

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

# South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Population: 30,000

Type of Community: Suburban

Type of Program: Drop-off, Tags

Program Start Date: August 1994

*With pay-as-you-throw, the average family of four has reduced its solid waste stream to one tagged bag of waste and one bag of recyclables per week.*

## Getting Started: Why Pay-As-You-Throw?

Solid waste for South Kingstown and its regional partner Narragansett is processed at the town's Rose Hill Regional Transfer Station (RHRTS). Given the community's oceanfront shoreline, the approximate year-round population of 22,000 residents swells to an estimated 30,000 persons in the summer months. Residents of both communities can dispose of solid waste by either contracting with a private refuse hauler or by directly accessing the transfer station.

After facility operations began at RHRTS in 1983, the disposal cost to "direct access" residential users continued to escalate. This increase in disposal costs was due in part to increasing tipping fees, higher processing costs,

and abuse of a flat-rate annual vehicle pass program, which provided unlimited disposal with little or no incentive to recycle materials. Because of these concerns, South Kingstown and Narragansett initiated a volume-based tag solid waste disposal system and a voluntary source reduction recycling program for RHRTS residential users.

## How Does It Work?

Under the tag solid waste disposal system, each residential user directly accessing the transfer station is required to purchase refuse tags (\$10.00 for 10 tags) for solid waste disposal. Residential RHRTS customers place a tag on each garbage bag

*The success of both the volume-based disposal system and the enhanced recycling facility has exceeded all pre-operational expectations.*



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July 18, 1996

TOWN OF SOUTH KINGSTON

PAY-AS-YOU-THROW TESTIMONIAL



(35-pound/33-gallon limit) prior to disposal. Refuse tags were chosen in lieu of bags to provide residents free choice with regard to the size and type of refuse bag they were accustomed to using.

Some residents continue to use trash cans for refuse disposal. The RHRTS operates as a solid waste enterprise fund, and operational costs are covered by the cost of the refuse tags.

Utilization of the recycling center by residential RHRTS users continues to remain a voluntary decision. Residents who maximize their recycling efforts can minimize tag purchases and reduce their overall solid waste disposal costs. RHRTS residential users with wasteful disposal habits who choose not to recycle must consequently purchase additional tags.

### Complementary Programs

Residential users can dispose of bulky waste and yard waste at a rate of 5 cents and 3.5 cents per pound, respectively. Residents may also elect to purchase yard waste bags at a cost of 75 cents each (which includes the disposal fee) for disposal of grass clippings and leaves.

In addition, the town constructed new recycling disposal facilities for direct access residential users that became operational on August 1, 1994. The enhanced recycling center accepts a wide variety of materials that can be recycled by residents at no cost, including aluminum, steel, plastic, newspaper,

glass, and many others. Yard waste, uncontaminated wood demolition, and ferrous and nonferrous scrap metals are also recycled, but are assessed a tip fee due to associated processing costs.

### Success: Saving Money and Reducing Waste

The success of both the volume-based disposal system and enhanced recycling facility has exceeded all pre-operational expectations. The capture ratio of recyclables from direct access residential users has consistently reached approximately 40 percent, with levels as high as 51 percent (not including bulky or recyclable yard waste). Recycling capture ratios approach 60 percent if yard waste and bulky recycled waste estimates are included.

Under the PAYT program, RHRTS residential users discharged approximately 2,175 tons during fiscal year 1994-95, as compared with 7,608 tons in fiscal year 1991-92 under the former vehicle sticker program. The average family of four has reduced its solid waste stream to one tagged bag and one bag of recyclables per week. This equates to a total yearly refuse disposal cost of \$52 per year, which is a \$40 savings from the previous year's average cost of \$92. Elderly and single residents have reported a reduction in solid waste disposal to as low as one refuse bag every two weeks, for a total yearly refuse disposal cost of \$26.