

Landfill could become role model

Tamara Cunningham, Didsbury Review, August 10, 2010



The Resource Recovery Centre is still a flurry of activity, a year after opening at the regional landfill – and the province is taking notice.

It's thinking about signing on the rural dump with Calgary and Edmonton next year as part of an Alberta-wide construction and demolition recycle program. The project requires legislative amendments and final government go-ahead before it kicks off.

It's expected to be hashed out this fall.

"We are trying to reduce drywall and concrete going into landfills and Didsbury is already doing that at a high level," said Trevor Gemmell, spokesperson for Alberta Environment.

"We have been trying to gage the interest of Mountain View County in joining the first stage of the program as an example to other rural areas."

According to Alberta Environment 25 per cent of municipal solid waste in landfills is construction and demolition material and less than 10 per cent of those same items is ever recycled.

This landfill has made headway in the construction industry. Since September 2009 it's recycled just over 6,281 metric tonnes.

That's on top of regional recyclables, which rose six per cent from 2008 with 7,769 tonnes of material. Last December the commission had to run two shifts to handle all the material pouring in and up to 65 bales of recyclables were being baled and shipped out each day. Six years ago the landfill would bundle up five or six bales daily.

"It has just been insane," said Don Reid, CAO of Mountain View Waste Commission.

The commission developed the centre to capture waste – like wood, concrete, shingles and cardboard – that developers and residents hit by hailstorms were looking to dispose of. They also heard communities were wanting to recycle more and prepared to require developers to recycle construction mess.

So far the process has been successful, Reid said.

There have been only a few grumbles from contractors who have to now separate waste from recyclables before they unload at the centre. They pay a reduced dumping fee if they use the resource centre.

"People used to just dump everything ... that would have doubled the landfill this year," Reid said.

"By doing this we're extending the 40-year lifespan of our local landfill."