

**Rogers, Chad
(DEQ)**

From: Rogers, Chad (DEQ)
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2017 8:40 AM
To: Campbell, Christina (DEQ)
Subject: Emmet County Final Report

Chris – I have reviewed and approved the final report for Emmet County, Grant #430269-15. Please proceed with their final payment.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Chad Rogers
Pollution Prevention and Stewardship
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 30241
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7741

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517-284-6872

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Emmet County
Department of
Public Works

200 Division Street, Suite G76
Petoskey, Michigan 49770
231-348-0640
231-348-0633 fax
www.EmmetRecycling.org

August 10, 2017

Chad Rogers
Grant Administrator
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environmental Assistance
P.O. Box 30457
Lansing, MI. 48909-7957

OEA #: 430269-15

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The Emmet County Department of Public Works is pleased to submit its Final Bins to Carts report to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. This report reflects work conducted by Emmet County DPW and its community partners from Quarter 1 through Quarter 8 of the Grant.

Attached you will find a Final report detailing work conducted, statistics, findings, as well as supporting documentation. We are requesting the final balance remaining upon grant completion. Please feel free to contact Jayna Steffel, Grant Manager, or myself at (231)348-0640 with any questions related to these reports.

We appreciate your support of our efforts to increase recycling rates throughout Emmet County.

Sincerely,

Elisa Seltzer
DPW Director

The objectives of this project are listed below

1. Distribute 1,800 carts to recycling program participants by the end of the project.
2. Increase the participation rate in designated cart regions by 20% by the end of the project. The participation rate will be calculated by dividing the number of participating households in the designated cart regions by the total number of households in the designated cart regions. A participating household is defined as a household that sets their recycling bin at the curb at least once within a month on recycling day.
3. Increase tonnage of materials collected in designated cart regions by 20% by the end of the project. This data will be collected from the route reports gathered at the Materials Recycling Facility.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of adding carts to a dual stream collection program to increase rates and tonnage by comparing data to participation and tons prior to adding the carts.
5. Evaluate improvement in route efficiency as indicated by an anticipated decrease in set-out rates with corresponding increase in volume/tons.

By receiving the DEQ grant, we were able to leverage more money to grow the scope of the project from 1,800 carts to 7,600 carts. We were able to provide carts for our entire curbside service area, not just the City of Petoskey and the City of Harbor Springs like we originally planned. The DEQ money was leveraged to include money from 14 additional funding sources.

To begin the project, we researched and developed a cart RFP, a vendor list, released the RFP for the carts, received the proposals, reviewed, analyzed, researched and developed a recommendation for a cart vendor (Cascade Engineering), and received great press in our local paper that we accomplished our funding goal and that carts are coming!

We distributed 26 carts as a pilot program and we started gathering data from our drivers. This helped us decide which carts worked best for our program, gave our drivers some experience with the carts, and helped us overcome challenges that we could educate the rest of the residents on when the real cart rollout happened.

We also conducted every other week phone conference meetings with TRP, benefitting from their technical and outreach and design experience as we move forward with our project. TRP helped us tremendously with all steps to education and outreach throughout the project. They also gave great expertise on the bidding process with both the truck and the carts. We conducted most of the curbside recycling cart audit to verify addresses, identify participation, and note potential access issues for follow-up.

“Carts are coming” was announced in flyers, on Facebook, and even on our curbside recycling trucks! We received some excellent press in our local newspaper, and held a media event for the public on Friday June 3rd during a downtown open house in our community.

While awaiting the delivery of our carts, our distribution plan was finalized and shared with Cascade Engineering in preparation for the rollout. Our educational cart packets were completed and put together in plastic bags to hang inside the carts as they are delivered. Carts arrived on June 19th and 20th. Cart distribution started on June 20th.

The beginning of distribution went slower than expected. The distribution crews were not prepared for the rural geography of our county. They were confused by our address list and the amount of vacant lots, long driveways, and unoccupied outbuildings. If we were to do this all over again, we would have increased communication with the distribution crews to ensure a smoother start. The address list we gave them did not match what was truly out there, so that made it difficult for all involved. We ensured that one ECR staff member was with each distribution crew to answer any questions. Once they got the hang of it, all 6,800 carts were distributed by our original deadline.

Once the distribution was complete, a constant stream of phone calls rolled into the office for at least 3 weeks, keeping the staff busy with questions, cart pick-ups, and deliveries for those that were missed. Things didn't settle down for a good month after distribution was complete, but as things quieted down we were able to take the time to interview customers about their new carts, take photos, and put some great coverage on Facebook, and in the Petoskey News-Review.

This slow time was a good time to internally review our message to customers that called with cart questions in our December quarterly staff meeting. We began to conduct the "post-delivery" curbside audits for comparison. As the winter weather arrived, we faced different challenges with the carts due to snowplows, high winds, and snow banks. "3 Tips for Smooth Winter Recycling" was developed and placed on the Emmet County Recycling website to help give our customers ideas on how to make recycling with their cart smooth for the winter season. We also started running year-end data comparisons and are seeing increases in both participation and volume since the carts were rolled out.

"Frost laws" are truck weight limits imposed by the county Road Commission to protect roads from damage as the ground thaws in the spring. While frost laws are in effect, our curbside recycling trucks---the only ones equipped to empty the rolling recycling carts---are not allowed to operate on most rural roads. During this time we asked affected customers to use a green tote or totes to set out their Papers, Boxes and Bags recyclables. This is quite a counterintuitive request, so we set out to spread the word through several channels, including a video release on Facebook.

Looking forward, we are reaching out offering mechanisms for customers to be notified each year when frost laws will go into effect and when they are lifted. Options include:

- Cart hangers and/or sticker tape
- Following our Facebook or Instagram feeds and
- Signing up for our E-newsletter, the EmmetRecycling.org Retriever.

We will also have frost laws announcements annually on our phone system and the website.

One other theme we addressed ALOT was setting out by 7:00 a.m. Before carts, there was a trickle of calls from customers whose recycling pick up was missed because their totes weren't out yet when their driver went by. The addition of carts shook up the timing of the routes, so suddenly many customers—who under the old timing of the routes had gotten away with setting out their recyclables later in the morning—were being missed because they set out late.

The increased volume and participation made the routes so long in the busy season that we put a third truck and driver on the road. This third driver took various parts of each day's two routes, totally stirring up the timing of each route. Having a third truck on the road increased our miles driven 15% from the year before, resulting in decreased overall route efficiency. But, it did allow us to turn our two routes into three efficient routes, because the third route was created to allow the drivers to be as efficient as possible during peak summer season.

To increase awareness preemptively, we put the message “Set out by 7AM for reliable service” on the back end of all of the curbside trucks and posted pictures of them on social media. We will continue stressing this message going forward, for example on slips to be included in township and municipal mailings.

The carts continue to prove popular and valuable—for increasing recycling participation and volume collected, *and* visibility.

News of our new curbside cart service reached the nearby Village of Alanson, which never had curbside recycling service. Due to many requests by village residents, the Village of Alanson board reached out to Emmet County Recycling to start up municipal curbside recycling service. Their new curbside collection began on Tuesday, June 13, 2017, less than a year after our initial cart launch.

We have not completed our “After Carts Participation Audit,” therefore we do not have participation numbers to compare. However, pick-ups have increased 6% since before carts. This is unexpected because with the volume available at each house has tripled, we figured residents would set their carts out less frequently. We predicted that the weights of our recyclables would go up 20% with the addition of carts. After 1 year of using carts, our total tonnage has increase 21.1%!

Overall, the project has been very successful with the leveraged funding for carts, quadrupling coverage from 1,800 households to 7,200 households. TRP’s technical expertise and outreach support increased participation and set outs, and, in just one year, our recycling volume increased over 21%.