

The Current State of Recycling in Georgia...

"A Tale of Three Programs"



Presented by:
Michael Snipes
Solid Waste Director
Laurens County SWMA
478-676-3963

October 13, 2020

A day may come where I get sick,
but it will not be this day.



Laurens County SWMA

Laurens County is primarily rural with some industry.

Population: 47,000

The Laurens County SWMA is responsible for:

1. MSW landfill
2. C&D landfill
3. Inert landfill
4. Single Stream Sorting facility
5. Composting Operation

Covid Impact on our operation

- MSW landfill – 4.24% increase in tonnage
 - C&D landfill – .21% decrease in tonnage
 - Inert landfill – No change in tonnage
 - Recycling Program – Startup delayed 2 months
 - Composting – 32.98% decrease in feedstock tonnage
 - Food Residuals acceptance suspended (Atlanta)
 - Sawdust decreased 16.5% (plant production down)
 - Biosolids decreased 35.4% (staff shortages at POTW)
- Compost sales increased 100% and we struggled to keep up with the demand. (screening was the bottleneck due to staffing issues)

Athens – Clarke County Solid Waste

Athens Clark-County is the home of the University of Georgia and has several industries.

Population: 127,000

UGA enrollment: 37,000

Athens – Clarke County responsibilities include:

1. MSW landfill
2. Single Stream Sorting facility
3. Composting Operation

Covid Impact on ACC's operation:

- MSW landfill – 5% decrease in tonnage
- Recycling Program – 22% decrease in tonnage
- Composting – 50% decrease in food residuals but otherwise stable. Compost demand increased but unable to meet the demand due to a mechanical issue.

Morale issues, staffing shortages, etc.

City of Columbus Waste Disposal

Columbus is the home of Fort Benning, Columbus State University and several industries.

Population (incl. Muscogee County): 196,000

Columbus' responsibilities include:

1. MSW landfill
2. Single Stream Sorting facility

Covid Impact on City of Columbus operations:

- MSW landfill – 7% increase in tonnage
- Recycling Program – Collections are stable but all material was baled and sent to an automated sort facility.

Sorting operation was shut down for 2 months.

Statewide Covid Impact:

- Landfills seemed to experience tonnage increases generally, except when impacted by a large population shift. It is assumed that industry/business/college closures were the major cause of any reductions. Tonnage increases, like we experienced, are attributed to dining habit changes, i.e. drive thru dining vs. dine-in and at home dining. College closures potentially caused a redistribution of waste to smaller towns as most students returned home.
- Recycling programs were impacted differently in each situation however, there appears to have been a reduction in collections regardless of the size of the operation. Some communities ceased recycling collections due to safety concerns.
- Composting operations saw decreases in food residual tonnages which resulted from school, restaurant, and public venue closures.

Where are we now?

- Recycling collections and sorting facilities are returning to normal.
- We are not experiencing issues moving our material
- As always, CONTAMINATION continues to be the biggest operational problem that we face.
- The “new” enemy will be budget cuts in the future.
- Now, more than ever, we need to

CLEAN UP OUR ACT!

Michael Snipes

Solid Waste Director
Laurens County SWMA
1101-L Hillcrest Pkwy
PMB 417
Dublin, GA 31021
478-676-3963



Past-President
SWANA – Georgia Chapter
2133 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Rd
Suite 12-456
Suwanee, GA 30024
770-822-9308 voice mail

