large trucks. I am not saying the area is not accessible, but is dangerous, difficult and costly for transporters.

While the Sneedville area is mountainous, I was amazed at the local and small scale agriculture. Doubtlessly, the population here grows much of their own food. Garden sites are plentiful; livestock production is no doubt vital and a part of the local food chain as well. These facts alone reduce amounts of recyclable materials generated.

Population of Hancock County remains low at some 7,000 or less residents. Roughly 1,300 of these folks reside in Sneedville which proves the area to be very rural. Rural generation rates of Solid Waste, including recyclables, are always found to be less per capita than incorporated areas. Mountain culture and natural terrain further add to the negative amounts of collectable recyclables from residents. Virtually no industrial operations also limit recyclable materials generated as well.

From my observations, I agree that the reality of a workable recycling program in Hancock County is most likely a non feasible option at present. If market prices for recyclables continue to rise the situation may well warrant looking into again. Hopefully employment rates and economic conditions will also improve in this area which would also improve chances of a successful recycling venture.

For RMCT  
James Aydelott, Executive Director