



Clinton County Department of Waste Management

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Clinton County Clean Community Event Services 1999 thru 2020

Clinton County has conducted 32 Clean Community Events since the spring of 2004 (no events were held in 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions). The events had been previously offered several times in the 1990s under the program titled “Dump Your Junk.” However those services were suspended after 1999 and limited to annual household hazardous waste programs. In 2004 the county was able to again offer comprehensive collection events for residents, and for the first time, events were offered twice each year. This was a result of decreased expenses to the county to provide recycling drop-off sites after eight communities agreed to help fund those services. In 2016, it was decided the fall event would be rebranded based on participation rates and is now called the Free for Fall Event.

Clean Community Events target 10 types of residentially generated materials that can be reused, recycled, disposed of in a landfill, or as in the case of hazardous and pharmaceutical waste, put through special treatment technologies for safe disposal. Services are also offered to small businesses that qualify as “Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generators.” Working thru the county’s program to get rid of hazardous and electronic waste items can provide a significant cost savings to businesses as compared to working directly with a private service provider.

With the exception of 2007 and 2021, events have been held twice annually: in the spring in St. Johns (Bingham Township) at the Clinton County Road Commission’s facility, and in the fall in Lansing (DeWitt Township) at Granger’s facility. This approach is used since the event requires a large paved area with on-site heavy operating equipment to accommodate all of the collection stations and materials received. It is too expensive to try to rent such equipment and have it delivered to a site, and there a limited number of sites in the county with the space to hold the event. In 2007 a different collection model was pursued: four events were held in different areas of the county and the types of services were reduced so that they could fit in the space of the different facilities used. However this approach was not cost effective and did not result in a very large turn out in terms of number of residents participating or the amount of material received.

Table 1 above provides an overview of the types and amounts of materials collected at the events over the last eighteen years. Over 3 million pounds of materials have been recycled; 895,682 pounds of hazardous waste materials have either been recycled (as in the case of motor oil and antifreeze, flammables and solvents blended for fuel in cement kilns, and batteries, etc.) and remaining hazardous waste is safely destroyed (such as pesticides, pharmaceuticals and other toxics.)

Hazardous Waste	623,965
Oil & Anti-Freeze	271,717
Electronic Waste	784,676
Scrap Metal	627,948
Tires	1,452,060
Yard Waste	162,760
Total Recycling	3,840,694
Total Landfilled	5,255,060

Of the items collected, the most difficult materials for residents to properly dispose of are:

- Hazardous waste: services simply do not exist for households outside of the county's events, even if residents were inclined to pay for such.
- Unwanted and expired pharmaceuticals and personal care products are handled through incineration to avoid these persistent and bio-accumulative compounds from entering water ways.
- Electronic waste: Consistent, ongoing programs do not exist to recycle this waste stream and it would otherwise be put in a landfill. This is a potential hazard given the amount of lead and other heavy metals used to make electronics.
- Tires: Although residents can pay a service fee of a few dollars to dispose of a tire when a new one is purchased, many do not. Given the large agricultural base, tires tend to quickly accumulate on properties from their use with grain storage, on large earth moving and farming equipment, etc. Since it is illegal to dispose of tires in the landfill it can be difficult for consumers to get rid of them if they have a large volume and cannot afford fees charged by retail establishments. Furthermore, tires found along side the roads have historically been collected by the Road Commission, who doesn't necessarily have a budget to dispose of them. The county is able to handle tires inexpensively by directly working with a processor who is a parent company to a manufacturer making many items from recycled rubber. In the past, a 55' trailer is provided to the county for a flat fee and costs are passed on to residents at an affordable rate of just \$1 per car tire. In 2016, Clinton County partnered with Eaton County to apply for a grant through the Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE) to cover tire recycling costs. This grant allowed Clinton County to provide a free tire collection in August 2015, April 2016, April 2017, April 2018, April 2019 and September 2021. Clinton County will be working with Eaton County again in 2022 for EGLE tire grant.
- Historic, bulky waste and junk items: When purchasing old estates, many residents are also inheriting large junk piles which are a result of dumping of household waste in old structures or "in the back 40" over a long period of time, as was the custom years ago. The cost of cleaning up these open dumps can be quite considerable. The fact that the county subsidizes disposal costs at less than half of what the landfill would charge provides residents the incentive and assistance they need to clean up their properties, which is a benefit for all residents in the communities impacted by these past activities.

Since the first event, 16,783 households have participated bringing an averaging 229 pounds of recyclable material per household. On average a little more than 2% of the county's households will attend any given event. The US Environmental Protection Agency considers a well-attended event to include between 1 to 3% of the overall population, so Clinton County does well in getting residents to come out and take advantage of the services

Table 2 below provides a break out of costs for events held in 2017 and 2018. Hazardous waste services represent the highest cost category. Clinton County collects an average of 53 pounds of hazardous waste per household; many other programs around the state collect an average of 50 pounds per household. Clearly there is a strong need for these services. Miscellaneous costs include printing of participant

confirmation and volunteer materials, signage, safety equipment, supplies, toilet rental, volunteer thank you items, services provided by the Sheriff's Mounted Patrol for traffic control, and food served at the event for volunteers and jail inmates.

Table 2. Clean Community Event Costs April 2018 thru September 2019				
	Apr-18	Sept-18	Apr-19	Sept-19
Hazardous Waste	\$21,468	\$11,419	\$12,735	\$7,966
Junk	\$7,119	\$386	\$7,936	\$386
Electronic Waste	\$4,444	\$1,157	\$2,920	\$1,176
Equipment Rental	\$5,635	\$0	\$5,343	\$0
Wages	\$1,846	\$1,540	\$1,105	\$832
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$8,723	\$1,353	\$5,968	\$3,210
Tires	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Oil & Antifreeze	\$250	\$250	\$2,556	\$747
Freon Appliances	\$450	\$0	\$700	\$0
TOTALS	\$49,934	\$16,105	\$39,263	\$14,318

Funding for the events is provided through the Department of Waste Management's budget and fees charged for a few items. This includes bulky waste (about \$15 for a half truck load or \$30 for a full truck load), televisions & computer monitors (\$10 per unit) and Freon-removal from appliances at a cost of \$10 per appliance. Revenue collected from the collection event fees for 2018 was \$7,770 (about 12% of actual costs) and \$7,685 for 2019 (about 14% of actual costs). Department revenues stem from the Landfill User Fee Agreement with Granger which generates \$.25 for every cubic yard of waste disposed of, to be spent on programs and services to fulfill Clinton County's solid waste planning obligations as set forth by Part 115 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act as well as the Clinton County Solid Waste Plan and Ordinance of 1989.

Clean Community Event services continue to evolve each year both in the participants served and types of material collected. A great deal of collaboration is required, and the success of the events is in large part thanks to the excellent contributions made by event contractors, site hosts and volunteers. This includes the Clinton County Sheriff's Office and Mounted Division who oversee jail inmates, the collection of unwanted and expired pharmaceuticals, and provides traffic control to ensure participants move through in an orderly fashion. The events receives broad community support from the approximately 40 to 125 individuals who come to work a three hour shift at each event; assistance that is critical to servicing vehicles quickly and getting participants on their way. Finally the Clinton County Road Commission and Granger as site hosts provide invaluable assistance. Both agencies arrange for key staff, supplies and equipment to help with event staging, unloading of vehicles with heavy items and generally ensuring that as needs arise, challenges are addressed and event staff is fully supported.