

# The Landfill Update

A Publication of the Larimer County Solid Waste Department



## A Glance Back and a Look Forward

By Stephen Gillette, Solid Waste Director

It has been an exciting year for the Solid Waste Department. Spring brought the start of construction on our new administrative and training facility at the landfill, and we moved in October. Built with as many “green” features as we could afford, the building uses a geothermal heat pump, has added insulation, great windows to make use of the sun’s power, and many other environmentally friendly features. Still to be built is the engineered wetlands to handle our waste water; this will be completed next spring. Please stop by and visit the new office! It’s just south of the recycling containers and hazardous waste facility; look for the American flag.

At the working face of the landfill, you may notice a new oddly colored (off-white) compactor, which we purchased earlier in the year. Phase 2 of the landfill (the northwest section) will be filled to capacity sometime next summer, after which it will be capped with clay, topsoil and vegetation and permanently closed. The closure will result in the completion of the entire northern half of the landfill. The next section that we’ll start filling is the area around the old shooting range, just south of Phase 2. This area was previously cleaned of lead and is ready for use as a landfill.

We’re happy to report that, for the fifth



consecutive year, we will *not* be increasing prices at the landfill. Other good news is that the department is in the process of putting out a request for proposal to enter into a public/private partnership for the collection of organic materials. The landfill would act as a depository where the organics would be kept separate and then transferred to another site for processing.

The Solid Waste Department is here to serve you, the residents of Larimer County. Please feel free to come by, write, call, or e-mail our staff with comments or questions. Contact information is on page 2. Have a great New Year!

## 2007: A Great Year for Trashy Education

By Cheryl Kolus, Environmental Educator

The education program really took off this year, with the help of Rose Watson, education center attendant, and our wonderful volunteers, Wally Jacobson, Wanda Mayberry and Dick Rush.

The Garbage Garage Education Center, located at the landfill, is the cornerstone of the Solid Waste Department’s education program. As of November 30, the center had welcomed about 3,500 visitors, (a 46 percent increase from 2006!) including 274 drop-ins (not part of a tour group) and 242 class participants.

This was the third year we hosted summer classes for kids at the education center, and the first time that almost all classes had full registration. Rose led the classes, whose topics included prairie dogs, composting, and how to have a “zero waste” picnic, among others. In fact, because of the tremendous interest in these classes, Rose developed three Saturday family classes for the fall/winter season, too.

Other events at the Garbage Garage included the annual Earth Day open house in April and the Reusable Art Contest associated with it; both were once again great successes.

Although the Garbage Garage is our most popular educational tool, it is certainly not the only one. Cheryl Kolus, environmental educator for the department, occasionally presents recycling information to schools and other community groups. This year, she was invited to talk at three U.S. Department of Agriculture offices on America Recycles Day (November 15), where her presentations were very well received. In addition, we hosted educational booths at several community fairs throughout 2007; distributed

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## Solid Waste Department

**Director:** Stephen Gillette

**Landfill Manager:** Robert Nielsen

**Asst. Landfill Manager:** Bob Turner

**Hazardous Waste Mgr:** Linda Hayden

**Administrative Services Manager:**

Ann Lujan

**Environmental Specialist:**

Steve Harem

**Environmental Educator:**

Cheryl Kulus

**Accounting Tech:** Linda Oatney

**Administrative Assistant:** Rita Trostel

**Address:**

5887 S. Taft Hill Rd.

Fort Collins, CO 80526

**Main Phone:**

(970) 498-5760

**24-hour Landfill Information Line:**

(970) 498-5770

**Office Hours:**

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Landfill/Recycling Drop-off:**

Mon.–Sat. 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Sun. 9 a.m.–4 p.m. (*Apr. - Oct. only*)

**Household Hazardous Waste Facility:**

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday

9 a.m.–4 p.m.

**Garbage Garage Education Center:**

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

10 a.m.–2 p.m.

(*other times by appointment*)

**Website:**

[larimer.org/solidwaste](http://larimer.org/solidwaste)

## Environmental Update

# Negative Monitoring Results are Positive

By Steve Harem, Environmental Specialist

Results of extra groundwater testing conducted this year confirm that the landfill is not causing pesticide or cyanide contamination, and recent landfill gas monitoring shows that methane is safely contained within the property boundaries.

Water samples, collected quarterly to monitor the landfill's impact on downstream groundwater, were subjected to extra testing in 2007 because trace levels of cyanide and a pesticide derivative were detected in October 2006 near the northeast corner of the landfill. The pesticide, an isomer of the chemical hexachlorocyclohexane (commonly known as delta-BHC), was detected at a very low concentration and at only one monitoring point.

Sixteen water samples collected this year were tested for pesticides, and delta-BHC was not detected in any of them, indicating that the October 2006 result was a false positive. All groundwater samples collected from the northern landfill area in 2007 were analyzed for cyanide compounds via two different laboratory methods. Analysis for "Total Cyanide" was used to measure the total amount in the samples of various forms of cyanide—toxic and non-toxic, and naturally-occurring and man-made. Analysis for "Free Cyanide" provided a measure of the more toxic forms of cyanide that are regulated under a Colorado Drinking Water Standard. Though low concentrations of cyanide—ranging from 0.003 to 0.006 parts per million (ppm)—were detected in a few of the 32 samples tested, all results were well below the 0.2 ppm threshold considered hazardous

to human health. The highest level of cyanide was detected in a background monitoring well, indicating that these low concentrations of cyanide compounds are a natural condition and not the result of landfill influence.

Water table elevation measurements, meanwhile, continue to show the effects of long-term drought. The year started with average precipitation, but spring and summer were very dry, resulting in a continued drop in the water table. A severe thunderstorm dumped 4.75 inches of rain on the landfill August 2, but the rain came so fast that it produced all runoff and no aquifer recharge. The deluge caused flooding and significant damage to drainage structures, but it had no noticeable impact on the surficial aquifer.

Landfill gas monitoring, conducted monthly to track underground movement of methane around the landfill, has shown in recent months that a problem with gas migration has been resolved. Last winter, methane concentrations exceeded 5 percent (the lower explosive limit) at one location along the landfill's northern property boundary. A small gas blower/flare was installed in the area to help vent the landfill gas, and methane levels soon dropped to a safe level. Monthly monitoring results show no detectable methane at any point around the landfill perimeter for the last five consecutive months. Independent measurements, made by the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, confirm these findings.

## **Attention Customers!**

Please note that our new business office is now located at the landfill, 5887 S. Taft Hill Road, Fort Collins, 80526. Please use this address for all mailings.



## **Upcoming Holiday Closures**

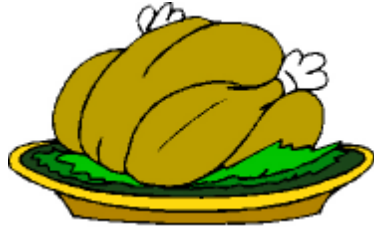
Landfill and all facilities on-site: Closed at 2:30 Dec. 24 & 31; closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

Business office: Closed Dec. 24, 25 & 31, Jan. 1 & 21, Feb. 18.

# Used Cooking Oil is Hazardous Waste? Who Knew?

By Linda Hayden, Hazardous Waste Manager

Holidays bring good food to our tables, but did you know that sometimes that good meal results in a hazardous waste you shouldn't be throwing in the trash? Think: used cooking oil. If you deep fry your holiday turkey, have you ever wondered what to do with the left-over cooking oil? You may not think of cooking oil as a hazardous waste but rather as a nuisance that will clog your drains or make a mess in the garbage can. Cooking oil is more than just a nuisance, however; it's a combustible liquid that can easily catch fire when exposed to a very hot source. Unlike flammable materials,



such as gasoline, which catch fire at a lower temperature and burn out quickly, cooking oil burns much hotter and longer creating a more dangerous situation. It can also be a major source of methane gas production in the landfill.

The good news is that Larimer County residents can properly dispose of their used cooking oil by bringing it to the Household Hazardous Waste Facility at the landfill. Stop by any Tuesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We'll be waiting for you!

# Solid Waste Staff Win County Awards

Rose Watson, education center attendant, was presented an Environmental Stewardship Award by the county commissioners earlier this month. These awards, first presented in 1995, are given each year to honor the environmental efforts of county residents, businesses and organizations. Winning programs are innovative and proactive, and demonstrate exceptional effort and concern for stewardship of the environment.

The county's volunteer citizen Environmental Advisory Board reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the commissioners who determine the final selections. This year, five awards were presented from the 12 nominations received.



Rose was nominated by a visitor to the Garbage Garage Education Center for her commitment, dedication and skill as education center attendant.

Cheryl Kolus, environmental educator, was chosen as the Larimer County Employee of the Month for July. Cheryl is primarily responsible for the Solid Waste Department's education and outreach program, and had a hand in the development of the Garbage Garage Education Center.

She organizes tours for school groups, senior organizations, boy/girl scouts and countless other groups. In addition, she writes and produces brochures and newsletters for the department, maintains the website, writes press releases, and puts together the department's annual report. She also is a member of the county's "Green Committee" through which she promotes recycling within county buildings.

Cheryl was nominated for the award by coworker Linda Oatney.



## Trashy Education (continued from page 1)

dozens of press releases on a variety of solid waste topics; and continued production of our two popular newsletters, *The Recyclone Times* (in cooperation with the City of Fort Collins) and of course, *The Landfill Update*. In fact, an online-only version of *The Recyclone Times* is due out soon, and we encourage those interested in getting the latest recycling news to sign up as an e-mail subscriber (see box below). We expect to begin distributing the newsletter four times yearly, with only the summer issue being distributed in a print version.

Cheryl and Rose have also appeared on local radio shows to promote recycling, and

we continue to partner with our colleagues at the Cities of Fort Collins and Loveland to help promote awareness of waste issues. For the second year in a row, the department's education program and the City of Fort Collins teamed up to produce a four-page ad in the 2008 Dex phone book entitled "The Garbage and Recycling Guide." This will allow Fort Collins residents to have year-round, convenient access to landfill and recycling information at their fingertips.

We look forward to developing more educational partnerships and finding new ways to promote reducing, reusing and recycling in the community in 2008.

### Want the latest recycling news delivered right to your inbox?

Sign up for a free online subscription to *The Recyclone Times* newsletter. Go to [www.larimer.org](http://www.larimer.org) and enter your e-mail address in the box at the top right. You can also sign up to receive *The Landfill Update* via e-mail (in which case, please contact the Solid Waste Department to remove your name from the hard copy mailing list).

### Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for one or two volunteers interested in helping with tours of the Garbage Garage Education Center, landfill and recycling center. Candidates must be at least 18 years old and have an interest in recycling and waste reduction. Experience in teaching or public speaking is a plus. Must be available during regular business hours. Training provided. Call 498-5772 or e-mail [ckolus@larimer.org](mailto:ckolus@larimer.org).



For more landfill news, visit  
[www.larimer.org/solidwaste](http://www.larimer.org/solidwaste).

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## *Make Recycling a Holiday Tradition*

### **Recycle Your Christmas Tree, Wrapping Paper and Much More!**

Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins are once again offering free Christmas tree recycling for their residents. The trees will be recycled into mulch, which will be available free to residents in the spring at the Larimer County Landfill.

Individuals can drop off their holiday trees at the county landfill, 5887 S. Taft Hill Road, Fort Collins, or in Wellington at the corner of 6th Street and Grant Avenue, free of charge from December 26 to January 21.

The City of Fort Collins has several drop-off sites around town, as well. Visit [www.larimer.org/solidwaste](http://www.larimer.org/solidwaste) for details or call 498-5772. Other communities may also offer tree recycling programs; contact your local municipal offices.

Only “naked” trees are accepted—all decorations and any other foreign materials must be removed from the trees before recycling. Flocked trees cannot be recycled.

Don’t forget to recycle wrapping paper, packaging paper and greeting cards, too. These materials may be placed year round in your curbside recycling bin or in the paper-board bin at recycling drop-offs located at the landfill, at the City of Fort Collins’ drop-off at 1702 Riverside Ave., and at the City of Loveland’s drop-off at 400 N. Wilson Ave. Corrugated cardboard may be recycled at these locations, as well. Cardboard recycled curbside must be flattened and broken down to 2 ft. x 2 ft. or smaller. Foil wrapping paper and Styrofoam are NOT currently recyclable.

Did you know you can even recycle used cooking oil? Take it to our hazardous waste facility or to Loveland’s recycling drop-off.

For more details about what can be recycled in Larimer County, call 498-5760 or go to [www.larimer.org/solidwaste](http://www.larimer.org/solidwaste). For the latest information on unscheduled landfill closures (usually due to high winds), call the 24-hour information line at 498-5770.



Larimer County Solid Waste  
5887 S. Taft Hill Road  
Fort Collins, CO 80526

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED