



# Spokane Regional Solid Waste System 2009 – A Year in Review

## MISSION STATEMENT

To provide all citizens residing in Spokane County with recycling and disposal services that continue to put this area in a leadership position with respect to programs, planning, and results. These integrated services should be cost effective, efficient, and environmentally justifiable. It continues to be the goal of the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System to manage more than 50% of the waste stream through waste reduction and recycling.

### *A Message from the Director*

The Spokane Regional Solid Waste System (System) made substantial progress on planning and management challenges in 2009:

- Spokane County adopted the 2009 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan.
- An independent auditor examined our performance and found that the department is generally well-operated, and identified areas for potential improvement. As resources and time permit, we are implementing those recommendations.
- The State Auditor's Office completed a financial audit, with no findings. The auditor offered informal accounting recommendations to increase transparency, which we will implement.
- We are working toward enhancing the clean green composting program to allow residential customers to add food waste to the yard debris that is picked up curbside or dropped at System facilities.
- We made substantial progress on the development of a regional Materials Recovery Facility, so that a commingled recyclables collection system can be created.
- We continue work on resolving governance issues, and to prepare for the replacement of operating and electrical sales agreements which expire in 2011.

Operationally, we made impressive progress:

- The quantity of waste we received in 2009 decreased about 3 percent compared to 2008, due to reduced economic activity.
- With an aggressive maintenance and repair program, however, we increased the quantity of waste processed at the Waste to Energy facility by nearly 7 percent. The quantity of recycled metals diverted from disposal increased by over 9 percent.

**This combination of reduced waste generation and increased waste processing and recovery resulted in a 30 percent decrease in the quantity of raw waste landfilled, from 86,000 tons to 60,000 tons.**

We at the System remain proud of our integrated approach to solid waste management. We will continue to utilize the latest proven technology to recycle and dispose of our garbage with the greatest environmental benefits and least environmental impacts.

*Russ Menke, P.E.*

## **Background**

In the mid-1980s, the four publicly-owned landfills in Spokane County were almost full, and three had been designated by the EPA as Superfund sites. They were polluting groundwater and could potentially lead to contamination of Spokane's sole-source aquifer. In addition, new landfill standards were adopted by the State that would make landfilling more costly and siting more difficult.

After years of study, a decision was made by elected officials from the City of Spokane and Spokane County to form the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System (System). The other Regional Cities/Towns in Spokane County and Fairchild AFB accepted an invitation to join the System and entered into Interlocal Agreements with Spokane County and the City of Spokane. The System operates as a department of the City of Spokane, and manages solid waste facilities, contracts, and programs for the benefit of all citizens residing in Spokane County. Under the Interlocal Agreement, the City of Spokane is responsible for making all operational decisions other than certain major decisions that require the concurrence of the County.

In 1987, a Liaison Board was established for the purpose of recommending policy and providing direction on matters pertaining to the management of solid waste and related environmental issues. The Liaison Board is also responsible for monitoring capital assets and recommending capital improvements of the System.

Following are the members who served on the Liaison Board in 2009:

- Councilman Doug Nixon, Cheney, Regional Cities Representative (appointed March 2008)
- Councilman Bob Apple, City of Spokane (appointed January 2007)
- County Commissioner Bonnie Mager (appointed January 2007)
- County Commissioner Todd Mielke (appointed January 2009)
- Councilman Richard Rush, City of Spokane (appointed March 2008)
- Councilman Gary Schimmels, City of Spokane Valley (appointed July 2003)

## **Facilities and Management**

System facilities include the Waste to Energy (WTE) Facility, Valley and North County Transfer Stations, and the Northside Landfill. Oversight for all System facilities is provided by the System. Other System management responsibilities include planning, recycling/waste reduction, composting, solid waste disposal, household hazardous waste and litter programs. Protection of the environment was a primary consideration when the Regional System was developed. This commitment continues today after 18 years of operation.

### **2009 Highlights**

The Spokane County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update (Plan) guides the activities of the System. Periodic updates are required by the Department of Ecology. The System has worked with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to develop an updated Plan. The updated Plan has been adopted by Spokane County and will go to all the regional cities for adoption in 2010.

The System worked with City of Spokane Solid Waste Management staff and the Spokane Engineering Services Department in a pilot program to use recovered glass as road bed material in the Market Street construction project.

The tipping floors at the transfer stations were resurfaced. At the Valley Transfer Station, three scale decks were replaced and the scale system electronics were upgraded.

Major repair and replacement projects at the WTE facility included replacement of major portions of the furnace water walls, and crane rails.

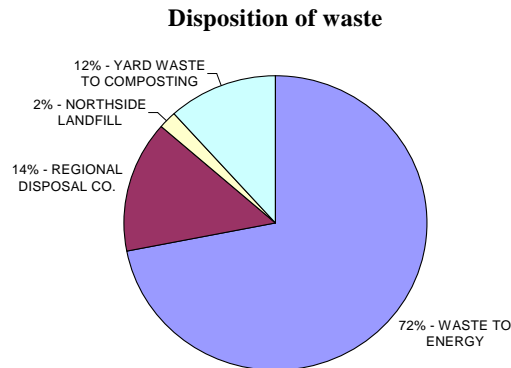
A customer satisfaction survey conducted by the Solid Waste Management crew at the waste to energy plant and transfer stations found that 97.9% of frequent and 98.1% of infrequent customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the service at the disposal sites.

A performance audit of the System found that the System was generally well operated and managed, and offered recommendations for improvement which are being implemented as resources permit.

A financial audit of the System by the State Auditor's Office had no findings; recommended accounting improvements are being implemented.

## Disposal

- Total waste received by the System – 373,302.72 tons (excludes materials received at System Recycling Centers)
- Waste to Energy Facility – 269,082 tons processed
- Solid waste to Regional Disposal Co. – 53,566.63 tons
- Ash to Regional Disposal Co. – 77,291.26
- Northside Landfill – 6,939.76 tons
- Clean green to Waste Management, Inc., for composting –43,714.33 tons
- Recycled metals diverted from disposal –11,164 tons (9,434 tons of recovered ferrous metal from ash; 1,730 tons of white goods retrieved from tipping floor)



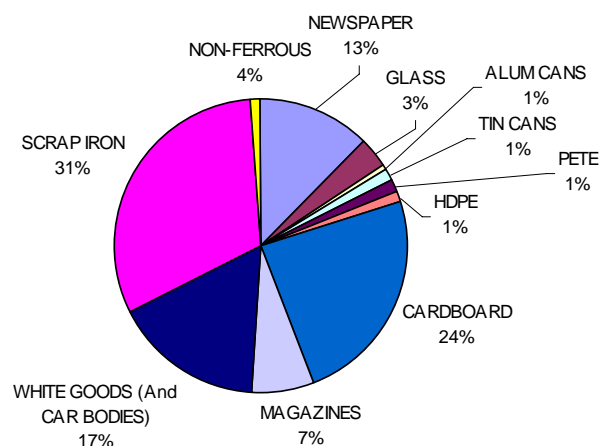
## Electrical Generation

- 163,250 MWh produced by Waste to Energy Facility
- 29,261 MWh used to meet the in-house demands of operating the facility
- 132,109 MWh sold to Puget Sound Energy for \$11,442,725.90

## Curbside and Commercial Recycling Collection

- County/Regional Cities curbside and commercial collection – 13,137.01 tons
  - City of Spokane curbside collection - 8,756.68 tons
  - City of Spokane commercial collection - 2,841.92 tons
  - County curbside and commercial collection – 1,538.41

## Transfer Station and Waste to Energy Recycling Centers—Total materials 3,942 tons



### Recycling Rates for 2008

- 42% Recycling Rate (232,924 tons of material)
- 38% Diverted Rate (198,090 tons of material)
- 40% Combined Rate

**Spokane's 2009 Recycling Rate will be announced when it is available. It will also be posted on the System website at:**

<http://www.solidwaste.org/>

### Moderate Risk Waste

A total of 540.38 tons of Household Hazardous Waste was collected at the three System facilities in 2009, compared to 509 tons in 2008. The following materials were collected in 2009:

▪ Oil	279.21 tons	▪ Solvents	6.15 tons
▪ Antifreeze	26.17 tons	▪ Acids and Bases	3.13 tons
▪ Auto Batteries	114.20 tons	▪ Other Materials	4.15 tons
▪ Household/NiCad Batteries	22.45 tons	▪ Paint (oil based)	71.65 tons
▪ Sealed Lead-Acid Batteries	2.89 tons	▪ Fluorescent/CFLs	5.81 tons
▪ Pesticides	4.26 tons	▪ Refrigerant	.31 tons

While not considered household hazardous waste, over 200 tons of latex paint was accepted by the System and either reused or used for energy recovery. **90% of the total collected materials, by weight, was recycled, reused or went to energy recovery!**

### Litter Control

Litter crews worked throughout Spokane County cleaning up 250 tons of trash, which included roadside litter and 989 illegal dumpsites. In addition, the Geiger Litter Crew abated 68.78 tons from 535 locations on public rights of way. In addition, 79 cases of illegal dumping on private property were investigated.

### Solid Waste and Recycling - Educational Activities

- Recycling Hotline – 9,611 calls
- Total of 34 staff presentations (1,527 students/individuals)
- Exhibits at 20 community events with approximately 3,400 contacts
- Waste to Energy Facility tours for 1,918 individuals
- Youth Environmental Conference – Nearly 100 students participated
- America Recycles Day activities: Poster Contest/Calendar – 340 entries from 32 schools, with 18 posters selected for 2010 Calendar. The finalists were displayed in River Park Square.
- EnviroKids Newsletter – 4 times, reaching 450 members
- *One Man's Trash* insert in Spokesman-Review, January, April, July and October (80,000); additional insertions were placed in *The Northwest Inlander*
- *Recycling RAP* published once during the school year (3,000 copies)
- *kids enviro page* published in *kids* newspaper 9 times during the school year, reaching 38,000 elementary school children
- Recycling Campaign “The Cycle Starts with You” – Advertising placements: 800 TV, 75 print, plus a variety of "value added" placements
- Website ([www.solidwaste.org](http://www.solidwaste.org))



### Master Composter Program

- Staffed booths at 12 events.
- 17 new Master Composters trained.
- 2 Compost Fairs, April and October - 1005 attendees and 756 bins distributed.
- 2 Chipping and Composting Events (North County and Valleyford) over 2 days. Total of 80 attendees, with 62 bins distributed.
- 480 volunteer hours logged by Master Composters.