



Clinton County Department of Waste Management

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Clinton County Clean Community Event Services 1999 thru 2022

Clinton County has conducted 39 Clean Community Events/Special Collection 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 up to 10 different 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 through 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. In 2021, three “mini-events” were held to accommodate COVID-19 health & safety protocol while providing collection services for the hardest to dispose of items for our residents.

Table 1 above provides an overview of the types and amounts of materials collected at the events over the last twenty three years. Just over 4 million pounds of materials have been recycled; 1.1 million 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.) or safely destroyed (such as pesticides,

Hazardous Waste	702,396
Oil & Anti-Freeze	308,903
Electronic Waste	853,305
Scrap Metal	875,818
Tires	1,550,425
Yard Waste	168,760
Total Recycling	4,108,409
Total Junk	5,504,460

pharmaceuticals and other toxics.)

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 (formerly the Department of Environmental Quality or DEQ) to cover tire recycling costs. This grant allowed Clinton County to provide a free tire collection annually since 2015. Clinton County will continue working with Eaton County and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE) for the annual 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, 18,134 households have participated bringing an averaging 227 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 breakout of costs for events held in 2021 and 2022. Hazardous waste services represent the highest cost category. Clinton County collects an average of 56 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, heavy equipment operation at the Road Commission, and food served at the event for volunteers and contractors.

Table 2. Clean Community Event Costs April 2021 thru September 2022					
	April-21	Sept-21	Oct-21	April-22	Sept-22
Hazardous Waste	\$16,513	\$0	\$10,743	\$24,012	\$11,506
Junk	\$0	\$0	\$412	\$9,180	\$935
Electronic Waste	\$2,251	\$0	\$919	\$6,152	\$3,140
Equipment Rental	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,851	\$0
Wages	\$83	\$224	\$224	\$0	\$257
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$1,898	\$3,502	\$1,104	\$10,761	\$2,164
Tires	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Oil & Antifreeze	\$0*	\$0	\$0*	\$0*	\$0*
Freon Appliances	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,305	\$0
TOTALS	\$20,745	\$3,726	\$13,402	\$57,261	\$18,001

**Oil & Antifreeze are charged as part of the household hazardous waste.*

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 2021 were \$5,118 (about 13.5% of actual costs) and in 2022 \$10,341 (about 7% 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 receive 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.

The collection events in 2021 and 2022 provided our department with a unique perspective on which items our residents have the most difficult time recycling or disposing. It has become clear that year-round recycling and disposal options have greatly improved over the past two decades. This has provided our department with an opportunity to review how we provide these collection events and what works best for our residents. These changes may impact how we move forward with these events in the future.