



by Ben Hoff
Chemical engineer,
Wadsworth

Guest column

County flip-flopping on recycling policies

In the Dec. 20 edition of *The Post*, there were a couple articles about the new contract for the Medina County Central Processing Facility in regard to waste and recycling. Currently the CPF acts as both a transfer station and recycling center. Residents put both trash and recyclables into the same bin and it gets sorted at the facility. From what I can ascertain from the articles, the county is looking at using the CPF as only a transfer station, and now pursuing other means of recycling such as community drop-offs (recycling bins).

Let's not forget that in 2011, the county was strongly suggesting (a.k.a. strong-arming) local churches to remove privatized paper drop-offs (provided by Abitibi-Bowater Corp.) on their property, so that the paper would be processed at the CPF, and therefore, increase revenue for the CPF.

Here is an excerpt from my previous letter to the editor in regard to this subject from September 2011: "In response to the Sept. 3 article concerning the county's policy on recycling, I find the county's intention quite contradictory to the overall good of the public. In summary of the article, the county is targeting the removal of independent recycling stations, such as paper drop-offs at churches and non profits, in favor of its own recycling program, the Central Processing Facility (CPF), for monetary reasons. In short, the county is trying to capture revenue from those independent stations, to the tune of \$150,000.

"This doesn't sit well with me for a few reasons. From an overall recycling effort standpoint, nothing changes. People will get their things recycled regardless of whether they take it to the recycling stations or the CPF. I believe the county should embrace visible and proactive recycling, to keep it forefront in the minds of the residents. We moved into the area about two years ago and were so confused about the county's policy, we decided to take our recyclables to a drop-off in another county, instead of risking that it actually wasn't recycled. Proactively recycling gives a sense of accomplishment, doing your part, whereas now we just 'pitch' everything in the same trash bin."

The sanitary engineer at the time, James Troike, responded and recognized Medina County as being rated as one of the top recycling programs in the state. I believe that it is a great program as it stands now. If commissioners and the sanitary engineer approach a different method of recycling, such as local drop-offs, they will have to retrain the way the people of the county have been recycling for the past five-plus years. I imagine that this will mean hundreds of tons of recyclables going to the landfill, because residents are not aware or not able to drop off their recyclables at the local drop offs. Drop off locations at other communities are often very full or overflowing and become an eyesore.

I suggest that the county seriously consider maintaining their current recycling operation at the CPF. If they find it not feasible, then they need to come up with a solution other than local drop-offs that works for the people. An easily accessible option and an option that will not require its residents to purchase or pay for an additional recyclables bin. If a local bin is the only option, ensure that it is big enough to accommodate the amount of recyclables in a week or whatever time period it will be picked up in.

Since it was the county that pushed for such localized processing and "hands-off" approach of their citizens, they should do everything in their power to ensure the same amount of recyclables leave the county if the process is changed. This should be thoroughly reviewed and communicated to all the residents of Medina County. Or, better yet, show us what the options cost and put it on the ballot and let the people of Medina County vote on how they want to recycle.

Want a chat with Ben Hoff?