Pay-As-You-Throw: Experience in Rural Communities

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What is NEWMOA?

- Non-profit, non-partisan interstate association
- Solid waste, hazardous waste, waste site cleanup, & pollution prevention programs
- CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, & VT
- Formally recognized by EPA in 1986
- More information at: www.newmoa.org
Project Promoting Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT)

Vermont:
- Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District
- Windham Solid Waste Management District
- Department of Environmental Conservation

New Hampshire:
- Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission
- Department of Environmental Services

Case studies of 11 communities

“Fair Pricing Strategies” brochures
- 3 location-specific
- 1 “generic” for use by everyone everywhere

Regional meetings with government officials
- 4 held & 3 more planned

Developing template for a residential handout

All materials posted:
www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/smart/index.cfm
Community Summary

- Contacted 14 small communities with PAYT
- Most have transfer stations:
  - 1990’s: Concord, Dover, Piermont & Wilmington ($2.50), Readsboro ($1), Waterford ($3)
  - 2000’s: Unity ($2), Orford ($3) & Northfield ($1.50)
  - Recent: Newark ($3) & Canaan ($1.70)
- Some have curbside:
  - 1990’s: Plainfield & Hinsdale ($2)
  - Recent: Vernon ($3)

Curbside: Vernon, VT

- Population: 2,206
- Adopted PAYT July 1, 2014
  - Added curbside recycling
- Fees cover all costs
- Require special bags
  - $2.00 / 15 gallon
  - $3.00 / 30 gallon
- Disposal ↓ ~195 tons 3rd Q 2013 to 86 tons 3rd Q 2014
- Recycling ↑ ~28 tons 3rd Q 2013 to 57 tons 3rd Q 2014
Transfer Station: Piermont, NH

- Population: 709
- PAYT since 2001
- Fees usually cover all costs
- Require special bags
  - $2.50 / 33 gallon
  - sold at Town offices & local general store
- Disposal ↓ ~220 tons/yr. before to 99 tons in 2013
- Recycling ↑ ~50 tons/yr. before to 98 tons in 2013

Transfer Station: Northfield, MA

- Population 3,032
- PAYT since 2005
- Fees cover hauling/disposal
- Require special bags
  - $1.50 / 33 gal. bag
  - $0.75 / 15 gal. bag
- Trash cut by 40%
  - 795 tons in 2004 » 460 tons in 2006
- Hauling/disposal costs cut by 40%
  - $30K » $18.5K (6 month period)
Transfer Station: Newark, VT

- Population: 581
- PAYT since 2013
- Removed all costs from Town budget
- Contractor operates - paid by fees only
  - $2 / 15 gallon
  - $3 / 30 gallon
  - $4 / “contractor”
- Disposal ↓ 33.39 tons to 14.4 tons
  (4th Q 2012 vs 4th Q 2013)
Transfer Station: Canaan, VT

- Population: 972
- PAYT since 2008
- 50/50 split: fees & Town budget
- Require special bags
  - $1.70 / 30 gallon
- Costs: $114,000/yr. to $57,000/yr. (of which 50% covered by bag sales & bulky waste drop-off fees)
  - Disposal ↓ 535 tons/yr. to 258 tons/yr. (households & businesses (H&B))
  - Hauling ↓ 9.5 tons/week (H&B) to 12.5 tons/month (H)

Findings: PAYT @ Transfer Stations

- Reduced amount of trash managed
  - usually 40-55%
  - reduced hauling frequency & tipping costs = $$$
- Can implement without bag/sticker/punch-card
  - residents use their own bag or container & operator collects $
    - computerized cash register with receipts - helps accounting
  - OR contract out operation: collected fees only payment
    - Orford, New Hampshire & Newark, Vermont
PAYT Implementation Findings

- Towns vary on extent fees cover all costs to operate transfer station (e.g. staff & recycling)
  - Fee that covers most/all costs: $3 per 32 gallons
  - If want to cover all costs - set fees to save for future capital expenses
- Try to avoid collection of cash by transfer station attendant
- Set fees similar/higher than surrounding towns
- PAYT transfer stations charge fees for bulky items

Concerns/Views Expressed...

- New cost for low-income residents that are renters
- Some communities with a lot of second homes like trash service in their tax base so it’s subsidized by “out-of-staters”
- Composting will attract bears and other animals
- Illegal dumping will be a problem
  - NONE of the 14 towns reported increased problems
So Where is the Trash Going?

- Out-of-town trash no longer smuggled in
- Smarter purchasing
- New/increased
  - organics composting
  - recycling
  - donation for reuse
- Alternative disposal
  - commercial dumpsters
  - work, friends/relatives in other towns
- Other?

Next Steps for Communities

- Establish Solid Waste Committee
  - understand current costs: labor, hauling, disposal, recycling & capital expenses
    - separate out costs in tax bills & town budget
  - initiate ongoing public education/input process
  - determine how much fees should cover
    - all trash & recycling costs, most costs, just hauling & disposal, disposal only, capital expenses?
  - determine type of system (bags vs containers, 1 size or multiple sizes)
More Steps
▲ Determine fee structure
  ▶ estimate post-PAYT trash & recycling quantities & costs (include PAYT administration)
  ▶ determine PAYT rate(s) and modify if necessary
▲ Plan for logistics
  ▶ where will bags/stickers be sold?
  ▶ how will fees be collected & managed?
▲ Educate, educate, educate
▲ Obtain plan approval
▲ Publicize new system to residents

Vermont’s The Place to Watch
▲ Act 148 requires PAYT for all residential trash starting July 1, 2015
▲ Applies to municipal and private service
▲ Must provide recycling with no visible fee
▲ Trash fees must cover at least hauling & disposal
  ▶ Except allows municipalities an “hybrid” approach
    ▶ base level of service paid by town
    ▶ maximum one 32 gallon bag/container per week
▲ Enforcement challenges
Questions?

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