

Recycling efforts successful so far

By [Mark Wineka](#)

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mwineka@salisburypost.com

GRANITE QUARRY — When you consider Granite Quarry's recycling efforts started from scratch, the program is going like gangbusters.

Beth Calhoun, chairman of the town's recycling committee, told the Board of Aldermen on Monday night that recycling has a 9.3 percent participation rate, according to the two licensed recyclers covering Granite Quarry.

Participants enrolled with the recyclers receive a \$2.50 monthly discount from the town.

The recycling committee first formed in September 2008.

"We feel like we've accomplished a lot," Calhoun said.

In the immediate future, the committee wants to bump up recycling participation to about 15 percent. The long-range goal is 25 percent, Calhoun said, adding the committee aims for an economically viable and sustainable recycling program.

As for sustainability, Calhoun asked the board to consider giving recycling participants a \$4-a-month discount as soon as they are enrolled a full year.

Mayor Mary Ponds said she understood the request as an effort to reward people who show a commitment long-term, but it's a matter that will have to be turned over to Town Manager Dan Peters as he formulates the town's budget for 2010-11.

Calhoun said the town's recycling program has kept more than 30 tons of items out of landfills. About 60 percent of the recycled items are paper, 20 percent glass, 16 percent metal and 4 percent plastics.

"We have a lot of plastics still going into our garbage cans," Calhoun said.

The town's two recycling companies pick up the "1" through "7" plastics, she noted.

The recycling committee has outlined several promotional efforts for increasing participation.

Calhoun asked the board to consider awarding quarterly gift certificates of \$25, which could be redeemed at a local restaurant. The winners would be drawn at a town event each quarter and would have to come from the lists being provided by the recycling companies, Calhoun said.

Ponds has offered to pay for the first \$25 gift certificate herself.

The committee also hopes to promote recycling through the town's newsletter and create signs reminding residents of its importance.

"We've been working on a lot of things," Calhoun said.

In another matter, aldermen agreed to a postcard mailing that will be going to residents in coming weeks to provide information on three items: a May retirement recognition of longtime Police Chief Clyde Adams, new yard debris pickup schedules and the town's Fish Fry (and hot dog plates) June 5.

The postcards will cost 28 cents each. Peters said 1,100 to 1,200 postcards would be mailed out. They are cheaper than inserting something with water bills, he added.

The June 5 Fish Fry will be held at Civic Park. Fish plates will cost \$5 and include drinks; kids' hot dog plates, \$1.

"I think we need to let people know about" the good food that will be available at a good price, Alderman Jake Fisher said.

In another matter, Smart Start Rowan Director John Gerstenmier told the board about his agency's literacy initiative, the "Imagination Library," which will try to bring the gift of reading to a child for \$30 a year.

The program ends for a child when he or she turns 5. It's run through the Dolly Parton Institute.

Salisbury Mayor Susan Klutz has issued a challenge to each municipality in the county to sponsor at least 10 children for \$300 a year. The program targets at-risk children and automatically sends them a new book to read with their parents each month.

Gerstenmier said Rowan County has about 10,800 children from birth to 5 years old, and up to 5,000 of those children could qualify for the initiative. Smart Start Rowan is cooperating in the program with the "Rowan Reads" effort started last year by municipalities and county government.

Ponds said it's amazing how many impoverished children have never had a book read to them or even turned the pages of a book.

In other business:- Aldermen awarded a \$86,423 contract to BRS Construction of Richfield for the installation of 1,755 feet of 8-inch water line along Byrd Road.

- As the May 4 primaries approach, three candidates for the Rowan County Board of Commissioners dropped in on Monday night's meeting and addressed the board. They included Jon Barber, James Greene and Gene Miller.

Granite Quarry Mayor Pro Tem Bill Feather also is a candidate for county commissioner.