

Storm Debris Clean Up

On September 14, 2008, southwest Ohio was hit with the remnants of Hurricane Ike which resulted in severely damaging winds. The winds caused widespread damage throughout Hamilton County. At the September 18, 2008 Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District (District) Policy Committee meeting, a motion was passed authorizing the District to spend its excess carryover balance (~\$500,000) to assist communities in managing the storm debris. This report provides an overview of the District's response to the storm debris, results of the clean-up, costs, and lessons learned.

Community Assistance

District staff provided many services to communities and residents during the clean up phases. After meeting with community representatives, it was evident that communities sought help with tub grinding and wood chip removal. To provide this assistance, the District contracted with the private sector for tub grinding and wood chip removal.

To ensure compliance with air permitting regulations, prior to entering into contracts for tub grinding, the District requested and received an exemption from Ohio EPA's air permit requirements for tub grinding.

Initially, the District worked with the City of Cincinnati to add onto their existing contract for tub grinding services. The District also contracted with two additional companies to finish the tub grinding. In total, the District worked with three tub grinding companies to grind brush in the following communities: Symmes Township (which included brush collected from Sycamore Township), Amberley Village, Blue Ash (two sites), Colerain Township, Green Township (two sites), Woodlawn, Springfield Township (included brush from Mt. Healthy, Delhi Township, and North College Hill), and the City of Harrison (two sites).

The District also issued a Request for Bids and entered into a contract for the removal of wood chips. All communities that were serviced with tub grinding were also serviced for the removal of the wood chips. In addition, the following communities had their wood chips removed: Forest Park, Montgomery, and Newtown.

Residential Assistance

The District expanded the hours/days of operation at its residential yardwaste drop-off sites immediately following the storm. The Rumpke Sanitary Landfill and Turpin Farm site were open during the week from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. All three sites, including Kuliga Park, were also open extended hours on the weekends. The District utilized 19.5 hours of overtime to provide staffing at the Kuliga Park yardwaste drop-off site. The District also contracted with the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department to provide security and traffic control at the Kuliga Park and Turpin Farm drop-off sites.

General Outreach

The District supplied much needed information to the media to inform residents on options to properly dispose of storm debris. Staff contacted each community to determine their collection process and publicized the information via the District website and press releases. The resulting media coverage is attached.

Results

Listed below is a breakdown of the material collected by community and by the residential yardwaste drop-off sites:

Community	Service(s) Requested		Cubic Yards of Wood Chips Removed
	Tub Grinding	Wood Chip Removal	
Symmes Township	✓	✓	2,400
Amberley Village	✓	✓	3,600
Blue Ash (2 sites)	✓	✓	4,080
Colerain Township	✓	✓ (2 sites)	3,940
Green Township (2 sites)	✓	✓	5,300
Woodlawn	✓	✓	1,940
Springfield Township	✓	✓	6,160
Harrison (2 sites)	✓	✓	2,100
Montgomery		✓	1,200
Forest Park		✓	1,280
Newtown		✓	300
TOTAL CUBIC YARDS			32,300
ESTIMATED TONS			8,075¹

Yardwaste Drop-off Sites – The District’s yardwaste sites received an additional **809 tons** of material in September and October, or a 34% increase in yardwaste.

Costs

The total cost for the storm debris clean-up was \$368,623.61. The breakdown of the costs is listed below:

Line Item	Cost
Tub Grinding	\$201,660.00
Wood Chip Removal	\$107,260.00
Yardwaste Drop-off Sites	\$57,318.03
Hamilton County Sheriff	\$904.50
Direct Administrative Costs	\$764.68
Labor (overtime to work yardwaste drop-off site)	\$716.40
TOTAL	\$368,623.61

In addition to the costs listed above, **283 hours of staff time** was spent organizing the clean-up efforts and completing the necessary FEMA paperwork.

FEMA Reimbursement

Given the damage from the windstorm, Hamilton County was declared a federal disaster area which meant that eligible applicants could receive up to 75% reimbursement for costs related to the storm debris clean-up. The District attended all meetings held by FEMA and completed the necessary paperwork. After submitting the first round of paperwork, in early December, 2008, the District was notified that it was not an Eligible Applicant to receive reimbursement, stating the District did not have

the authority to manage the debris. Over the next month, staff worked with FEMA and Ohio EMA in an effort to document that the District was indeed eligible to receive FEMA assistance. Staff also worked closely with Ohio EPA and other solid waste districts that received FEMA assistance to enlist support and advice. By the end of January, staff was notified that the District was an eligible applicant.

On April 17, 2009, the District received its first check from FEMA in the amount of \$203,523.00. The District anticipates receiving an additional \$72,944.71 in reimbursement over the next few weeks.

Lessons Learned

The storm debris clean-up resulting from the September 14, 2008 windstorm was the first time in its history that the District provided direct clean-up assistance to communities. Therefore, a few lessons were learned, which are detailed below:

Eligible Applicant for FEMA Reimbursement

The major obstacle and concern throughout the storm debris clean-up was whether or not the District would be reimbursed by FEMA. Concerns raised by FEMA included: 1.) The Solid Waste Management District was not included in Hamilton County's Emergency Management Plan, 2.) The District's Solid Waste Management Plan contained no provisions for storm debris clean-up, 3.) The District never provided this type of direct assistance in its history.

While it is unknown if the District will continue to play a direct role in managing natural disasters, staff recommends including debris management language in the next solid waste management plan update. In addition, staff will continue to work with Hamilton County EMA to ensure the District is included in updates to Hamilton County's Emergency Management Plan. Staff will also be working with Ohio EPA to ensure other Ohio solid waste districts understand that the aforementioned items should be in place *prior to* a natural disaster.

Procurement of Services

The District is required to follow procurement procedures for the purchase of goods and services. Issuing an invitation to bid and initiating a contract with a vendor can take anywhere from two to four months. Staff initially worked with the City of Cincinnati to add onto their existing contract for tub grinding. Once the contract expired, the District bid out additional tub grinding services, which took an additional three months (including the time it took to seek out potential bidders).

Now that staff has a template for tub grinding bid specifications and is more knowledgeable on local and regional tub grinding companies, the process will be much more efficient if the District assists with a natural disaster in the future. For example, the District will divide the County in quadrants to have multiple tub grinders working versus relying on one tub grinder to manage all of the debris.

Another obstacle with bidding out tub grinding services was estimating the amount of debris to be tub grinded. There are typically two methods of bidding out tub grinding: per hour or per job-site, or stockpile of debris. District staff preferred to bid out a cost per stockpile of debris as it is difficult to monitor the number of hours a tub grinder is operating. The downside to this type of bidding is the need for the clean-up to be finished and to have an accurate estimate of the cubic yards, in order to

develop the necessary bid specifications. Staff relied on the political jurisdictions to provide the data. Staff recommends that tub grinding be bid based on the stockpile, not on an hourly basis for any future projects. Even though this option takes longer, it is much easier for staff to monitor.

Estimating Costs

Similar to the concerns raised under the previous section, staff had difficulties estimating total costs for the clean-up efforts. Since this was the first time the District assisted in debris management, staff did not have first-hand experience in determining the costs associated with this scale of clean-up. Overall, however, staff's initial estimates were not too far off from actual expenses. As of January, 2009, staff anticipated the total costs to be \$345,000. As mentioned under the cost section of this report, the actual costs were \$368,623.61.

Storm Debris Media Coverage (Print & Television)

Media/Public Relations Activities

In response to the large quantities of yardwaste debris generated from the storm that struck the Greater Cincinnati area on Sunday, September 14, 2008, the District conducted a variety of media and public relations activities to help inform residents about the options available for handling yardwaste. The District issued numerous press releases and media reminders/alerts from September 15th through September 24th regarding issues and resources related to yardwaste cleanup.

Staff also conducted a media briefing at Rumpke Sanitary Landfill on September 17, 2008, at 2:00 p.m. to inform the public about the various yardwaste disposal options available and the expanded hours of the District's yardwaste drop-off sites. The briefing, held in conjunction with Rumpke, resulted in media coverage from channels 5, 9, and 12, as well as from 700 WLW and the Cincinnati Enquirer.

Media/Public Relations Results

As a result of the District's media and public relations efforts during the two-week period from September 14th through September 28th, a large amount of yardwaste information was aired and printed. The District's free media relations efforts resulted in the following successes:

Print Coverage

Although the topic of yardwaste cleanup appeared almost daily in this two-week period, a total of six stories ran in the Cincinnati Enquirer, Community Press and the Kentucky Post that specifically mention the District, or District-sponsored yardwaste programs.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>MEDIA OUTLET</u>	<u>ARTICLE TITLE</u>
9/15/2008	Community Press	Anderson: Clearing township streets first priority
9/16/2008	Cincinnati Enquirer	What to do with debris in Ohio
9/17/2008	Kentucky Post	Yardwaste, not trash, accepted at Hamilton County drop-offs
9/18/2008	Kentucky Post	Hamilton County offers free yard waste drop-off
9/18/2008	Cincinnati Enquirer	Stack limbs by the curb, then wait
9/20/2008	Cincinnati Enquirer	Mulch piles growing into mountains

Television Coverage

A vast amount of information about yardwaste cleanup, specifically about the District's yardwaste drop-off sites, was aired on the local television stations. A total of 26 specific mentions of the District and District-related programs were recorded, **resulting in a total audience of nearly 1.4 million viewers and an estimated media value of \$49,536.00.**

Television Coverage:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CHANNEL</u>	<u>COVERAGE SYNOPSIS</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u>MEDIA VALUE</u>
9/16/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Yardwaste debris needs to be bundled.	16,506	\$ 66.00

9/16/08	WLWT Ch. 5	Yardwaste drop-offs sites information.	14,460	\$ 225.00
9/16/08	WLWT Ch. 5	Yardwaste drop-offs sites information.	18,161	\$ 639.00
9/17/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Yardwaste drop-off sites hours.	51,758	\$ 675.00
9/17/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Yardwaste press briefing coverage.	88,402	\$ 4,500.00
9/17/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Hamilton County helps with yardwaste.	101,970	\$ 3,240.00
9/17/08	WKRC Ch. 12	How to handle yardwaste.	72,634	\$ 4,080.00
9/17/08	WLWT Ch. 5	How to handle yardwaste.	45,274	\$ 2,400.00
9/17/08	WLWT Ch. 5	Teaser - how to handle yardwaste.	62,988	\$ 255.00
9/17/08	WLWT Ch. 5	How to handle yardwaste.	62,988	\$ 5,610.00
9/18/08	WCPO Ch. 9	How to handle yardwaste.	35,022	\$ 2,739.00
9/18/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Teaser - How to handle yardwaste.	51,758	\$ 135.00
9/18/08	WCPO Ch. 9	How to handle yardwaste.	51,758	\$ 855.00
9/18/08	WKRC Ch. 12	Where to take your yardwaste.	24,939	\$ 276.00
9/18/08	WLWT Ch. 5	How to handle yardwaste.	19,908	\$ 2,241.00
9/19/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Yardwaste options from Ham. Cty.	35,022	\$ 5,079.00
9/19/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Yardwaste options in Hamilton County.	51,758	\$ 516.00
9/20/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Rumpke has extended yardwaste hours.	78,586	\$ 4,680.00
9/21/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Yardwaste options in Hamilton County.	59,229	\$ 699.00
9/21/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Yardwaste press briefing coverage.	59,229	\$ 750.00
9/21/08	WCPO Ch. 9	Rumpke has extended yardwaste hours.	59,229	\$ 699.00
9/27/08	WKRC Ch. 12	Ham. Cty. yardwaste sites - hours.	118,762	\$ 2,400.00
9/27/08	WLWT Ch. 5	Ham. Cty. yardwaste sites - hours.	45,049	\$ 5,100.00
9/28/08	WLWT Ch. 5	Ham. Cty. yardwaste sites - hours.	31,712	\$ 225.00
9/28/08	WLWT Ch. 5	Ham. Cty. yardwaste sites - hours.	69,141	\$ 600.00
9/28/08	WLWT Ch. 5	Ham. Cty. yardwaste sites - hours.	62,301	\$ 852.00

Conclusion

Although not every story contained information that focused solely on District-related programs, the free media coverage that the District received from the date the storm struck, through the next two weeks of the cleanup process, enhanced public awareness of and participation in the District's yardwaste drop-off sites and programs. This media coverage also drove traffic to the District's website, as District staff updated and publicized a detailed list of what each community in Hamilton County was doing to assist its residents with yardwaste debris.

Storm Debris Timeline

The following is a timeline of the clean-up efforts. While not inclusive of everything District staff completed after the windstorm, it provides a glimpse of the tasks involved.

September 14, 2008 – Windstorm hits Hamilton County.

September 15, 2008 – District announced that the Rumpke Sanitary Landfill and Turpin Farm yardwaste drop-off sites will be open additional hours during the week.

September 15 – 24, 2008 – Developed website detailing how communities were managing their debris.

September 16, 2008 – Rumpke requests an increase in the authorized maximum daily waste receipts to accommodate additional waste associated with the storm.

September 17, 2008 – Two yardwaste drop-off sites open during the week. District conducted press conference at Rumpke Sanitary Landfill. Ohio EPA approves Rumpke's request for an increase to their authorized maximum daily waste receipts.

September 18, 2008 – Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District Policy Committee authorizes the District to spend up to \$500,000 to assist in the clean-up efforts.

September 19, 2008 – The District submitted an Ohio EPA exemption request for air permitting requirements for tub grinders.

District conducted a conference call with Hamilton County communities to discuss needs.

September 20-21, 2008 – Additional staff and Sheriff Deputies worked at the yardwaste drop-off sites.

September 22, 2008 – District conducted meeting with communities to discuss needs.

September 23 – October 10, 2008 – Worked with City of Cincinnati to attach to their contract for tub grinding.

September 25, 2008 – District extended weekend hours for yardwaste drop-off sites.

September 29 – October 6, 2008 – District worked with Springfield Township to allow North College Hill and Mt. Healthy to drop-off their debris at Springfield Township's stockpile.

October 7, 2008 – District attended the FEMA informational meeting.

October 7 – December 2, 2008 – District drafted and issued an invitation to bid for disposal of wood chips. The District entered into contract with Bzak Landscaping for this service.

October 16, 2008 – District receives exemption from Ohio EPA for air permitting requirements for tub grinders.

October 17, 2008 – District staff spoke to the Greater Cincinnati Local Government Association about the clean-up efforts.

October 24, 2008 – Thirty-three counties in Ohio were declared Federal disaster areas that are eligible for public assistance funds.

October 29, 2008 – Tub grinding started.

November 10, 2008 – Staff participated in FEMA meeting (one-on-one meeting with FEMA representatives).

November 24, 2008 – Staff met with FEMA representative to review paperwork.

December 9, 2008 – Staff met with FEMA to answer remaining questions on paperwork.

December 11, 2008 – District notified by Ohio EMA that the District was not eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

December 12 – January 28, 2009 – District worked on documentation and proof that the District was an eligible applicant for FEMA reimbursement.

December 24 – January 21, 2009 – Drafted and issued invitation to bid for grinding. District contracted with Bzak Landscaping for grinding services.

January 29, 2009 – FEMA approves District as an eligible applicant.

February 21, 2009 – District submitted first round of paperwork to FEMA.

April 17, 2009 – Received first reimbursement check in the amount of \$203,523.00.

June 18, 2009 – Clean-up finished.

July 16, 2009 – District submitted close-out report to FEMA.