Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC)

Since its formation in 1967, the LRGVDC has served as a link between federal and state programs and a means for local units of government to join together in developing services and strategy, thus eliminating duplication of effort and encouraging economic efficiency.

Membership in the LRGVDC includes cities, counties, school districts, special districts, educational institutions, and others.

Mission Statement

“Encourage and permit local units of government to join and cooperate with one another and with representatives of major economic interests, citizen groups and groups experiencing economic distress to improve the health, safety and general welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of the region”
Where does the Trash Go?

Where does the trash go after you throw it in the can? Does it magically disappear? No!

The Landfill—After garbage leaves your home, it goes to a landfill. A landfill is a large space where trash is buried in the ground. Landfills must receive a permit from the State and are safe when they are operated correctly. However, it is very expensive to operate a good landfill because of the rules and regulations needed to make them safe. We need to reduce what we toss out so landfills don’t fill up fast.

Dumps—They are illegal places to dispose of garbage and are harmful to the environment. They pollute water, attract rodents carrying diseases, breed germs: all of which can make humans and animals sick.

Waste Hits Your Wallet

- Texans spend over $1 billion annually on solid waste disposal services for over 22 million tons of garbage
- Approximately 27 landfill years remaining in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- Every ton of paper recycled saves approximately 17 trees
- Recycling one aluminum can save the equivalent of enough energy to run a TV set for three hours
- The U.S. produces enough plastic film each year to shrink-wrap the state of Texas
- Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour
- At least 20% of Texas’ solid waste is from grass clippings, leaves and other landscape wastes.

We must Reduce waste in landfills to Save space and natural resources
What the Data Shows about Landfills

There are 218 open landfills in Texas and 186 of these landfills were considered active (accepting waste) in 2005. In the LRGVDC Region there are 5 active landfills, 4 in Hidalgo County and 1 in Cameron County.

**Per-capita rate**—For 2005, total disposal in the state was 29.67 million tons, the per capita disposal rate in Texas was 7.11 pounds per person per day which is above the EPA national average for 2003 of 4.5 pounds per person per day. The total disposal in the LRGVDC Region for 2005 was 1,042,880 and the per capita disposal rate was 5.21 pounds per person per day.

**Landfill capacity**—The total remaining landfill capacity in the State of Texas at the end of 2005 was 1.845 billion cubic yards. Based on reported compaction rates, this volume would hold 1.22 billion tons of waste and serve for 41.05 years. For the LRGVDC Region the estimated remaining capacity as of 2007 is 8,509,686 tons, which would translate to 27.11 remaining years of landfill space.

### LRGVDC Open Landfills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility/Permit #</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Total Facility Acres</th>
<th>2007 Intake (Tons)</th>
<th>Compaction Rates</th>
<th>Remaining Capacity</th>
<th>Estimated Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville – 1273A</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>285,024</td>
<td>1,218</td>
<td>19,396,769</td>
<td>31,860,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburg - 2302</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>1,020</td>
<td>12,500,000</td>
<td>25,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edinburg – 956B</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>371,257</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>8,115,151</td>
<td>11,578,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFI/Donna – 1948</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>473,814</td>
<td>1,021</td>
<td>2,523,542</td>
<td>4,743,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peñitas - 1727</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>44.07</td>
<td>3,574</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>12,970</td>
<td>25,580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trends Analysis

Since 1986, there have been over 700 MSW landfills closed in the State of Texas, most due to more stringent requirements of the Federal Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA) Subtitle D.

In the late 1990’s the permitted number of facilities stopped decreasing and the state’s reserve capacity has shown a steady increase. This is due in part to improvements in technology which has nearly doubled the average compaction rate. There has also been a move away from smaller community landfills towards larger regional landfills.

In the LRGVDC Region there are 38 closed landfills and only five (5) open landfills.
Who makes the difference?
You do!

Why is it important to Recycle?
♦ Recycling is a way to keep waste out of landfills.
♦ Recycling recovers valuable raw materials. If we make aluminum cans from recycled cans, then we don’t have to disturb the environment by mining new materials.
♦ Recycling reduces pollution and saves energy that would have been used for making products from raw materials.

How can one person make a difference?
♦ If not you, who? If we combine our efforts together, we can make a difference.

What would happen if everyone stopped recycling?
♦ Disposing of garbage would become much more expensive. Since everything would be thrown away, landfills would fill up fast. We would have to build more landfills to accept the new garbage.
♦ The supply of any material is limited. Many natural resources would quickly disappear. If we keep filling our landfills with aluminum, plastic and steel, there will eventually be no more of those materials left.
What can be Recycled?
Almost Everything!

Electronic Waste

Electronic waste is becoming one of the fastest growing waste because we are replacing older models at rapid rates. The key to reducing e-waste in our landfills is to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Re-buy and Restore. Many companies now accept old computers and cell phones when you purchase a new one. The City of McAllen also has a drop-off center that offers e-waste recycling. Their Recycling Center is located at 4101 N. Bentsen, please call 681-4050 for more information.

Heavy Trash

Heavy trash is an item that cannot be put into your garbage can. Many local communities offer collection for heavy trash once a month. Many communities also schedule Clean-up Events for people to take these items at least twice a year. Check with your community to find more information.

Storm Water

Did you know it is illegal to dump waste and pollution into storm drains? Anything poured into the storm drain makes its way into the Arroyo Colorado and Lower Laguna Madre. Storm drains are used to prevent flooding from excess rain water. Storm water receives no treatment, so if it is contaminated by pollutants it stays polluted. Storm drains can also be clogged by waste or debris that is dumped into them, causing flooding.

Do not “over-buy” Electronics
Buy only what you need.

Dirt in Drain
Turtles Complain!
Plastics have become the most used material in the World since 1976. Bottled water being the single largest growth area among all liquids, which include consumable and non-consumable. Although plastic bottled water is the largest growth area in bottled beverages only about 12 percent were recycled in 2003. The recycling rate for plastic soft drinks is around 30 percent. Three major reasons for recycling plastic bottles are 1) less petroleum is consumed, 2) the litter factor and 3) the plastic recycling industry faces a shortage because much of the recycled plastic is being exported to China.

Plastics can be numbered from 1 through 7, the numbers signify the type of plastic that the product is made from and it also identifies if it is recyclable. Number 1 (PET) is often used in milk jugs or detergent bottles. It is easily recycled by breaking it apart into small chips which are washed, dried and reused. Some common end uses for recycled #1 plastics are plastic pipes, lumber, flower pots, trash cans, or containers for motor oil or cleaning supplies. Number 2 (HDPE) plastics are commonly used in food packaging, as well as water and soda bottles. Number 2 plastic is one of the most used recycled plastics and is commonly used in textiles. Some companies make their carpet using 100% recycled #2 plastic. Number 2 plastic is also spun like cotton candy to make fiber filing or fabric for things like pillows, quilts or jackets and a large quantity goes back into the bottle market. Plastic films (LDPE) are often used for plastic bags, shrink wrap and grocery bags. Film plastics are washed and reformed or used to make new products. Some end uses for recycled LDPE plastic films are plastic tubing, agricultural film and plastic lumber. The types of plastic that can be recycled depends on where you live. The most common types of recyclable plastics are #1 plastic, #2 plastic and film plastic.

Grass Cycling is the natural recycling of grass by leaving clippings on the lawn when mowing. Grass clippings quickly decompose, returning valuable nutrients to the soil. Composting is another great way to recycle yard waste.

- Grass Cycling saves time, money and protects the environment.
- Labor time is reduced since there is no bagging or the need to dispose of clippings.
- Grass clippings add beneficial organic matter (free fertilizer) to soil and produce health, green lawns.
- Grass Cycling also reduces the amount of yard waste disposed in landfills.
- No! Grass clippings do not cause thatch, grass roots are the primary cause of thatch.
- No! Grass Cycling does not spread lawn disease, improper watering and fertilizing are the primary cause of disease spread.
- No! Grass Cycling will not make a lawn look bad, if lawn is properly mowed, watered and fertilized grass cycling can produce a healthier-looking lawn.

Yard trimmings are 20% of what is sitting in landfills in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.
Mulch will slow water loss, reduce competition from weeds and grasses, will moderate soil temperature and will provide a small amount of “nutrients”.

Compost helps the soil absorb and retain nutrients and moisture, and protects plants from diseases and pests.

**WHAT IS COMPOST?**

Composting is the natural process of decomposition and recycling of organic material into a humus rich soil amendment known as compost. Compost is one of the most valuable resources for beautifying your landscape, and it is virtually free. Leaves drop from trees. Grass clippings are left after mowing the lawn. Plants and animals die, over time these organic materials break down or decompose. The rich, dark-brown, crumbly, soil-like material that results is called compost. Finished compost also has a pleasant smell.

**WHY COMPOST?**

Recycling the organic waste of a household into compost allows us to return badly needed organic matter to the soil. In this way, we participate in nature’s cycle, and cut down on garbage going into landfills. Composting also provides a way not only of reducing the amount of waste that needs to be disposed of, but also of converting it into a product that is useful for gardening, landscaping, or house plants.

**Compost can save your money**
- Reduce trash
- Provides free soil amendment
- Retains soil moisture & saves on water bills

**Compost can improve our environment**
- Turns waste into a valuable resource
- Saves limited landfill space
- Recycles nutrients back into the soil

**Compost can help your garden**
- Feeds the soil
- Prevents soil erosion
- Improves yields of fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs

**Price Guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td>Regular $15.00 per cubic yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Premium $20.00 per cubic yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulch</td>
<td>$15.00 per cubic yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Fee</td>
<td>$20.00 per load (minimum of 14 cubic yards)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wholesale Prices**

For purchases over 50 cubic yards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td>Negotiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulch</td>
<td>Negotiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Fee</td>
<td>$ 20.00 per load or negotiable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compost Programs in the LRGV Region:**

City of McAllen Recycling Center
4101 N. Bentsen Rd., McAllen, TX
(956) 681-4050
Compost Facility - (956) 688-3278

City of Brownsville
900 FM 802, Brownsville, TX
956-831-3641

Several smaller cities have Composting Programs and

**Price Guide**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compost</td>
<td>$45.00 per ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulch</td>
<td>$25.00 per ton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chipped material for cities and parks projects and also have it available for their citizens at their Parks and Recreation Dept., Recycling Centers, etc.

Some of the cities include:

City of Alamo - (956) 787-0006
City of La Feria - (956) 797-2261
City of Port Isabel - (956) 943-9654
City of San Juan - (956) 702-6945

**Mulch** will slow water loss, reduce competition from weeds and grasses, will moderate soil temperature and will provide a small amount of “nutrients”.

**Compost** helps the soil absorb and retain nutrients and moisture, and protects plants from diseases and pests.
### Hidalgo County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Types of Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Alamo Drop Off Site 423 North Tower Road Alamo TX 78516 (956) 787-8321</td>
<td>Used motor oil, newspaper, mixed paper, telephone books, computer paper, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, Christmas trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Edinburg Recycling Center 3102 South Business 281 Edinburg TX 78539 (956) 292-2133</td>
<td>Used motor oil, car batteries, newspaper, cardboard, mixed paper, computer paper, #1 plastic (PETE), #2 plastic (HDPE colored), #2 plastic (HDPE clear), aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, magazines and catalogs, white office paper and telephone books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of McAllen Recycling Center 4101 North Bentsen Road McAllen TX 78504 (956) 681-4050</td>
<td>Used motor oil, car batteries, newspaper, cardboard, paperboard, mixed paper, telephone books, computer paper, #1 plastic (PETE), #2 plastic (HDPE colored), #2 plastic (HDPE clear), aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, ferrous metals (steel, iron), toner cartridge, magazines and catalogs, brown paper bags, metal clothes hangers, nonferrous metal, chipboard, aerosol cans, white office paper, drink boxes, aseptic containers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of San Juan Recycling Center 323 West 1st San Juan TX (956) 702-6428/6429</td>
<td>Used motor oil, paper, plastic, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, telephone books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Weslaco 3101 South Border Weslaco TX 78579 (956) 968-9623</td>
<td>Newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, tin, phone books, used motor oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Fibers Inc. 103 North I Road Pharr TX 78577 (956) 783-0774</td>
<td>Paper, card board (office waste only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weslaco Scrap Metal 512 N. Midway Weslaco TX 78596 (956) 968-5461</td>
<td>Aluminum cans, tin or steel, iron, copper, brass, batteries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Willacy County

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Types of Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willacy County Recycling Center 3 Miles South Highway 77 Raymondville TX 78580</td>
<td>Cardboard, aluminum, paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cameron County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville Recycling Center 308 East Elizabeth Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 541-9501</td>
<td>Newspaper, office paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, plastic bags, aluminum cans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville Scrap Paper 5850 FM 511 Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 838-1999</td>
<td>Computer paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Brownsville Landfill 9000 FM 802 Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 831-3641</td>
<td>Used motor oil, used oil filters, used tires, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, ferrous metals (steel, iron), white goods (non-reusable large appliances)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Harlingen/Proud Recycling Drop-off Site 1006 South Commerce Harlingen TX 78550 (956) 427-8824</td>
<td>Used motor oil, car batteries, rechargeable batteries (non-NiCd), newspaper, cardboard, computer paper, #1 plastic (PETE), #2 plastic (HDPE Colored), #2 plastic (HDPE clear), packing peanut reuse, aluminum cans, tin or steel cans, plastic bags, magazines and catalogs, brown paper bags, chipboard, white office paper, Christmas trees, telephone books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Zapato Loco 6224 Padre Island Highway Brownsville TX 78520 (956) 831-2087</td>
<td>Aluminum cans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Zapato Loco 310 West Van Buren Harlingen TX 78550 (956) 423-0139</td>
<td>Aluminum cans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Port Isabel Recycling Center 217 E. Hickman Port Isabel TX 78578 (956) 943-6631</td>
<td>Cardboard (folded), newspaper, office paper, gallons of milk, juice bottles, coke bottles, water bottles, detergent and shampoo bottles, aluminum cans, grocery bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of South Padre Island 108 W. Retama South Padre Island TX 78597 (956) 761-1025</td>
<td>Aluminum cans, tin cans, card board, newspaper and any type of plastic bottles (laundry detergent plastic jugs are not included)</td>
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More information available at the LRGVDC Web Site
Citizen Collection Stations

Cameron County

Hidalgo County

Precinct #1
Donna Citizen Collection Station
Mile 4 1/2 North East of FM 493
Donna TX 78537
(956) 968-8733

Mercedes Citizen Collection Station
Mile 1 East and 6 North
Mercedes TX 78570
(956) 968-8733

Monte Alto Citizen Collection Station
Ash Street
Monte Alto TX
(956) 968-8733

Sunset Park Citizen Collection Station
Mile 11 North and Mile 1 1/2 West
Mercedes TX 78570
(956) 968-8733

Harlingen
Harlingen Transfer Station
3700 E. Harrison
Harlingen TX 78550
(956) 216-5300

Precinct #2
El Gato Citizen Collection Station
Corner of Border and El Gato
Alamo TX 78516
(956) 283-9496

Precinct #3
Pct. #3 Landfill Citizen Collection Station
Military Highway
Peñitas TX 78576
(956) 279-2203

Trosper Road Citizen Collection Station
7 Mile Line & Trosper
Mission TX 78573
(956) 279-2203

Precinct #4
Doolittle Citizen Collection Station
1101 N. Doolittle
Edinburg TX 78541
(956) 383-3112

El Gato Citizen Collection Station
Trosper Road Citizen Collection Station
Have you ever thrown your household garbage into a vacant lot; along a road; or into a ditch?
If you answer yes to this question, you’ve dumped your garbage illegally. Litter and illegally
dumped garbage are public health hazards. Children playing around illegally dumped litter
can get hurt by broken glass, exposed metal, and other dangerous materials. Rats, snakes,
mosquitoes, bees, and other pests can live in the garbage and transmit disease to humans.
Rotting food attracts flies and may contain germs that can make people sick. Harmful chemi-
cals and other materials that are dumped can contaminate our water. If you dump it, you’ll drink it! Litter and illegal dumping are public safety problems. Dumping in draining ditches
can cause flooding. If the ditches are full of garbage or other material, water cannot flow
properly.

The Law

Under the Texas Health and Safety Code the following are violations:
* A person who dumps litter in a place other than an approved solid waste site;
* A person who transports litter to a place other than approved solid waste site for the purpose of dis-
posal;
* A person who received litter for the purpose of disposal in place other than an approved solid waste site;
* An unauthorized person who dumps litter in a dumpster or similar receptacle.

The Penalties

* **Class C Misdemeanor**
  Solid waste or litter, which weighs 5 lbs. or less
  **Penalty:** $500 fine.

* **Class B Misdemeanor**
  Solid waste or litter, which weighs more than 5 lbs. but less than 500 lbs.
  **Penalty:** 180 days in jail and/or $2,000 fine.

* **Class A Misdemeanor**
  Solid waste or litter, which weighs 500 lbs. to 1,000 lbs.
  **Penalty:** 1 year in jail and/or $4,000 fine.

State Jail Felony
  1,000 lbs. or more

What can you do with your garbage?

Be responsible for your garbage. Dispose of it properly.

Reduce
Reduce the amount of garbage you produce by buying brands with less packaging. Buy products in bulk quantities or buy refills.
When there is less packaging, there is less garbage.

Reuse
Instead of disposable products, buy things that can be washed and reused. Find other uses for things that you may be ready to throw away.

Recycle
Many communities now have recycling centers. If your community does not have one, help start a recycling center in your area. Call your community leaders to find out where your recycling center is and what kinds of recyclable items it accepts.

Re-Buy
Buy products made from or packaged in recycled materials. Look for bargains at thrift shops, consignment stores, garage sales, and classified ads. Avoid buying non-recyclable items and find out what items local recyclers accept.

Report illegal dumping by contacting your local Solid Waste Enforcement Officer

**Cameron County Sheriff - 956-554-6700**
**Hidalgo County Pct. 1 - 956-968-8733**
**Hidalgo County Pct. 2 & 3 - 956-581-6800**
**Hidalgo County Pct. 4 - 956-383-3112**
**Willacy County - 956-689-3393**