

# THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Winter 2018

## Landfill Closure Will Bring Hard Choices for the County

“What we need to learn today is to be less wasteful,” speaker Mac Nolen, told some 50 people gathered at the Heritage Center in October, citing excess packaging and use of materials that are difficult if not impossible to recycle. He says national changes could help: “If someone sells something, that seller should have a plan for recycling or disposal.”

Nolen, director of Rutherford County Solid Waste and Landfill since 2008, was giving some of the reasons he was asked to address the question “What happens when the landfill is full?” at Recycle Rutherford’s fall meeting. This is a question the county government and citizens will be facing in as little as five to seven years by some estimates.

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**“We need to grow up  
and learn to manage better.”**

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Nolen, who started in the garbage business as a driver in the 1980s, also has worked in managerial positions in the industry. He earned a B.S. degree from Middle Tennessee State University in agribusiness and vocational education; his career includes teaching agriculture and horticulture at Smyrna High School.

Looking back at the history of the landfill, Nolen explained that Middle Point opened in the late eighties and was intended to be for Rutherford County use only. The operation was not very profitable, prompting the owners, Browning Ferris Industries (BFI) at the time, to offer to pay the county a host fee and give them free garbage disposal in exchange for opening the landfill to garbage from surrounding counties. The city of Murfreesboro gets free garbage disposal in exchange for treating the leachate generated by decomposition of materials in the landfill. “The county would have had to pay \$1.2 million annually for garbage disposal,” says Nolen. “This led to the perception that garbage disposal is free.”

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## Postcard Contest Winners Announced



*Winner of middle school category*

For the third year, Recycle Rutherford invited local students to enter a contest by submitting 8.5 by 5.5 inch postcards that promote recycling. The 2017 theme was “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!” The intent of the competition is to promote recycling and raise awareness among teachers, students, and their families. Winners representing several schools were announced at the October meeting. Recycle Rutherford thanks all those who participated.

Winners and their teachers in the three categories follow:

### **Primary—Grades K-2**

**Winner-** Atticus Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade (\$50 gift card)  
Rae Ellyn Kelley, Barfield Elementary (\$100 check)

**Honorable Mention-** Olivia Ruel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade (\$25 gift card)

Jill Thomas, Smyrna Elementary (\$75 check)

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## Postcard Contest Winners 2017

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Some of the postcard contest winners with families and teachers seen at the October meeting

### Elementary Category:

**Winner-** Reece Bonk, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade (\$50 gift card)  
Lynn Fitzpatrick, Blackman Elementary (\$100 check)

**Honorable Mention-** Rosa Onate, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (\$25 gift card)  
Donna Damron, Christiana Elementary (\$75 check)



Winner in the primary school category

### Middle School Category:

**Winner-** Haylei Hancock, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade (\$50 gift card)  
Judith Thompson, Rock Springs Middle (\$100 check)

**Honorable Mention-** Nicole Chantharath, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (\$25 gift card)  
David Landry, Rockvale Middle School (\$75 check)

### Participating Teachers- Drawing Winners (\$50 check):

Tammy Cavanaugh, Rockvale Middle  
Amanda Thompson, Blackman Elementary  
Laura Schlesinger, Smyrna West  
Tabitha Herrin, Stewart's Creek Middle

For the competition, students created postcards using any number of artistic mediums, including markers, paint, collage, digital media, and written words. Winners were decided by a panel of judges, including three members of Recycle Rutherford's Board, local artist Frank Baugh, and Mimi Keisling, Rutherford County environmental education coordinator.

Winning entries are used during the year on promotional materials. The postcard contest began in 2015 as a replacement for the phonebook recycling contest sponsored by the organization for many years to raise awareness among students of the importance of recycling. Recycle Rutherford continues to urge people to recycle used phonebooks and similar materials. Those who want to learn more about recycling in Rutherford County should visit the website at [www.recyclerutherford.org](http://www.recyclerutherford.org).



Winner in the elementary school category

## Landfill Closure Will Bring Difficult Decisions

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Nineteen counties use the landfill, with the largest amount coming from Davidson County. The influx of garbage from elsewhere and population growth are causing Middle Point to reach capacity at an alarming rate. Not only are the county and Murfreesboro facing increased hauling, but they will also have to start paying disposal fees.

Nolen discussed **four different options: First**, “we can do nothing, but that’s not a very good option to just maintain the status quo.”

**Second**, “My hope is on converting waste to energy, but it’s probably not something we can afford.” Nolen went on to explain that he visited facilities in Florida and saw operations that dealt with two and three thousand tons of trash a day and generated energy costing \$690 million to build. He quickly realized that we don’t have enough trash to support such an operation.

**Third**, there is the option of building transfer stations—probably two, one on each side of the county, Nolen says. There is a landfill in Lewisburg, but as closer landfills reach capacity, hauling distances will get longer and more expensive. A recycling facility needs to be part of the plan. “I’ve been tasked with finding a location and think that the Cherry Lane interchange near 840 would work well, but I’ve been told the property is too valuable,” Nolen continues. The location of any type of collection facility is important to help avoid traffic issues and have the ability to easily ship all over the country.

**Fourth** is the option to expand Middle Point Landfill, now owned by Republic Services. “This would be a way to get us through for a while,” Nolen admits.

However, he concludes that increasing recycling and building transfer stations is probably the best solution. Paying for this, or any other solution, will

be difficult because the county is accustomed to enjoying free tipping. Building another landfill is not practical—there has been only one landfill approved in the state since the 1990s. Nor is it a good way to dispose of trash because as Nolen points out, “It is easy to use, but over time results in serious issues: leachate is created; methane gas is generated; it takes seventy years for garbage to deteriorate.”

During questions, Nolen responded to an enquiry about burning the methane gas generated as an energy source. “It’s too dirty; you would have to have a scrubber before it could be burned. That isn’t simple because the composition of the methane produced by garbage changes.”

The logistics of dealing with trash in a county such as Rutherford is not simple. Murfreesboro is the only governmental entity in the county that picks up garbage at households and takes it to Middle Point. County residents outside Murfreesboro pay a private company to pick up their trash or take it to one of 14 recycling centers (formerly called convenience centers) scattered across the county. The centers include collection bins for recyclables, an addition in the 1990s he attributes to Recycle Rutherford.

Nolen explained that there are only ten drivers to haul everything collected at the recycling centers and that the average haul takes an hour and 25 minutes, making it difficult to keep up with the hauling.

Square miles and population are used to determine the number of convenience centers. “Using square miles, we need nine; using population, we need 15,” Nolen reflects, continuing “I think we need a solid waste authority or utility, one that would require communities to have curbside pick-up of both trash and recyclables.”

“The decisions to resolve the situation will be hard, but they need to be right,” Nolen says, concluding his informative presentation with “We need to grow up and learn to manage better.”

--Suma Clark

### Recycle Rutherford Membership Form

I enclose my annual dues to support Recycle Rutherford and receive the newsletter.

- \$25.00 supporter                       \$15.00 student                       \$100.00 patron  
 I am contributing \$\_\_\_\_\_ in addition to dues.     I prefer the newsletter to be emailed.

**PLEASE PRINT:**

name \_\_\_\_\_ amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_  
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 telephone: day \_\_\_\_\_; evening \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Please make check payable and mail to Recycle Rutherford, P.O. Box 1804, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804**

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### New Recycler Award Announced

After several months of research and discussion, Recycle Rutherford is announcing the first ever community *Spirit of Recycling Award* recognizing businesses and industries for their efforts in recycling. Businesses of any size located in Rutherford County, Tennessee, may apply for the award(s). One important factor to be considered is the amount of trash diverted from our local landfill which continues to move toward its maximum capacity.

**The awards will be presented at a June 18 event**, to be held at the Carriage Lane Inn, to coincide with National Garbage Man Week.

Application for the award can be found at [www.recyclerutherford.org](http://www.recyclerutherford.org). **The deadline to apply is May 1, 2018.**

The development of the award grew out of board members' desire to recognize achievement in recycling even though the important action may require extra effort and resources. The number of awards to be presented will take into account relative sizes of those businesses that enter.

### Dates to Remember

#### Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Saturday, April 7, 2018, 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
Murfreesboro City Solid Waste Department  
4765 Florence Road, Murfreesboro

#### Earth Day 2018—Murfreesboro:

Saturday, April 21, 2017, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Public Square, Downtown Murfreesboro  
**Theme "Extreme Weather: Stay Aware and Be Prepared"**

#### Spring Annual Meeting—Recycle Rutherford:

Monday, April 23, 2018, 7:00 p.m.  
Heritage Center, 225 W. College  
Election of officers and speaker

### 2016-18 Officers and Board

*Recycle Rutherford holds elections each April at the annual meeting; in general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms.*

*The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the term of each ends. The board meets monthly on first Mondays at 6:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. Spring Street.*

Rachel Cornett, president  
Bonnie Black, vice president  
Suma Clark, secretary  
Rick Racker, treasurer  
Glenn Himebaugh, past president

#### Board Members:

Gib Backlund, 2018  
Linda Hardymon, 2018

**Reminder: To renew your membership, please see the form on page 3.**

**Dues are only \$25 per year.  
We don't want to lose you!**

**For more information, go to  
[www.recyclerutherford.org](http://www.recyclerutherford.org)**

**Like us on Facebook!**

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