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BROWN COUNTY PORT & RESOURCE RECOVERY DEPARTMENT

The Waste Not

OUR VISION

To provide Brown County municipal commercial and industrial customers cost-effective and sustainable solid waste management systems with the focus on resource recovery primarily through recycling, repurposing and energy recovery

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Waste Workers on Front Lines, Too

During the 1918 flu pandemic no class of Americans was spared, including garbage men. In San Francisco, illness rapidly thinned their ranks, and trash piled up in streets and backyards, leaving the city little choice but to cover it with dirt. In Kansas City, Missouri, medical waste was tossed atop the household waste already piling up in public spaces, creating new hazards for the diminishing numbers of people employed to collect it, and those who lived, worked and played in the city. Today, Covid-19 poses several unique challenges for the U.S. waste collection and disposal industry and the 467,000 workers employed by it. Above all, it is likely to generate a surge in solid medical waste such as used surgical masks and empty IV bags.

At the height of the epidemic in Wuhan, China, the city was producing 240 tons of medical waste a day, and the government had to deploy mobile treatment facilities to manage it. The good news is that, unlike China, the U.S. has sufficient capacity at specialized medical waste treatment centers to manage whatever is generated in hospitals and other medical facilities. In fact, it's been managing medical wastes safely - including wastes far more hazardous than items carrying coronavirus - for years.



Photographer: Marco Bertorello/AFP/Getty Images

According to [Bloomberg.com](https://www.bloomberg.com), across the industry concern is rising about the impact on employees and the ability to collect and process waste. Some recycling centers are closing to maintain safe distances between customers and employees. In Platteville, Wisconsin, waste workers have been instructed not to pick up garbage that falls from a torn or ripped bag, for fear of infection. The National Waste & Recycling Association, an association of almost 700 members, has expressed concern that personal protective equipment for waste workers is unavailable because of panic buying by the general public.

Waste industry employers must strive to provide and enforce the use of personal protective gear, and workers must double-down in their commitment to using it.

Waste Workers on Front Lines, Too cont.

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Often, industry accidents happen because employees simply don't like wearing gear or set it aside because it's uncomfortable. Finally, Americans should take extra care with their waste and recycling, especially if it was generated in a quarantined home. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using gloves when handling trash generated by an ill person. Doing so will not only protect the health of the people employed to collect your trash, but also help to maintain clean cities where disease outbreaks are rare and quick.

Happy 50th Anniversary, Earth Day!



Photo Credit: EarthDay.org

Earth Day celebrated its 50th anniversary on April 22, 2020. The theme for Earth Day 2020 was climate action. "Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable," says the *Earth Day* website.

According to EarthDay.org, the first Earth Day in 1970 mobilized millions of Americans for the protection of the planet. On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans 10% of the U.S. population at the time took to the street, college campuses, and hundreds of cities to protest environmental ignorance and demand a new way forward for our planet.

Earth Day is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event and it led to passage of landmark environmental laws in the United States, including the Clean Air, Clear Water and Endangered Species Acts. Many countries soon adopted similar laws, and in 2016, the United Nations chose Earth Day as the day to open the Paris Climate Agreement for signatures to ratify the accord.

"Despite that amazing success and decades of environmental progress, we find ourselves facing an even more dire, almost existential, set of global environmental challenges, from loss of biodiversity to climate change to plastic pollution, that call for action at all levels of government," said Denis Hayes, the organizer of the first Earth Day in 1970 and Earth Day Network's Board Chair Emeritus.



First Earth Day; April 22, 1970, Arvada, CO. "Hundreds of students from Arvada High School Wednesday morning got Earth Day activities off to an early and enthusiastic start as they marched and bicycled to school to demonstrate their concern over pollution." Photo by Dick Davis, Courtesy of DenverLibrary.org

Happy 50th Anniversary, Earth Day cont.

“Progress has slowed, climate change impacts grow, and our adversaries have become better financed,” said Earth Day Network president Kathleen Rogers. “We find ourselves today in a world facing global threats that

demand a unified global response. For Earth Day 2020, we will build a new generation of environmentalist activists, engaging millions of people worldwide.”

What have you done to make Earth Day 2020 another historic moment?

Construction Underway on New South Landfill

This is anything but a typical spring across the U.S., but many construction projects throughout the Midwest are moving forward with the advent of nicer weather. That is true for the Brown County South Landfill project, where the first phase of construction is now underway.

“After many years of study, discussion and planning, construction has begun to develop the next landfill that will serve Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago counties,” said Dean Haen, Brown County Port & Resource Recovery director. “The work this year will include excavation to create the first cell for the landfill and security fencing around the entire landfill site.”

Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago counties (BOW) entered into a solid waste partnership in 2002 to coordinate waste disposal and recycling efforts. As part of that partnership, each county-run landfill is operated in sequence.

The first county landfill to be used was in Winnebago County, with Brown and Outagamie counties operating solid waste transfer stations in their counties where solid waste was collected, compacted and then hauled to the landfill in Winnebago County. When that landfill reached capacity, the solid waste disposal shifted to Outagamie County. The Outagamie County landfill is expected to reach capacity near the end of 2022, with waste disposal then shifting to Brown County. “Because of that, we are now beginning construction of the Brown County landfill so it will be ready when needed,” added Haen.

Located in the town of Holland, on County IL (Mill Road), the 313-acre South Landfill site was selected because its geology is well suited for a landfill. The South Landfill will have three phases and is designed to have 13 years of capacity at current waste levels from the three counties.



Photo Credit: settje.com

The project has received all necessary federal and state permits and approvals. The estimated cost to construct the initial phase of the project is \$20 million, which will be recouped on a per ton basis of disposal over the life of the landfill. Mashuda Contractors, Inc., of Princeton, Wis., is the main contractor for the landfill project.

COVID-19 Department Updates

The Brown County Resource Recovery Department has been identified as an essential County Department during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brown County Resource Recovery was also advised to close non-essential facilities and programs.

The following facilities remain **OPEN**:

- Waste Transfer Station*
Mon—Fri: 7am—4pm
Sat: 7am—2pm
**All transactions must be by credit card or account only*
- Recycling Transfer Station
Mon—Fri: 7:30am—4pm
- Food Waste & Organics Drop-off
Limited hours: Mon—Fri: 7:30am—4pm



The following facilities are **CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**:

- Hazardous Material Recovery Facility*
**Still accepting appointments for businesses with established accounts*
- Product Exchange Room

Visit our website at BrownCountyRecycling.org to stay up to date on our closings.

Follow Us

For facts, general information and ideas on how to reduce waste, follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest! We post information you want to know several times a week.

If you are interested in reading more about a resource recovery topic online or in our newsletter let us know! We would love to hear from you.

Email us at BC_Resource_Recovery@browncountywi.gov with your idea and we will post it or include it in our next newsletter.



Brown County Port & Resource Recovery Department

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