



Like many other communities, the municipalities and businesses of greater Racine will soon face the challenge of how to manage their solid waste. The Kestrel Hawk landfill, where residential and commercial garbage generated by Caledonia, Mount Pleasant, Sturtevant and Racine is disposed, will likely close in the next five years. Republic Services, who manages the landfill, reports they are operating the last remaining cell at Kestrel Hawk, leaving local officials the challenge of where to send their garbage, potentially including the option of finding a site for a new landfill.

Racine Public Works Director, Mark Yehlen, reports the process to find a new landfill will not occur until the Kestrel Hawk only has three years of remaining capacity. However, this challenge will involve not only finding a suitable site, which will most certainly face local reaction from adjacent property owners, but also a lengthy process of acquiring permits, as well as designing and building the site. Utilizing other existing landfills in southeast Wisconsin is another option, but this will certainly involve higher costs for managing solid waste simply based on additional transportation. Whether garbage from greater Racine goes to a new site or an existing landfill, when Kestrel Hawk finally closes, residents and businesses will most certainly pay higher solid waste management costs. Unfortunately, current costs are relatively inexpensive, and most people are unaware of the pending consequences of the Kestrel Hawk closure.

To address the pending solid waste crisis and help bring awareness of the issue to the greater Racine community, over the past two years several individuals initiated a “Zero Waste” campaign. Over the past decade or so, other communities across the U.S.A., such as New York City, Austin, and San Francisco, have adopted zero waste master plans to reduce waste going to landfills – if not just to reduce pressure on landfills, but to improve recycling and resource recovery, as well to promote their communities as sustainable.

Individuals from several groups are involved with “Zero Waste Racine,” including officials from within the City of Racine, such as City Administrator Jim Palenick and Public Works Director Mark Yehlen. David Rhoads from Greening a Greater Racine and the Racine Sustainable Business Network is taking the lead for this initiative on behalf of Visioning a Greater Racine.

Please recognize this announcement as a Call to Action for Zero Waste in greater Racine! Attend our monthly meetings and get involved by joining the group as we begin development of a Zero Waste Master Plan.



LET’S MAKE RACINE A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY!