BARTLOMEOY County Council member Chris Ogle, who also serves on the Solid Waste Management District Board, framed the issue of recycling in basic economic terms last week. He discussed that discussion that resulted in a decision by the board to seek a 3-cent per-ton fee on garbage. The fee, which took effect March 1, is expected to result in a financial analysis of the district’s operations. Ogle offered a reason, “Our tax dollars are for the want-to’s, not the have-to’s.”

Someone is going to have to absorb the costs. That price fluctuates as well. Some are diverted from the landfill. The landfill pay a one-time fee of $100 for each identifiable cardboard. That price fluctuates with the have-to’s from the want-to’s. Can some companies reduce the community at cost?

The Solid Waste Management District has decided to cut off all additional clients for the cardboard service because there is only one truck designed for picking up the materials. Officials estimated a second truck and crew could double the current capacity of materials picked up and diverted from the landfill.

That brings into question the costs and financial benefits of operating the system.

One factor that comes into play is the current state the district gets on the recyclable cardboard. That price fluctuates from year to year, but has been falling recently. In 2005 the district received $112,354 from sales, but last year that number had dropped to $87,400.

While there is certainly a value on the services for the overall community in that it helps prolong the life of the landfill, it is becoming obvious that any expansion of this service is going to increase substantial costs.

Some are trying to go one step further by heating the materials to increase the amount that can be recycled. While this helps keep the landfill waste, it also helps the environment, it is expensive. The cost of the materials can be increased by 10 percent to 15 percent.

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