

INTRODUCTION

Most people don't think twice about the waste they throw away or place at the curb for collection. Those who do wonder assume that it goes directly to a landfill where it is buried and forgotten. In most places in the United States, this would be true. But Lancaster County is unique in that the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority has implemented an **integrated** waste disposal system. This means we not only have a landfill, but also utilize a Resource Recovery Facility, a comprehensive recycling program and a Household Hazardous Waste Facility to manage the waste we all generate. Because we have more than one means of waste disposal, we are better equipped than most places to preserve land and protect the environment. Our facilities employ the most up-to-date technology that not only meet safety requirements, but also exceed them.

The history of the Authority began in 1954 when the city of Lancaster and several surrounding municipalities formed the Lancaster Area Refuse Authority, better known as LARA. During these years, LARA operated several landfills, one on the former Lancaster Brick Company site that is now a wooded region that hosts extensive hiking trails. The other landfill was closed and capped in the late 1960s and now forms part of the Lancaster County Central Park.

In 1968, the Authority constructed the Manor Township. The Creswell Landfill was closed and capped in 1989.

In the 1980s, with technology increasing, LARA recognized the need for the disposal needs of the entire county. In solid waste advisory committee, LARA was *Management Authority* to encompass its new materials in an environmentally safe, reliable and plan mandated a new landfill, a resource recovery facility and waste-reduction programs (recycling).

Creswell Landfill, located south of Columbia in served the county's needs for 21 years before it

advancing and the amount of trash rapidly an up-to-date, comprehensive plan to manage 1986, after several years of research by a renamed the *Lancaster County Solid Waste* mission to manage solid waste and recyclable efficient manner for all of Lancaster County. The new

The *Frey Farm Landfill* accepts mostly inorganic materials like construction debris, ash residue and other inert manufacturing waste, so there is minimal odor and no scavenging birds commonly associated with most landfills. *The Resource Recovery Facility* burns municipal trash and carefully screened and selected waste (such as clean-burning and energy-producing pharmaceutical products). The heat is then harnessed and generated into electricity. Due to recycling and the Resource Recovery Facility, Lancaster's waste is reduced by 86% before anything goes to the Landfill. Lancaster County remains the only county in the state to have such an extensive integrated approach to waste management.

In 1990 the Authority augmented its new plan of an integrated system by opening a *Household Hazardous Waste Facility* that would serve the community by accepting hazardous materials (computers, cell phones, fluorescent bulbs, mercury thermometers, batteries, paint, insecticides etc.) and disposing of them in an environmentally safe manner.

Each year, the Authority processes more than 530,000 tons of waste through the facilities that comprise the integrated system: the *Jack D. Lausch, Sr. Transfer Station*, the *Household Hazardous Waste Facility*, the *Resource Recovery Facility* and the *Frey Farm Landfill*.

In addition, the Authority coordinates recycling programs for municipalities and local businesses that have most recently yielded a 37.5% countywide recycling rate. Largely due to this integrated system, the life of the *Frey Farm Landfill* has been extended by approximately twenty (20) years!

The governing body for the Authority is the Board of Directors who is appointed by the Lancaster County Commissioners. The Board establishes the policies and procedures of the Authority, and employs staff to administer those policies. The Executive Director serves as the chief executive officer and is assisted by five (5) Senior Managers. From its beginnings of just one employee and one bulldozer, the Authority has grown to a staff of 81 people.

The Authority also guides the efforts of the Citizens Advisory Committee, appointed by the Lancaster County Commissioners. In the past, research done by this group culminated in the construction of the Authority's Household Hazardous Waste Facility. They also assisted in updating the 1999 Lancaster County Municipal Waste Management Plan. They meet at a minimum of several times per year to review the Authority's progress with implementing that Plan.

The Authority is financed primarily by tipping fees charged to dispose of waste and revenue from the sale of electricity, generated by burning waste at the Resource Recover Facility. Haulers (who are licensed by the Authority) and county residents, pay a fee (based on the weight of their load) when they use the facilities. These fees cover the full cost of developing, operating and maintaining the system. No tax dollars are utilized.

For more information about the Authority please contact our office at (717) 397-9968 or visit us at www.lcswma.org.