

District Recycling Coordinator Monthly Board Report

July 2026

Executive Summary

In July 2026, the preliminary single-stream recycling tip fee at Republic Services was negative \$82.97 per ton. Markets for most commodities remained stable while plastic prices softened. The Solid Waste Planning Division welcomed Lena Ouellette (Recycling Special Projects Coordinator & Program Assistant) and Andrea Dolan (Recycling Program Education and Training Administrator) on July 27, along with intern Julia Glenn on August 3. Five municipal Environmental Commissions were awarded 2026 Waste Reduction and Recycling Mini-Grants. The boat shrink-wrap recycling program concluded with 26 tons collected in 2026 (76 tons over four years). The 2025 Clean Communities Grant final report was submitted on time, and staff continued strong outreach, MRC support, and food-waste questionnaire collection at public events.

Recycling Market and Operations Report Update

In July, the preliminary single-stream recycling rate with Republic Services was calculated at negative \$82.97 per ton, a \$2.87 reduction from the previous month's finalized rate of negative \$80.10 per ton.

In July and early August, recycling markets in the Northeast US saw prices for cardboard, paper, steel, aluminum, and glass remain unchanged from the previous period. However, plastic prices decreased in value throughout this period, despite fluctuations in virgin oil pricing following geopolitical matters.

A more in-depth look at the numbers for recycling markets in mid-2026 shows the outlook is mixed, with uncertainty hanging over the rest of the year. Typically, summer benefits recycling markets, as warm weather boosts beverage sales and increases demand for used aluminum cans and PET bottles. Paper mills also seek old boxes and mixed paper to produce new packaging for back-to-school season. Spring's housing boom raises the need for color HDPE. However, this summer's retail sector remains fragile, and ongoing conflicts add to the unpredictability. Overall, markets are both conventional and unusual.

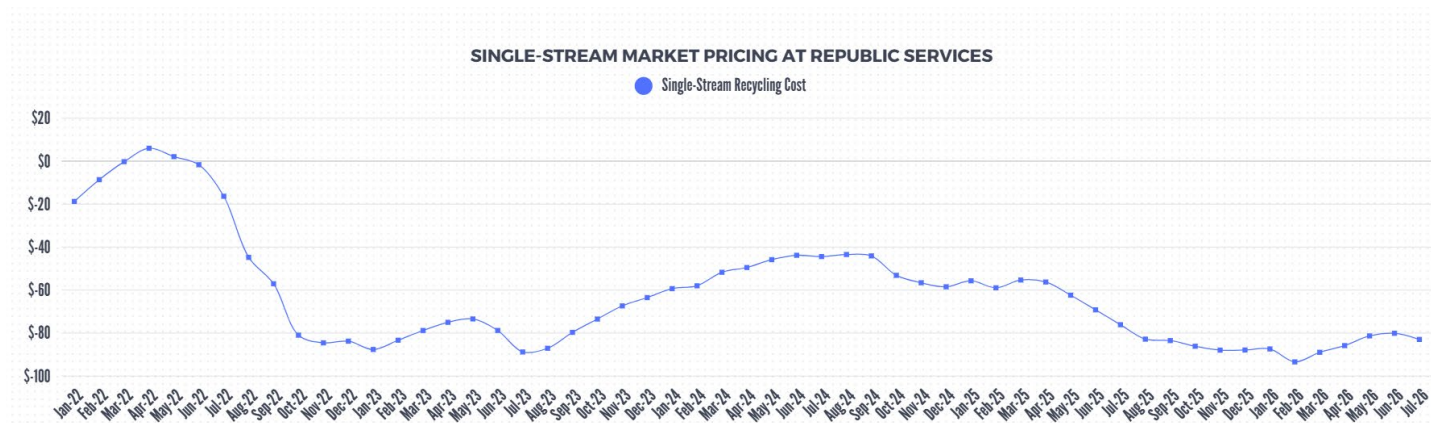
While pricing, except for plastics, seems to be holding steady, metal cans and paper prices are holding firm, with national averages at \$82.50 per ton for OCC (corrugated boxes) and \$47.50 for sorted residential papers; both are higher than the national average. Aluminum cans are at 100 cents a pound, and steel cans at \$207.50 per ton, benefiting from increased beverage demand and tariffs on imported steel.

Plastics show a more varied situation. Natural HDPE prices are at 43.00 cents a pound (down from 59.50 cents), and Colored HDPE at 7.50 cents (down from 16 cents). Despite some price drops for both, these remain above levels observed in the first quarter of the year. The recycled resin market has been unstable due to inventory buildup and fluctuations in virgin resin prices. PET, once a strong recyclable, has struggled and has been priced at 3 cents per pound, impacted by cheap foreign imports and minimal support from beverage companies to use increased recycled content in products.

Looking ahead, the retail economy is debilitated, affecting packaging demand, but back-to-school sales may stabilize cardboard and paper prices. Metal prices are expected to hold steady, while plastic prices are expected to continue to decline.

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Monthly MCMUA single-stream recycling tip fees at Republic Services.

Ongoing Shared Service Agreements and Contract Activities

In July, Marrone and Chavanne worked on incorporating the following shared service agreements into our recycling collection program:

Town of Boonton Curbside and Depot Collection SSA Proposal Work:

In July, Marrone and Chavanne discussed updates to the new shared services agreement for curbside recycling and depot services with the Town, as the current contract ends in 2026. In addition to actions noted in earlier reports, they are considering additional collection sites for inclusion in the new contract, along with efforts to streamline curbside pickup and transition to dumpster collection for certain multifamily units to boost efficiency and provide better educational services. Once all details are finalized, a revised shared services agreement incorporating these changes will be sent to the Town for review and approval.

Township of Washington First Amendment to Depot Collection SSA:

In early July, the new MRC and DPW Director for Washington Township contacted us to review trash and recycling services, improve education, expand depot services under our MCMUA contract, and increase recycling options to raise the Township's recycling rate. Since the Township doesn't provide trash or recycling services, residents must find their own haulers, with no recent contact made with haulers or posted information. The depot is paid for, adding further complexity.

On July 21, Marrone and Chavanne trained DPW team members on proper recycling, waste reduction, operations, and suggested improvements, such as adding outside services for revenue, supporting programs, and offsetting depot costs. They also proposed expanding services with a revised shared services agreement, including more recycling bins, using local vendors for items like clothing and cooking oil, and acquiring an oil filter crusher to reduce onsite recycling fees. Vendors would provide free containers, monthly check-ins, and annual reports.

The plan includes expanding hours, reducing fees, making grass, brush, and leaf collection year-round, auditing materials, and redesigning containers for cardboard and single-stream recycling to increase revenue. An additional scrap metal container will be added next year, and electronic waste limits will be lifted. The MCMUA will update the recycling flyer with new educational content, and the Township will mail it to its residents. A draft agreement for a 30 CY scrap metal container is also being prepared for next year.

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Solid Waste Planning Division Personnel Updates

MCMUA Welcomes Two New Employees to the Solid Waste Planning Division:

On July 27, the Solid Waste Planning Division welcomed Lena Ouellette as our new Recycling Special Projects Coordinator and Program Assistant, along with Andrea Dolan as Recycling Program Education and Training Administrator. Ouellette will focus on developing environmental programs and initiatives across the County, aiming to exceed our 50% recycling goal through long-term projects. In addition to supporting ongoing educational outreach, she will create new programs that align with State directives and the MCMUA's vision. This includes leading our Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) grant initiatives and applying research to guide their progress. Ouellette will also provide administrative support to the Curbside Recycling Division by handling collection contracts and addressing customer concerns. Dolan will primarily focus on meeting recycling targets and supporting program development, particularly related to the County's Food Waste Reduction Law (N.J.S.A. 13:1E-227.1 et seq.). She is already working on developing strategies and projects in collaboration with our municipalities and their stakeholders, such as their environmental commissions, to help them reach their 50% recycling goal and revitalize recycling and waste reduction practices.



MCMUA Welcomes its New Intern with the Morris County Vocational School District:

On August 3, the Solid Waste Planning Division welcomed Julia Glenn as its newest intern for the 2026-2027 school year. The internship program requires the student to complete a total of 120 hours with the partner agency. Glenn will be interning with us one day per week until she reaches her total hours and has already begun working with Ouellette on creating a capstone project involving educational modules on stormwater education and protection, while also supporting the MCMUA's school-based learning activities with guidance from the Division team. At the conclusion of her internship, she will present her work at an upcoming Morris County Clean Communities Coordinator meeting.



Recycling/Clean Communities Education, Inspections, and Customer Service Support

Below are summaries of Recycling and Clean Communities' projects, public outreach, and education programs in July 2026. Details regarding these activities are provided in a supplemental report.

Recycling and Clean Communities Projects, Public Outreach, Education, and Inspections:

- MCMUA and the New Jersey Association of New Jersey Recyclers (ANJR) Joint Efforts
- MCMUA Assists Sustainable Jersey's Efforts to Reduce Food Waste in Schools
- MCMUA Attends the Washington Township Night Out Event
- MCMUA Participates in New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Farm to Tray Workshop
- MCMUA Attends the Morris County 4-H Fair Event
- MCMUA Attends the NJDEP Clean Communities Update (Webinar)

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- MCMUA Plans for its Fourth MRC Meeting of the 2026 Calendar Year
- Food Waste Questionnaire for Public Participation
- MCMUA Open Space Properties Activities
- MCMUA, MCDPH, & NJDEP Collaborations

Solid Waste Planning Activities and Special Projects

2026 MCMUA Recycling Enhancement Mini-Grant Program for Environmental Commissions:

In March, Marrone and Eramo began working on materials for MCMUA's second annual recycling enhancement mini-grant program, available to Morris County's Municipal Environmental Commissions. Following last year's mini-grant program, which awarded \$3,000 to municipalities for improvements to their recycling programs, several Environmental Commissions contacted the MCMUA seeking support for their own initiatives in this area. This year's program sought to award Environmental Commission mini grants of up to \$1,500 each to support new recycling and waste prevention projects, with the goal of fostering waste reduction and recycling initiatives throughout Morris County.

On April 1, all 39 municipal clerks were emailed and asked to forward the application documents, cover letter, application instructions, evaluation criteria, application forms, and closing report information to appropriate parties, including their Environmental Commission, Municipal Recycling Coordinator, and their mayor and/or Township Administrator/Manager. For those municipalities without an Environmental Commission, we asked that they forward the information to another appropriate municipal committee or commission.

With a June 26 deadline for proposals, five towns applied for grant funding, one more than initially expected. Thanks to additional funds in our budget, the MCMUA was able to support all five programs. After reviewing and revising several proposals, the winners were announced on July 29, allowing them to begin work. Each awarded town received a letter confirming their award and outlining the acceptance requirements, a sample press release, a grant reimbursement form, and closing report documents. All recipients expressed gratitude for the opportunity to advance their waste reduction and recycling efforts and thanked the MCMUA. Additionally, Marrone authored a press release, which was forwarded to the Morris County Office of Communications & Digital Media for approval and distribution. The county's version is available on their website here: [Morris County News](#). The release was picked up by WRNJ Radio, and Marrone recorded a segment on the "Local Impact" morning show, which aired on August 5. During the segment, Marrone discussed the state of recycling in New Jersey, Morris County's role as a Solid Waste Authority, our various waste management and recycling programs, the purpose of the Mini Grant program, and the initiatives of the winning towns. The towns' projects aim to renew community enthusiasm for recycling and waste reduction, aligning with the state's new County Food Waste Planning Law.

The 2026 Waste Reduction and Recycling Mini Grant recipients are:

- **Mendham Borough** – Residential Food Waste Collection Program
- **Mendham Township** – Plastic Film Recycling Pilot Program & Backyard Composting Training and Starter Kit Program
- **Morris Township** – Residential Food Waste Collection and Drop-off Pilot
- **Morristown** – Residential Food Waste Collection and Drop-off Pilot

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- **Rockaway Township** – CCTV Cameras for its Curbside Recycling Trucks to monitor for recycling contamination and provide proper recycling education practices to residents.

Since Monday's press release, two more municipalities and their Environmental Commissions have contacted the MCMUA about grant opportunities. Despite not submitting applications this cycle, they stated they never received the grant information from their municipal clerk and inquired when the next round of grants will be announced so they can participate. These include Rockaway Borough, which plans to create a Styrofoam recycling depot with Long Hill to process collected materials, and Chatham Township, which intends to launch a food waste drop-off program for residents at their DPW yard.

MCMUA Update on NJDEP Annual Awards for Recycling Grants and Associated Recycling Rates:

On June 18, NJDEP announced 2023 grant awards and recycling rates, revealing a statewide decline in recycling and an increase in disposal over recent years. Morris County's data, however, has been improving. Although we did not meet our 50% Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) recycling goal for 2023, dropping from 46% to 45%, we are now tied with Sussex County for the third highest in NJ. For Total Solid Waste (TSW) recycling, we reached a 60% rate, which has slightly decreased to 61% from 62%, placing us second in the state alongside Sussex. Despite statewide declines, Morris's figures stayed stable, thanks to diligent reporting, strong MRC commitment, and the MCMUA's first year of reviewing initial reports, which offered improvements. Of 39 municipalities, 12 met their 50% MSW goals, a two-town decrease, though many missed by just a few points. The MCMUA supports towns through grants, report reviews, resources, and personalized training, while also increasing education via meetings and reporting efforts praised by NJDEP.

Building on these successes and aiming to further highlight our municipalities' achievements, personalized letters were sent to each of the 39 municipalities. These letters commend the municipalities' efforts and are divided into four categories; some municipalities may receive multiple letters and award certificates, but each will get at least one. The categories include towns that reached their 50% MSW goal or higher, the three towns with the most improved recycling rates from the previous year, municipalities whose MRC obtained the Certified Recycling Professional certification, and those working towards achieving a 50% MSW rate. These letters introduce the municipal tonnage grant process, outline the goals of at least 50% MSW and 60% TSW or more at municipal, county, and state levels, and commend the MRC and support teams for recycling and waste reduction efforts. They also include recent rate data and connect it all to the tonnage grant process. The letters were sent by regular mail to the municipal clerk, who was asked to share copies with the Mayor, Town Administrator/Manager, Council Members, MRC, and Environmental Commission/Green Team. The aim of these communications and awards is to support our coordinator's efforts, encourage town-wide discussion on recycling and the MTG reporting process, and showcase the letter and award at a council meeting as part of official correspondence. Copies of these documents will be provided at the August MCMUA Board Meeting.

Lastly, at the July MCMUA Board Meeting, Marrone was asked to provide our members with a detailed listing of recycling rates broken down by County and Municipality along with their associated grant awards. Hard copies will be provided at the August Meeting outlining the requested information and is provided in correspondence.

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Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) & Municipal Tonnage Grant (MTG) Program Activities:

By April 30, all 39 Morris County municipalities submitted their 2025 Tonnage Grant Applications to NJDEP. From May to June, the MCMUA collected recycling reports, reviewed each, checked for errors, and worked to achieve full resubmission, especially from those who didn't last year. We prioritized non-responders, coordinated, created a schedule, and followed up. Thanks to these efforts, 38 towns resubmitted by the June 15 resubmission deadline, 10 more than last year. One town did not resubmit despite our attempts to provide assistance. In mid-June, that town's alternate MRC was contacted, and the NJDEP approved an extenuating circumstance, enabling a late resubmission. This marked the first time our organization had had all its towns submit their initial reports in accordance with NJDEP standards under the law and further work toward revising and improving their initial numbers by submitting their data by the resubmission deadline.

Looking at the submitted data, Chavanne finalized her in-depth analysis of the tonnage numbers and categories from our municipalities' reports, building on last month's report and suggested areas for improvement for 2026. Looking at the 2025 calendar year submissions, a total of 416 individual generators reported their data to our MRCs who operated in at least one town in all of Morris County. This number does not include general "residential submission categories" such as curbside collection or depot collection, nor does it include general "commercial" generation that was reported without a designated name. 45 generators reported more than 500 tons across the county. 21 of these reports were received by the MCMUA and distributed to towns. A total of 39 generators reported food waste in their 2025 reports. Future strategies include:

- Determining which large, corporate food waste generators didn't submit a report or likely underreported food waste. The MCMUA should contact these to ensure all their tonnage data is captured.
- Compiling a list of local contacts for each town for MRCs to contact to facilitate them into the process of soliciting reports, as it is likely that less than half our MRCs only submit reports received into the department for submission to the NJDEP for various reasons, from lack of administrative support to time management and so on.
- Using spatial analysis and other tools to determine how present certain organizations are within Morris County to effectively pinpoint generators and haulers operating to solicit reports from.

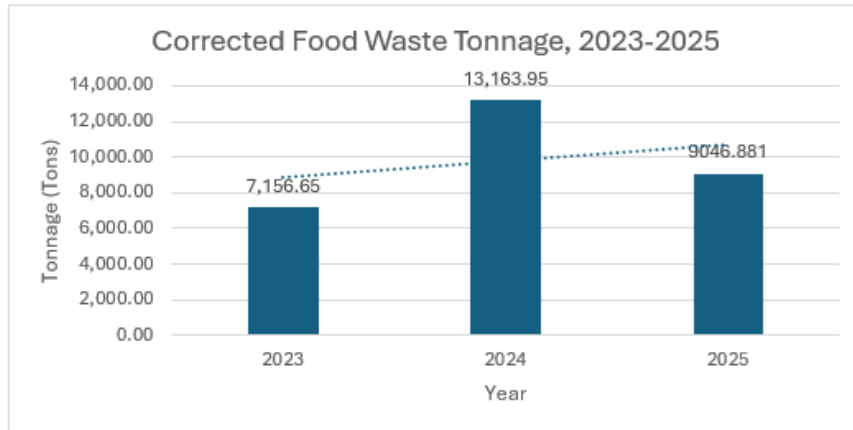
The table below provides our best estimate of recycling during the 2025 calendar year. These disposal figures are derived from our transfer station records and align with the revised reports submitted by our towns to the NJDEP. However, these figures do not include the 30-day auditing period conducted by NJDEP, during which our municipalities and the MCMUA review all data sheet categories submitted by the NJDEP. This review occurs after the state's totals are added into their reports, including categories such as scrap metal, which could lead to more accurate numbers. As you can see from the preliminary reports, we are still creeping upward toward our 50% MSW goal as disposal numbers continue to increase, and TSW recycling numbers are 1% below the 60% goal but likely to increase with add-on totals submitted to the state.

Population	Generation	Disposal			Recycling			
2025 Estimate	Disposal & Recycling	MSW	Non-MSW	Total	MSW	MSW %	Total Recycled w/ Add-ons	Total % Recycled
524,251	1,162,450	304,392.28	172,821.01	477,213.29	270,709.73	47.1%	685,237.05	59%

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Looking at an analysis of Food Waste during reporting years 2023 through 2025, all food waste tonnage reported was reviewed and found that towns had misreported food waste data from Darling Ingredients in pounds, not tons, and shows inflated tons in 2024, but the MCMUA does not have the municipal reports to verify, and it will likely be corrected in next year's audit of those numbers by the NJDEP in the coming months when they audit the towns reports. Still, it shows an increasing trend in food waste being recycled and reported in Morris County.



MCMUA Boat Shrink Wrap Recycling Stewardship Efforts:

At the end of July, the boat shrink wrap recycling efforts in Morris and Sussex Counties concluded. Working with Roxbury Township's Municipal Recycling Coordinator, Ultra-Poly Corporation, the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, and Sussex County's District Recycling Coordinator, over 26 tons (52,000 pounds) of boat shrink wrap were collected and recycled in 2026. This brings the four-year total to an impressive 76 tons (more than 152,000 pounds) of plastic diverted from landfills. Each spring, as boats are removed from winter storage, thousands of pounds of shrink wrap are discarded. Instead of trash, this plastic is recycled into new products through the program. Once collected, the shrink wrap is sent to Ultra-Poly in Pennsylvania, where it's processed into recycled plastic pellets. These pellets are then used to create products like composite lumber, flowerpots, storage totes, and packaging materials. This program exemplifies successful collaboration among organizations, businesses, and community members working toward a shared goal. After Morris County's long-standing shrink wrap recycling program ended in 2020 due to rising costs, the MCMUA, along with project partners, reintroduced this recycling option in 2023 through a regional partnership. Participation has grown each year since then. Over four seasons, 76 tons of shrink wrap have been recycled: 8 tons in 2023, 19 tons in 2024, 22 tons in 2025, and 26 tons in 2026. The MCMUA thanks its partners, volunteers, marinas, businesses, and boaters for their contributions; every effort made a difference. We look forward to continuing this initiative next year and appreciate everyone's support. A press release that went out on the program's success can be found here: [Post](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



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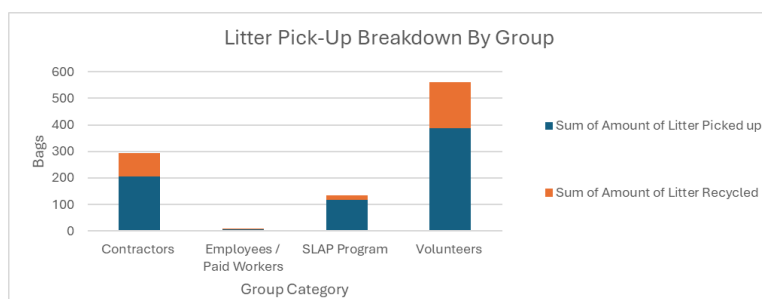
Morris County Clean Communities Program

2025 Clean Communities Grant Update and Final Reporting:

June 30, 2026, marked the deadline for Counties and Municipalities to use their 2025 Clean Communities Grants or to request extensions. Throughout July, Chavanne focused on completing grant spending and preparing the final report before the July 31 submission deadline for the NJ Clean Communities Council, detailing the MCMUA's activities and expenditures for that grant period. The 2025 Clean Communities grant period runs from January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. We are proud to announce that our Morris County Clean Communities report has been submitted on time to the Clean Communities Council. In addition to the financial statistics provided at the last Board Report, the following are the data statistics for each report category:

2025 Grant Period Cleanups Conducted:

During the 2025 Grant period, Morris County recorded 57 cleanup events. A total of 1,435 volunteers dedicated 5,212 man-hours to remove 714 bags of litter and 284 bags of recyclables. Cleanups covered 46.19 miles of road and 1854.9 acres of public land. Volunteers involved in Clean Communities grants, including school and non-profit groups, cleaned 1852.9 acres and collected 387.5 bags out of 562 total bags of litter. Adopt-A-Highway efforts covered 20 road miles and collected 294 bags. Below is a detailed comparison of which group categories contributed the most litter pickups. Note that the “Employees/Paid Workers” category includes MCMUA staff collecting trash on office grounds during lunch breaks.



2025 Grant Period Educational Programs Performed:

In the 2025 Grant period, the MCMUA held and sponsored 20 litter abatement educational programs. Out of these, 10 were outreach events the MCMUA recycling team hosted or attended, including the Clean Communities sustainability artwork contest awards ceremony, farmers markets, the 4-H fair, town Night Outs, etc. The remaining 10 events were sponsored educational vendors that spoke at various schools, libraries, and other public events throughout the year. In total, it is estimated that approximately 2770 residents and students were reached with these events.

MCMUA Clean Communities Statistical Report Compliance:

Throughout July, Chavanne continued to collaborate with our municipalities to ensure they submitted their 2025 Clean Communities Statistical Reports, along with any outstanding reports from grant years 2020 to 2024. Currently, 17 municipalities have notified Chavanne that they have submitted their 2025 reports. She will confirm the total number of municipal statistical report submissions once the submission data becomes available to the MCMUA from the Clean Communities Council and will follow up on any outstanding reports that have not been submitted.

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Regarding the 2024 Statistical Report submissions, 29 out of the 39 municipalities in Morris County submitted their reports before the July 2026 deadline, marking an improvement from previous years. Chavanne successfully communicated with seven of the remaining municipalities, which plan to submit all reports from 2022 to 2024, and worked closely with four of these towns to help them complete their reports. As of August, 33 towns have now submitted their 2024 reports, and 28 have fully completed their reports for the years 2022 to 2024. Chavanne anticipates that these numbers will increase, as many coordinators have informed her that they are actively working on their submissions.

Morris County Clean Communities Sponsored County Roadway Cleanup(s):

In July, the Morris County Clean Communities Litter Abatement Program continued its efforts to remove litter from county roads, working with the contractor Adopt-A-Highway. On July 14, the team focused on cleaning Parsippany Boulevard and Intervale Road. In total, 5 participants cleaned 2.5 miles of roadway and picked up 9 bags of garbage, 8 bags of recyclables, and 1 tire.