

West Central Iowa Solid Waste Association

January, 2008

Originally, Guthrie County established a landfill and operated it from the early 1970s until the very early 1990s. Over the years Federal and State regulations became increasingly costly and with such a small base of people (less than 9,000 since Stuart, Menlo, and Casey go to the Adair County Landfill) it was not possible for the County to justify continuing to operate a full scale landfill operation. This was true for other areas as well especially when all the recycling mandates were adopted.

In the 1990s the Association was formed so that a group of counties could work together to deal with waste, recycling, and all the attendant laws and regulations. As a larger site with a sizable population base, Carroll County decided to try to become a regional type facility. It began with the construction of a recycling facility designed to serve several counties. This helped to make it more cost-efficient.

Initially, Guthrie County joined for recycling and began sending recyclables there. Then when the need to open a new area of landfill approached, the Supervisors realized it was too costly to do. So it was decided to build a garbage transfer building as well and transfer garbage to Carroll County. By that time Carroll County had several counties taking recyclables there and some additional areas delivering garbage as well.

The Association consisted of Carroll, Guthrie, Audubon, Shelby, and Crawford Counties as full partners in this endeavor. Some additional partial county areas also utilize the facility. Currently, Carroll and Guthrie use the landfill and all counties use the recycling facility. Audubon has decided recently to close its landfill since a new area would need to be opened and there isn't the population base to support it, either. At that time Audubon County decided to leave West Central and go to Harrison County. Shelby and Crawford counties have continued to operate their own landfills due to larger volumes of people.

The Board meets about bi-monthly to go over the policies, operation, costs, etc. Each County has a vote on how to handle matters. Carroll County has a full-time staff devoted to locating markets and selling recyclables (a tough job) and providing education programs to all participating counties. Having one central location and main staff (paid for by Carroll County primarily), the costs to all counties is greatly reduced. By having a large garbage and recyclables stream, Carroll County can operate more efficiently.

Each County has its own separate budget and only pays portions of various program costs. Then, in the case of Guthrie, we pay a fee to take our garbage and recyclables there. The fees are much lower than if Guthrie County tried to do this alone and much of the recycling costs are off-set by the sale of the recyclable materials we send.

This Association allows each member to save costs, have access to professional staff and services, and to have a stable place to send materials over a long term period. Anytime we have questions or need help on matters that we don't know the answers to we have a place we can rely upon for answers and help.

These meetings are open to the public and anyone could attend. If you would be interested, contact Stephen Patterson and, when meetings are scheduled, you would be informed. These meetings are held in Carroll at the Landfill/Recycling Facility on a weekday morning and are set sporadically as everyone's schedules permit.