



## Tri-County Partnership Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why was the Tri-County Partnership (also known as BOW) formed?**

Providing recycling and waste management services to residents and businesses is a significant expense for any county. In the early 2000's, the three counties of Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago explored collaborative options for the stabilization of administration and operating costs for waste management, and, in 2003 formed the Tri-County Partnership by entering into the BOW Intergovernmental Solid Waste Disposal Agreement. This agreement commits the counties to work together to coordinate waste disposal, using each county's existing landfill capacities and future landfill developments while sharing administration and operations costs.

### **When and why was the agreement extended?**

The Tri-County agreement had an initial 25-year period, with a review of the landfill plan required at the midway point of the agreement. The review was completed, and the analysis showed there was over \$48M in solid waste savings across the 65 communities served by the three counties. The significant savings was proof the agreement worked and benefitted all involved; which is why each county signed a new BOW agreement, extending the partnership between the three counties through 2042. A key feature of this new agreement is the additional flexibility it provides, including parallel landfill operations in Brown and Outagamie counties.

### **Why the need for two landfills?**

Outagamie's 450-acre solid waste campus was always planned and developed to be a landfill and resource recovery campus. The new Northwest Landfill is a continuation of that plan. The new landfill cell will help meet demand as waste tonnage continues to increase. The original tonnage projections within the BOW system versus tonnages now has grown as the region continues to develop. The increased operational flexibility allows for the Tri-County partnership to meet the growing demand.

### **What is the timeline for the Northwest Landfill Operation to begin?**

The Northwest Landfill will be under full construction in 2022 and is set to become operational in 2023. When the Northwest Landfill is complete, it will operate in tandem with Brown County's new landfill.

### **When will Brown County's landfill become operational?**

Brown County's South Landfill is currently under construction and is set to become operational in 2022. At that time, waste will be delivered primarily from Winnebago and Brown Counties to establish the initial softer base layer on the floor of the first phase, or cell, to create a protective barrier as required by WDNR regulations



**Why construct the Northwest Landfill if Brown County is opening their landfill?**

Waste tonnages have increased significantly as the communities we serve continue to grow since inception of the BOW agreement in 2003. The new Northwest Landfill is a continuation of the plan for the Outagamie County waste management campus and, by operating in tandem with Brown County's new landfill, will help meet the increased demand of the communities we serve.

**Is the Northwest Landfill a new idea?**

No. Since May of 2016, the recycling and solid waste department has kept the three municipalities within the 1,500-foot boundary of OCRSW apprised of the development of the Northwest Landfill. The Recycling & Solid Waste Department made sure to communicate to those municipalities and walk them through the State of Wisconsin Waste Facility Siting Board steps to ensure the City of Appleton, Town of Grand Chute, and Village of Little Chute were fully educated about the process and siting timelines in relationship to the feasibility requirements set by the WDNR.

**What happens to the Northeast Landfill at Outagamie?**

Once the Northeast Landfill reaches capacity it will begin its final closure phases and be capped and closed. The timeline for that is within the next 3 years or so depending on tonnage received.

**Are there any plans for when the Northeast Landfill closes?**

Outagamie is currently looking at energy producing solar arrays to be incorporated into both the closed East Landfill (which was closed in 2016) and the Northeast Landfill when it closes. The electricity produced will potentially be utilized to operate the recycling and solid waste campus facilities or be made available for commercial and residential use.

**What is being done to stabilize rates?**

Outagamie has an extensive landfill gas collection system in place, which consists of horizontal and vertical gas collection lines throughout the entire closed and active landfills. Since 1991, the gas collected was used to run a county operated cogeneration facility that produced electricity for the local grid; supplying power to more than 4,500 homes. Unfortunately, the private company running the operation could no longer remain in business based on a new contract they had with WPPI Energy; and the plant was shut down in early December 2020.

Understanding the value of the gas, the County recently partnered with Mas Energy to construct a renewable natural gas (RNG) facility. The facility will convert the landfill methane gas to pipeline-quality RNG. The process qualifies for the Federal Renewable Fuel Standard Program that allows Renewable Identification Numbers (RINS) to be assigned to the RNG produced. This designation creates a much higher revenue stream for the county and, once operational in 2022, will help stabilize tipping fees while significantly reducing the need for gas flaring.