

What Happens to My Garbage?

April 7, 2011

Contact: Nathan Rich

(801) 614-5601 Fax: (801) 614-5651

Layton – Have you ever wondered, what happens to my garbage? If you are a resident of Davis or Morgan Counties you might be surprised to find out that most of the garbage you generate is recycled by Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District (Wasatch).

Wasatch, which is a Special Service District, operates a fully integrated waste management system consisting of the following components.

The **Davis Energy Recovery Facility** combusts municipal solid waste and uses the heat recovered to generate steam and electricity. The steam is sold to Hill Air Force Base (HAFB) and is used primarily for heating, while the electricity is used to run the facility. Using steam made from garbage keeps HAFB from burning natural gas or fuel oil to heat buildings. The energy recovery facility substantially reduces the amount of greenhouse gases that would be released to the atmosphere, by avoiding the use of fossil fuels (natural gas or fuel oil). The facility further reduces greenhouse gases by preventing the generation of methane at a landfill. With the installation of state of the art pollution controls in 2001, the facility is one of the cleanest sources of renewable energy and has extremely low emissions of pollution as detailed by the EPA.¹ Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore stated “waste-to-energy and landfill gas recovery can provide new energy sources that offset carbon dioxide emissions resulting from traditional fossil fuel energy sources such as coal and gas.”² The energy recovery facility reduces the volume of garbage going to the landfill by 90% while turning it into a relatively stable ash. Metals are also recovered from the incinerator ash for recycling.

The **Davis Landfill** is a modern sanitary landfill which incorporates a bottom liner and leachate collection system to protect groundwater, landfill gas collection, and modern management techniques. Ash from the energy recovery facility is used as daily cover at the landfill to maximize facility life. Gas being collected at the landfill is currently being shipped to HAFB where it is used to generate electricity in the first

landfill gas to energy project completed in the State of Utah. This project currently generates 2.4 Megawatts of electricity; enough to power almost 2,000 homes.

The **Green Waste Recycling Facility** diverts green waste (mainly yard trimmings) out of the landfill while generating quality compost and mulch for sale at \$25 and \$10 per scoop, respectively. The District is working with member cities to provide curbside collection of green waste.

The **Household Hazardous Waste Facility** (HHW) provides a place for residents of the District to properly dispose of potentially hazardous household items and is located at the landfill. An important component of the HHW facility is the **Reuse Shed** where usable products are available at no charge. Other items recycled through the HHW facility include used oil, used antifreeze, lead acid batteries, gasoline and fuel, electronic waste, and refrigerant containing units.

The **Recycle Drop Off Center**, which is also located at the entrance to the landfill, provides a quality recycling opportunity for residents and businesses. The center accepts cardboard, paper, plastics, aluminum, steel, and glass that have been separated by patrons. This building incorporates wind, solar, and landfill gas energy components in its design.

The landfill is designed for safe, clean, and convenient use by patrons. Self-haul waste can be unloaded on a concrete pad, and all other services can be accessed without leaving a paved surface. The **Give and Take** area allows customers to leave reusable items for use by other patrons at no charge.

In all, the District currently diverts over half of the waste generated in Davis and Morgan Counties away from the landfill. “We feel there are better ways to handle our waste than just putting it in the ground for future generations to deal with” said Nathan Rich, Executive Director of the District.

1. http://www.wte.org/userfiles/file/070810_Stevenson_MWC_memo.pdf

2. <http://www.thestar.com/article/185200>

###