



A newsletter from the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA)

SUMMER 2025

ATLANTIC COUNTY RECYCLES



Improving Recycling, One Bin at a Time



Pleasantville Public Works and ACUA worked together to inspect bins.

The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) is connecting with local communities to increase and improve recycling.

Most recently, ACUA joined forces with the Pleasantville Public Works Department to perform curbside inspections at 160 homes in the community. On three recycling days, the

team visually inspected curbside bins and recorded incorrect materials placed in recycling. Good job tags were left for those doing well, and educational “oops” tags were given to those needing improvement.

The results provided insights into the average person’s recycling habits and valuable feedback to ACUA’s outreach team. The number one contaminant found in curbside bins was bagged material.

“Bagged material is particularly bad for recycling sorting equipment,” said ACUA Vice President of Solid Waste Gary Conover. “Plastic bags get trapped in equipment, which can cause costly repairs and potential injuries. It’s important for residents to keep items loose in their containers.”

Leaving informative tags made a big difference. By the end of the project, there was a

55% decrease in bagged material and an overall 30% decrease in “oops” tags issued at the curb.

“Engaging with the community through outreach initiatives like this is essential for the success of recycling in Atlantic County,” stated ACUA President Matthew DeNafo. “Recycling offers every resident a simple opportunity to positively impact the environment. It conserves resources, minimizes landfill space, and reduces waste disposal costs.”

In addition to the curbside audit, ACUA distributed an educational mailer, performed presentations to community groups, and distributed recycling bags to residents living in multi-family homes, which provides an easy way for residents to transport recycling material into communal dumpsters.

...continued inside



ABOVE: Visual tags inform customers of recycling mistakes.

LEFT: ACUA visits with residents of St. Peter's Village in Pleasantville.

Girl-Powered AI Recycling Chatbot Wins State Recognition

There's nothing artificial about the intelligence of four local high school students that created an award-winning Recycling Chatbot.

Students Krispa Chapagain, Christina Htay, Sapna Patel, and Emily Liang of Mainland Regional High School recently developed an award-winning AI Recycling Chatbot that helps connect younger students with environmental projects as part of their STEM for Change Club.

"Our goal was to develop a sustainability focused chatbot app that would motivate students to reuse recycling materials," said Chapagain.

The bot prompts users to search for materials and guides them to a corresponding reuse project. For example, a search of paper generates instructions on how to make seed starters from old newspapers.

The group showcased their project at the statewide STEAM Tank Challenge hosted by the New Jersey School Boards Association where they placed in the top ten and took home a \$500 prize. The challenge invites students to develop solutions to environmental or societal issues impacting our communities.

The team is hoping to advance the chatbot for further use and looks forward to sharing it with the community. Check out the project at: recyclingchatbot.live



Chatbot creators from Mainland Regional High School.

Recycling Chatbot

Inspiring Engineers Through Smart Reuse

[Learn More](#) [Try Chatbot](#)

Transform Recyclables into Learning Opportunities

Discover how everyday materials like cardboard, bottles, and paper can become exciting engineering projects. Our AI-powered chatbot guides students through hands-on STEM activities that make learning both fun and sustainable.

[Start Building](#) [Learn More](#)

Scan to try out the Chatbot!



LANDFILL UPDATES

Permanent Cap Project Ongoing

Work to install a permanent cap over 16 acres of the ACUA's landfill in Egg Harbor Township is ongoing.

A permanent cap is a common tool that gets applied to areas of a landfill that are no longer accepting waste. The cap will block water from entering the landfill and prevent the creation of leachate. The cap will also prevent air and water from entering the landfill gas collection system, which will ensure it operates efficiently.

The \$7 million project is being completed five years ahead of schedule thanks to the



Photo shows the progress of the cap that will cover 16 acres of ACUA's landfill.

support of the Atlantic County Executive and Commissioners who approved an appropriation from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The cap construction began in April and is expected to be finished in the fall.

Renewable Natural Gas Facility Opening Soon

The renewable natural gas (RNG) facility that has been under construction since October 2023 is nearing completion.

The facility will capture and clean gases naturally created from decaying waste in the landfill. Once scrubbed to pipeline quality, the gas will be fed through the existing South Jersey Gas infrastructure as an energy source for the community. The project, the first of its kind in the state, will transform gas that would otherwise go wasted into a clean energy source.

The RNG facility is expected to be operational in September. Visit acua.com for updates.

RECYCLING (CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

By working closely with residents, ACUA and the Pleasantville Public Works Department were able to effectively communicate recycling guidelines and reduce contamination. ACUA plans to repeat this effort across more communities across Atlantic County. If your community is interested in learning more, please contact the ACUA Authority Relations Department at ar@acua.com.

Project Findings

Bagged material and plastic film were the most common contaminants found at the curb.

55%

decrease in
bagged material

30%

decrease in
oops tags
issued

50%

decrease in
unwashed
materials

Curbside Examples



Broken down cardboard and correct plastics make this container great!



Clean and empty plastic bottles set this recycling up for success.



Only glass bottles and jars are accepted—no coffee pots!



Items should be placed loosely in your recycling container—no plastic bags!

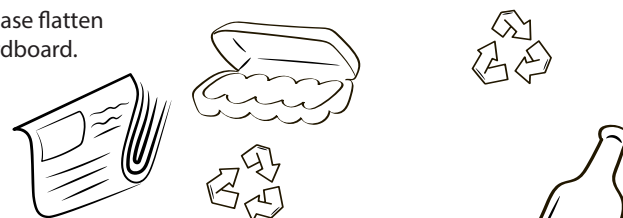
5 Easy Ways to Improve Your Recycling

1. Give your containers a quick rinse. Food and liquids should be removed before placing items in your bin.
2. Keep items loose in the container. Do not place items in a bag.
3. Check the bottom of your plastics for numbers 1, 2 or 5.
4. When it comes to glass, think bottles and jars – no mirrors or dishes.
5. Download the RecycleCoach App to see proper disposal information for your community! You can also access the search tool at acua.com.

Recycle These Items

PAPER + CARDBOARD

Please flatten cardboard.



GLASS

Bottles and Jars



METALS

Cans and Lids

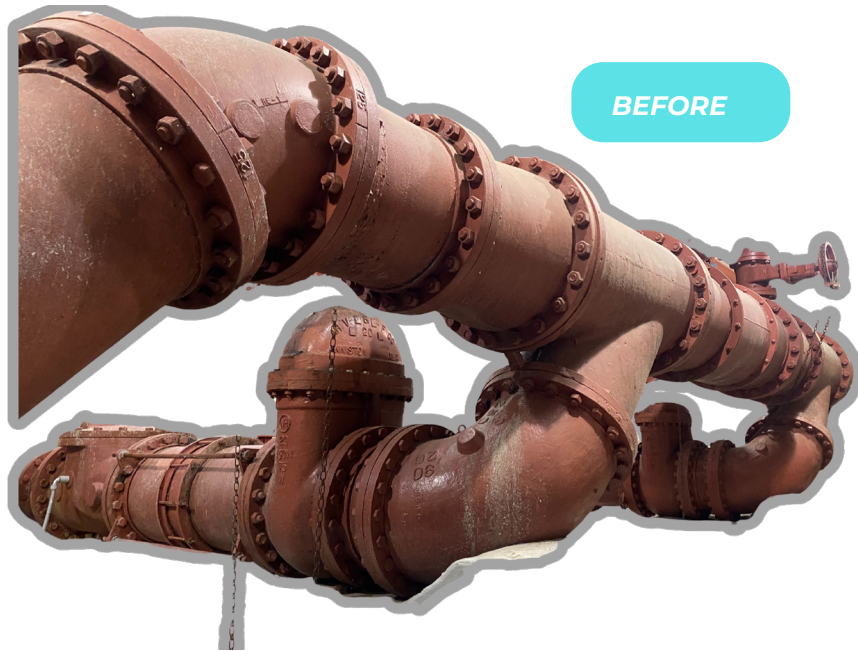


PLASTICS

Bottles, Containers and Jugs with numbers 1, 2, and 5 on bottom.



PUMP STATION RENEWAL



BEFORE



AFTER

UPGRADES INCLUDED:

Wet Well Expansion + Repair

The wet well, which acts as a holding tank for wastewater, was doubled in size to handle large volumes of water during major storm events. The existing wet well was also repaired, and a protective coating was added.

New HVAC System

The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system was fully replaced to be more reliable and energy efficient.

New Electrical Components

The electric transformer amperage was increased, and the station's automatic transfer switch, main distribution switchboard, and incoming power feed were replaced.

Permanent Bypass Added

This ensures sewage can bypass the station during maintenance or emergencies.

Protective Coatings

Protective coatings were added to all pipes in the dry well area of the pump station.

New Roof, Cedar Shakes, Paving and Fencing

The roof and cedar shakes were replaced, a new fence was installed, and repaving was completed to improve the site's structure and appearance.

The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) operates 20 pump stations across the county that transport dirty water from sinks, toilets and washing machines to the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Atlantic City.

The Downbeach Pump Station located in Ventnor, originally constructed in the 1970s, recently underwent a \$5.3 million revitalization that provided much-needed upgrades to its structural, electrical, and operational components.

The station works around the clock to transport nearly three million gallons of wastewater each day from Longport, Margate, Ventnor, and Seaview Harbor to ACUA's Wastewater Treatment Facility in Atlantic City.



Despite its simple brick exterior, this building is home to an essential system that helps ensure our waterways stay clean.

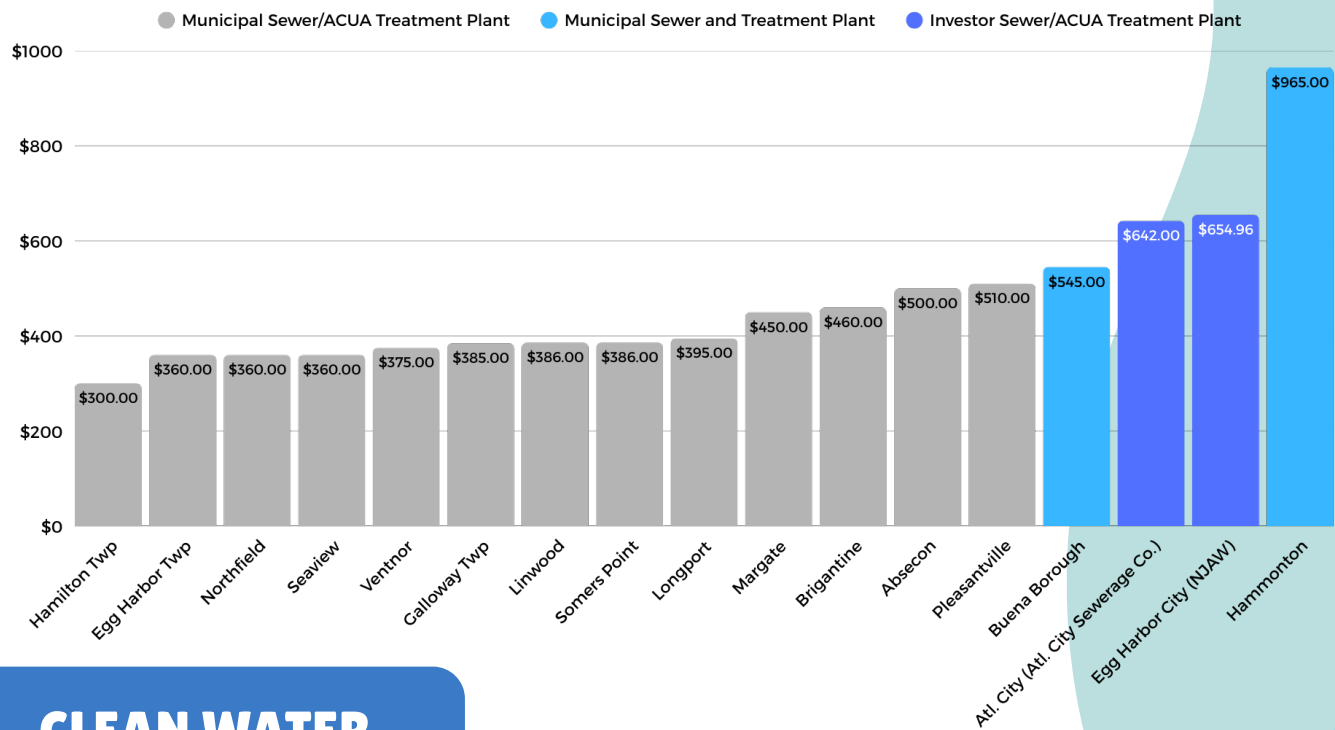


Local officials recently celebrated the grand re-opening of the pump station.

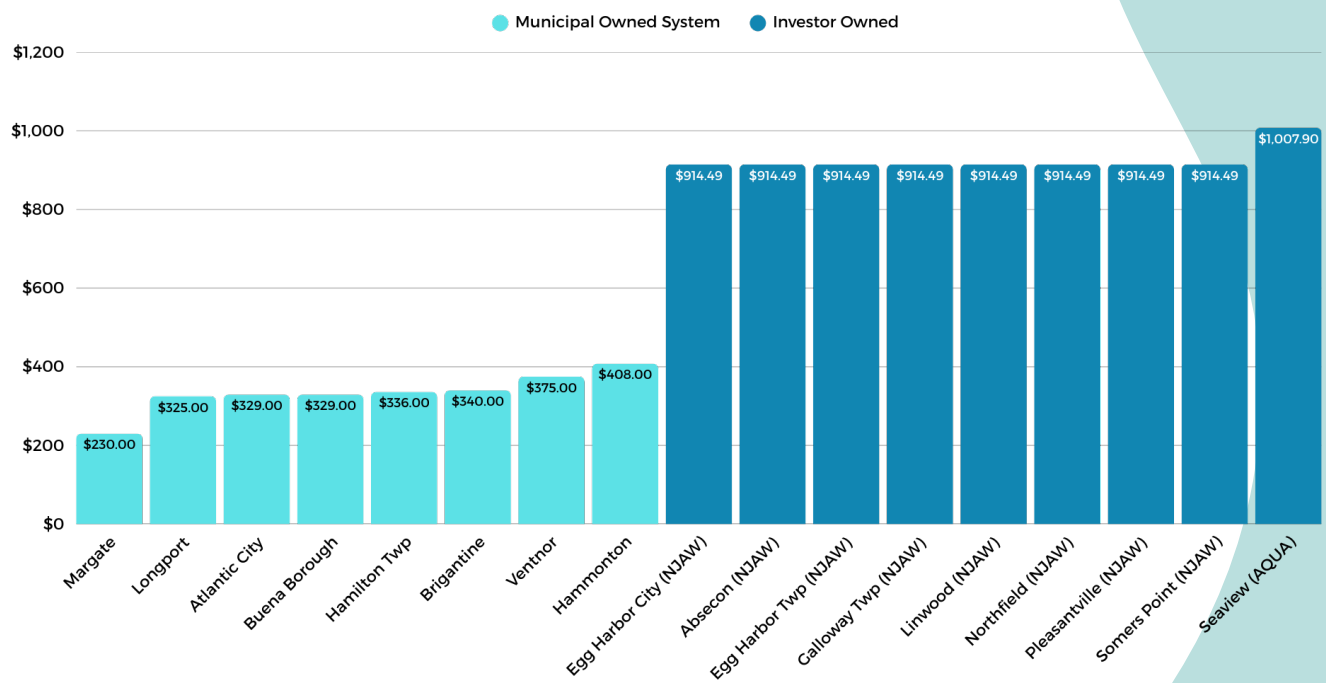
DO YOU KNOW YOUR WATER RATES?

The charts below show rates for local drinking water as well as the sewer and wastewater treatment rates based on 70,000 gallons/year usage.

WASTEWATER



CLEAN WATER



TOUR THE ACUA

Come learn about your wastewater infrastructure! ACUA regularly offers tours to school groups, organizations and residents.

Visit [acua.com/tours](https://www.acua.com/tours) for details.



ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

SEPT 6

Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off 8 AM to 1 PM

ACUA Environmental Park
6700 Delilah Road, Egg Harbor Township
acua.com/hhw

SEPT 22

Garden Talk: Adding Shrubs for Winter Interest 5:30 PM

ACUA Community Garden
6700 Delilah Road, Egg Harbor Township
acua.com/garden

OCTOBER

OCT 1

ACUA Recycled Art Contest Begins

Submit artwork made from recycled materials
to local libraries through October 31.
acua.com/artcontest

OCT 6

Litter Challenge Begins

Perform and document cleanups through
October 24 for your chance to win!
acua.com/litterchallenge

OCT 18

4H Electronic Recycling Collection 8 AM to 12 PM

David C. Wood 4H Center
3210 Route 50, Mays Landing
ac4hfair.org/electronic-recycling

OCT 27

Garden Talk: Herb Growing and Preserving 101 5:30 PM

ACUA Community Garden
6700 Delilah Road, Egg Harbor Township
acua.com/garden

The Sustainable Jersey Hub will host an art-related
event for communities in October. Visit [acua.com/](http://acua.com/events)
[events](http://acua.com/events) for details.

Event dates are subject to change.

Egg Harbor City To Distribute New Carts

Egg Harbor City is switching to carts! The city will provide trash and recycling carts to residents beginning in fall 2025.

The new containers will be the primary containers for disposal moving forward.

Atlantic County communities that have switched to carts have reported an increase in recycling and a decrease in litter. The carts are also safer for sanitation workers. Additional details coming soon!



Donate Your Extra Reusable Bags

The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA), in partnership with the NJ Clean Communities Program and the NJ Food Council, is accepting reusable bags for those in need.

“ACUA is happy to accept surplus bags from the community to help prevent waste and get clean bags in the hands of those that need them most,” said Atlantic County Clean Communities Coordinator Rebecca Turygan.

Donations can be dropped off at ACUA's GEO Administrative Building located at 6700 Delilah Road in Egg Harbor Township Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ACUA will also accept bags at its next Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off on Saturday, September 6. The bags are then sanitized and distributed to local organizations.



Reduce Waste:

COMPOST AT HOME

ACUA now sells
home composters

\$60

Purchase at our GEO Admin Building at
6700 Delilah Rd. in Egg Harbor Township
M-F 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM



ACUA

acua.com/homecompost



Clean Your Neighborhood, Win Cash!



Take the Fall Litter Challenge October 6-24

ACUA and the Atlantic County Clean Communities Program invite you to participate in a litter removal contest for a chance to win a mini-grant!

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Litter teams can perform cleanups between October 6-24 on roadways, parks, or other public areas. Each team must report bags of trash or recycling collected through a designated online form. Pictures of material must be sent to verify the cleanups. The winner will be selected based on the amount of litter collected and announced in November.

Contest is open to Atlantic County residents. Teams are limited to 15 people or less.

PRIZES

- First Place - \$500 Mini-Grant
- Second Place - \$300 Mini-Grant
- Third Place - \$100 Mini-Grant
- Strangest Litter Find - \$100 Mini-Grant

View full contest rules at acua.com/litterchallenge

ATLANTIC COUNTY CLEAN COMMUNITIES

Fall is a great time to get involved in the Atlantic County Clean Communities Program! Community groups, families, businesses and schools can adopt county roads, school yards and parks to help keep our community clean. ACUA will provide supplies and safety gear. Visit acua.com/adoptaroad to learn more.



EHT Scouts Pack 94



Atlantic County Umpires Association



Aktion Club



TD Bank



Hammonton Democrats



Atlantic County Ruff Ryders



Mullica Township PTA

RECYCLED ART CONTEST

Create art from trash or recycling!
Submit art pieces to your local library
between October 1 - October 31.



Entries will be judged in age categories based on creativity, use of recycled materials, and overall presentation.

Winners will be announced at ACUA's America Recycles Day event in November. Visit acua.com/artcontest for details.



RECYCLE THESE ITEMS

Please remove food or liquids. Place material loose in your bin.



PLASTICS

Recycle Plastics #1, 2, 5
Bottles, Jugs and Containers



GLASS

Glass Bottles
and Jars, All Colors



METALS

Aluminum, Tin
or Steel Cans



PAPER CARDBOARD



Atlantic County Utilities Authority

www.acua.com | 609.272.6950

OUR MISSION

The Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) is responsible for enhancing the quality of life through the protection of waters and lands from pollution by providing responsible waste management services. The Authority is an environmental leader and will continue to use new technologies, innovations and employee ideas to provide the highest quality and most cost effective environmental services.

OFFICERS

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LINDA BAZEMORE
Senior Vice President of Administration and Finance/CFO

GARY CONOVER
Vice President of Solid Waste

TOM GANARD
Chief Engineer

JOSEPH PANTALONE
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