

# From the Director's Desk

## July 2011

Occupying this position for almost three months now seems like the best opportunity to take a moment to look back to see how far we have come, and to look forward at how far, we yet have to go.

Looking back, our office has accomplished much in the way of laying foundation blocks upon which we may build a solid future:

1. Established new by-laws to reflect the District's growth
2. Contacted individuals and companies who owe the District money for payment
3. Paid individuals and companies who had a credit to the District
4. Completed the 2011 Solid Waste plan for submission to ADEQ
5. Developed an operating budget for this office
6. Located a new office location in downtown Benton
7. Developing new guidelines for permitting waste haulers for 2012
8. Developing new human resource guidelines
9. Created a Grant tracking mechanism to meet ADEQ standards

Looking forward, the future is full of opportunities, and fraught with perils. How do you meet government regulations and citizen's expectations without burdening the system with expensive solutions that require large capital cost and ongoing operational expenditures?

The State has set a goal of 45% recycling from the waste stream. What that means to every person in our District is that the 4.34 pounds of solid waste generated each day (based on national averages), 1.96 pounds should be recycled. On a yearly basis that means of the 1606 pounds of waste generated by each person in your household, 722 pounds should be recycled. How best do we accomplish this goal?

Currently the District provides two recycle trailers and four recycle roll-offs, but these only pick up a fraction of the potential recycle stream. Is curbside recycling a viable solution? Yes, but it is economically feasible only if you have one hauler picking up everyone's waste and recyclables. Do we provide more drop-off locations? Yes, but there is a cost associated with this as well. Who will pay for this?

With the sale of the landfill, a need to gather these recycled materials in a location in close proximity will be required to keep it from being cost prohibitive. Where best to put a recycling center? Who will operate it and at what cost?

How do we best educate our citizens on recycling? I applaud the school districts for their efforts but they need help. How do we use our grant money to help them reach our goals?

These are questions that need to be answered and our office is diligently looking for solutions that prove to be most effect in the long run. We are working with private companies to identify the best possible programs that cost the least amount to those interested in recycling. As an example, we currently provide a trailer to a public institution to collect cardboard, a process that takes approximately four to six man hours to service each week at no cost to the facility. A private company can accomplish the same task in 30 minutes at a considerable savings in labor, however there is an associated service charge, at what point is the trade off feasible?

In the coming months I expect much dialogue with local businesses, private citizen groups, and independent haulers to try and find the right balance. I invite each of you to be a part of the process.