COLUMBIA COUNTY
Department of Public Works

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Minutes from **Thursday, August 6, 2026, Solid Waste Advisory Committee hybrid meeting at 10 a.m. on Microsoft Teams and in person**

SWAC Committee

- In Attendance
  - Samantha Hawkins – Public Member, St Helens – At-Large
  - Nick Ries – Industrial Representative – WM
  - Kanale Tumlinson – Industrial Representative Alternate – Waste Connections
  - Derek Ranta – Industrial Representative Alternate – Waste Connections
  - Tatum Flowers – Columbia County Department of Public Works Solid Waste Coordinator
  - Mike Russell – Columbia County Department of Public Works Solid Waste Administrator

- Absent
  - Austin Carter-Nadeau – Public Member, Rainier – At-Large
  - Brandon Lesowske – Public Member, Scappoose – At-Large
  - Greg Rouse – Industrial Representative Alternate (in-progress) – WM

Regular Session

Meeting was officially brought to order at 10:05 a.m.

Approve May Minutes – minutes were not approved because we didn't have a quorum at the very beginning of the meeting. We will approve them in November.

Solid Waste Overview (10:05am-10:50am)

1. **Transfer Station and Collection Rates**
   a. May meeting haulers provided their DCRs for a 0% and 5.9% increase to the collection rates. County met with the financial consultant to better understand county costs and the transfer station rates.
   b. County and haulers met with the Board on June 17, and the Public Hearing was on July 1. The intention was for the rates to be approved on or by July 1.
   c. Board decided not to approve the rates. County reviewed and revised the transfer station rates. **Board approved adjusted rates on July 15, 1.83% for Hudson and 6.6% for WM and a CPI of 3.1% for the transfer station rates.**

2. **Dump Stoppers Program** – The program is a collaborative effort involving Land Development Services, Solid Waste, and Community Justice work crew to clean up dumpsites (~$1,000/month). The tipping fees are ~ $2,000/year. Dave Carlberg

records the cases and investigates dumpsites as the Columbia County Code Compliance Specialist.

a. **May-July 2026:** 18 cases, July has been an active month.
b. **Top areas for complaints:** Scappoose/Vernonia Highway, Smith Road
c. **No reported issues** of dumped sharps on Pittsburg Road.
d. Nick asked what items have you been seeing the most. Construction, household garbage, tires, some mattresses.

3. **Sharps Container Exchange Program** started Oct 2016 and expanded to five Fire Districts in April 2021. We collect registrant sheets at the transfer station and remote fire stations as well as full sharps containers.
    a. **Registrant Data as of July 24**
        i. **Total: 1,667**
            1. TS: 1,306
            2. Scappoose: 143
            3. Vernonia: 96
            4. Clatskanie: 108
            5. Rainier: 14 – site recently got active.

        i. **Sharps Purchased**
            1. Purchase 10 boxes or 120 containers each month.
            2. May-July 2026 purchased 400 containers, total= $1,492.10.
        ii. **Advertising sharps program**
            1. News release, hung up flyers in Clatskanie, Rainier, Columbia City banks, grocery stores, and post offices.

4. **Battery Drop-off Program**
    a. Began in mid-March 2026.
    b. Since mid-March, filled two 55-gal drums for lithium and other batteries (about a drum per 1.5 months). And two to three 35-gal drums of alkaline.
    c. Receive a ton of alkaline. Currently they are being recycled by ACT.
    d. **Updates:** Staff have received it well and I haven't heard of any major issues. Residents really enjoy the program.

5. **Mattress Recycling Events**
    a. Free events for recycling of mattresses and box springs. 5 units maximum.
    b. March 14, June 13, Sept 12, Nov 14. 8am-12pm at the transfer station.
    c. Sept 12 and Nov 14 – CAA will be onsite to host Recycle On events for collection of plastic bags, plastic caps & lids, plastic packaging handles, plastic buckets & pails, aluminum foil and trays, shredded paper.

6. **Transfer Station Maintenance & Repairs**
    a. Paving and Striping

i. July 29 @12pm – August 1 @12pm closure of the transfer station to slurry seal the pavement. Striping will occur on a regular business day. To be completed by late August.

b. Recycling Information Library added to the Recycling Center to provide residents and businesses with information about our programs and safe disposal. Well received. Lori's idea and we made it happen!

7. **Columbia County's ReUse Center Program**
   a. **ReUse Center Report – Material Diverted from the Landfill.**
      1. January: 4,820 lbs
      2. February: 8,120lbs
      3. March: 7,620 lbs
      4. April: 11,380 lbs
      5. May: 21,960 lbs
      6. June: 6,540 lbs
      7. July: 8,240 lbs
      8. Total: 68,700 lbs = 34.35 tons. Material is moving well and out to partners in the county. Partners are happy.

   ii. Hot items: lumber, bikes, accordion, keyboard, sewing machines, tools
   iii. Partners: H4H, Top Notch, Crunchy Littles, McBride School, St. Helens Library
   iv. Present to the Board in October about a one year in review!
   v. Published article in Waste Advantage Magazine. Columbia County, OR Reuse Program Diverts 60,000 Pounds from Landfill - Waste Advantage Magazine
   vi. Interviewed partners for (future) social media posts about the program.
   vii. Developed flyers to put at events and in the Recycling Info Library.
   viii. Looking at presenting this program at conferences for 2027.

8. **Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program**
   a. Rainier – May 16
      i. Car count: 74
      ii. Material tonnage: 5,344 pounds
      iii. Top items: Aerosols, pesticides, motor oil, paint
   b. St. Helens – June 6
      i. Car count: 232
      ii. Material tonnage: 17,743 pounds
      iii. Top items: Non-regulated hazardous waste, alkaline batteries, paint, 1 pound propane tanks, motor oil
   c. **Next events:** St. Helens August 22, Clatskanie Oct 3, St. Helens Oct 24

9. Updating the Solid Waste Management Plan as well as creating a waste search tool/app for Columbia County residents and businesses.

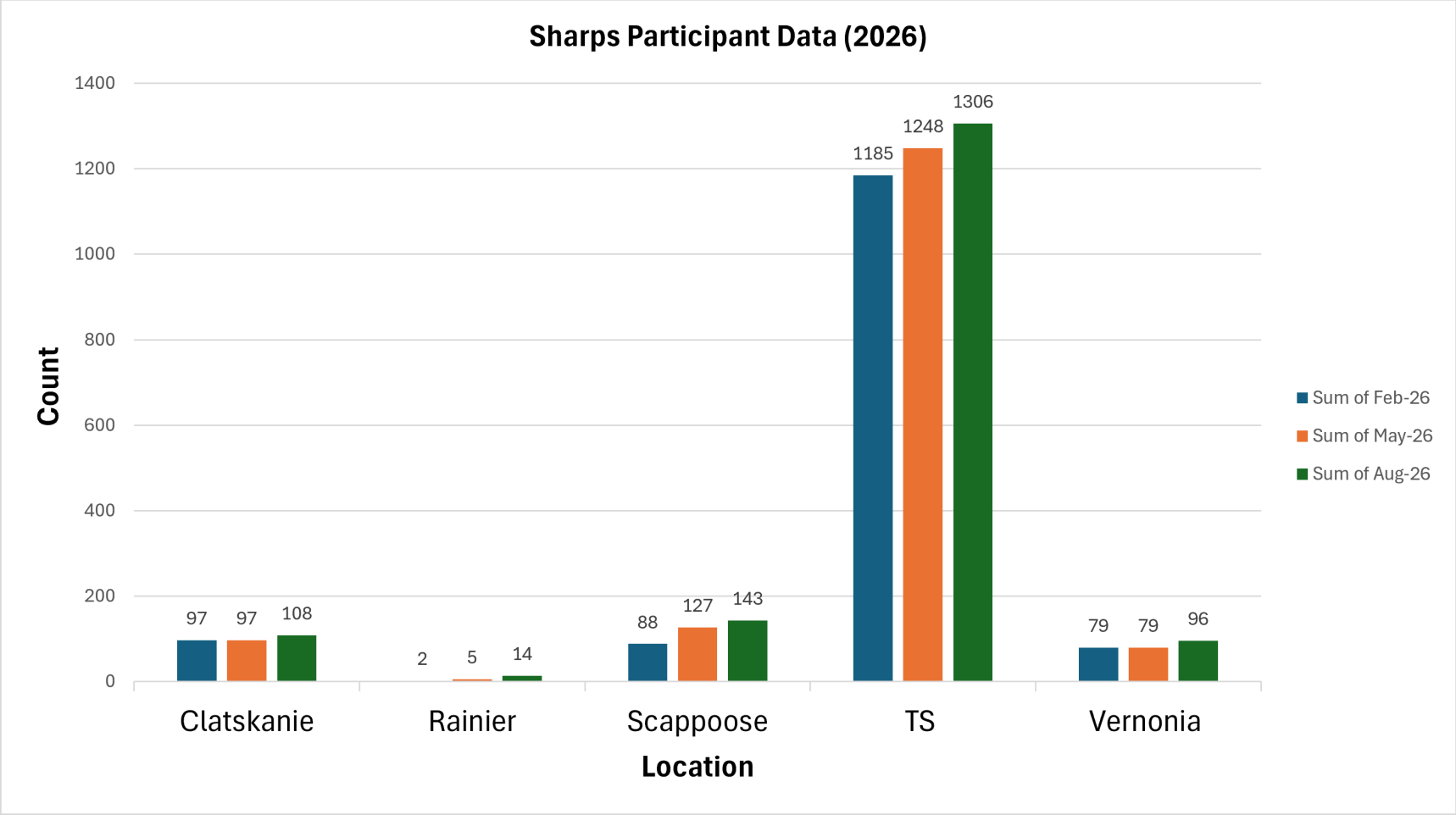
Discussion (10:50am-11:30am)

- **Hauler Report Outs**
- Issues, Incidents, What's working well, Education & Outreach.

- WM
    - One vehicle accident for this year (2026). Three years injury free.
    - Corn's pass is closed and Scappoose has a lot of construction causing hauler to reroute the pickups.
    - For smokey environments – they have procedures in place to monitor smoke and communicate with their staff.

- Hudson Garbage
    - Weather – especially heat and smoke have caused the most issues.
    - Concerns about a private drive and how to pick up the residents containers. Have resident put the containers near the mailbox and the driver turns around at the school bus area.
    - Using the RMA portal to order flyers, stickers, mailers, cart tags, etc.
    - No incidents on the garbage side only a few on the portable toilet company side.

Next SWAC meeting will on Thursday November 5, 2026, from 10am to 11:30am virtually and at Healy Hall, Public Works Department 1054 Oregon St, St. Helens, OR.


Sharps Participant Data (2026)
Count
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
97
97
108
2
5
14
88
127
143
1185
1248
1306
79
79
96
Clatskanie
Rainier
Scappoose
TS
Vernonia
Location
Sum of Feb-26
Sum of May-26
Sum of Aug-26