



LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDY: Craven County– PAYT Program

Population: 89,008
Households: 21485
Solid Waste Collection: Curbside
Recycling Collection: Curbside

Craven is located in Eastern North Carolina, along the Neuse River. Craven County, with a population of 89,008, implemented a PAYT program in November 1991. The program encompasses the entire county and all of its municipalities except New Bern, Dover and Vanceboro – serving approximately 65,487 residents with the full Craven County PAYT system (21,485 households). Until 1994, New Bern also participated in the county's program but now only utilizes it on a supplemental basis.

Craven County's PAYT system requires each household and small business to purchase adhesive stickers for each unit of garbage that requires collection. The rules for applying stickers are outlined below:

- One sticker – 33 gallons or smaller and not more than 50 lbs.
- Two stickers – larger than 33 gallons, up to 64 gallons and not more than 100 lbs.
- Three stickers – larger than 64 gallons, up to 90 gallons and not more than 150 lbs.

Craven County contracts with six franchised haulers for weekly garbage collection. Each hauler services designated areas of the county. Garbage collected by these haulers is taken to the Tuscarora Landfill operated by the Coastal Regional Solid Waste Management Authority. Collection personnel remove the stickers from the containers before putting the garbage in the trucks. The haulers then submit the stickers to the county for payment. In FY99-00, haulers redeemed approximately 386,500 stickers. They are currently reimbursed \$1.604 for each sticker redeemed. That amount is designed to cover the cost of collection and disposal of 50 lbs. of garbage. Due to changes in landfill tipping fees and other factors, haulers have historically received subsidies for their collection services. The table below outlines the compensation history for haulers since the program's inception.

History of Sticker Pricing and Hauler Compensation.			
Year	Per sticker price for users	Per sticker hauler reimbursement	Hauler Subsidies beyond sticker reimbursement.
1991	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$0.50 per household per month plus 10-12% of convenience center sticker totals.
1992	\$1.25	\$1.25	
1993	\$1.25	\$1.55	
1994	\$1.75	\$1.675	
1995	\$1.75	\$1.75	
1996	\$2.00	1.825	Raised per household subsidy to \$0.52 per month and eliminated subsidy on convenience center sticker totals.
1997	\$2.00	\$1.913	\$0.26 per household per month

1998	\$2.00	\$1.705	Subsidy ended.
1999	\$2.00	\$1.637	No subsidy
2000	\$2.00	\$1.604	One time \$25,000 payout to be divided between haulers to ease burden of high fuel prices.

In November 1996 the residents were given the opportunity to contract directly with the hauler in their franchised areas rather than using stickers. The county approved a fee schedule submitted by each hauler. The fees range from \$8 to \$16 per month for weekly pickup of 33 gallons not weighing more than 50 pounds. Larger volumes require increased fees. This change was made at the public's request. A portion of the population felt the negative response to the program's implementation in 1991 was due to the residents not being given a choice. Given that choice five years later, only 162 out of 21,485 households chose to contract directly with their haulers. Residents also have the option of taking their garbage directly to the landfill. The tipping fee on July 1, 2000, is \$37.50 per ton.

Prior to 1994, New Bern's 22,048 residents were also a part of the county program. In 1994, New Bern provided each household with a 64-gallon container and charged residents \$4 per month through the utility bill. The city pays for disposal through the general fund. If residents generate more trash than the 64-gallon cart will hold, then they must purchase the county's stickers for additional trash. The county then reimburses the waste hauler at the same rate that their franchise haulers are compensated. The county reports that only a small quantity of stickers are generated from New Bern.

A countywide curbside recycling program offers each household the opportunity to keep to a minimum what ends up in the garbage bag. This program includes all municipalities within the county. An annual fee of \$24 is applied to each dwelling unit and small business for curbside recycling. Currently, 35,239 households and small businesses receive this service. The fee is charged to the property owner on their tax bill. Craven County contracts with Waste Management for the recycling program. The weekly curbside service accepts newspaper, corrugated cardboard, glass containers, aluminum products, steel cans (including aerosol cans), HDPE and PETE containers. Processing of recyclables takes place at Waste Management's materials recovery facility.

Craven County also operates seven staffed convenience centers. The centers are open four days per week and located throughout the county. In addition to the same recyclables picked up curbside, the centers accept mixed paper, motor oil, antifreeze, lead-acid batteries and white goods. Yard waste, construction and demolition material and bulky items are accepted at the drop-off sites as well. Residents may also bring household garbage to the centers; however, stickers are required for disposal. From March 1999 through February 2000, 44,304 stickers were redeemed at convenience centers. Craven County contracts with GDS for the hauling of the material from the centers. The convenience centers are financed through the general fund.

In 1997, with a grant from DPPEA, Craven County began a paint exchange. Residents take unused paint to one of the convenience centers. The paint is then transferred to one center where it is mixed in 5-gallon containers according to color and distributed to residents. The program distributes approximately 300 gallons per month.

A comprehensive pay-as-you-throw program along with other waste reduction programs such as construction and demolition debris recovery has helped the county to achieve a waste reduction rate of more than 40 percent in FY98-99. According to officials, there was no noticeable increase in illegal disposal following program implementation.