



East End Landfill helping recycle millions of old tires

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HENRICO, VA (WWBT) - It's a dirty little secret, dotting the landscape all over Virginia. But now, a local company is helping to do something about thousands of abandoned tires in the greater Richmond area.

The guy who runs the grinder goes by the initials "K.O.D." As in, "King of Destruction." Kelly Hiner can tear up 2,500 tires in about 10 hours. That's a lot of rubber. And at this site off Golden Wheel Road in New Kent County, it's not in short supply.

"Every time you turn around you stumble on another pile of tires," Hiner said.

Joe Sandy is heading up the effort to recycle the old abandoned tires -- some of which date back to the 1970's.

"You can look and see how old. They haven't used that tread pattern in years," Sandy said, pointing out an example of old truck tires.

Dumping was legal, and common, because it was too expensive to do anything else. The result became millions of tires buried in the countryside, in every corner of Virginia. But lately, they have a purpose.

"We will take the shredded tire and use it for construction

purposes at our site," Sandy said.

Joe's site is The East End Landfill in Henrico, which was recently named in a Dept. of Environmental Quality report indicating it as at least one source of a foul smell in nearby neighborhoods. The tire shreds, or "chips" as they're called, will be used for a drainage layer. The alternative would've been to use some other natural resource.

"It just makes good sense. It's a win/win for the state and for our construction purposes," Sandy said.

Abandoned tires, also, are a safety issue. They help breed mosquitoes. And, they're a fire hazard. Getting rid of them, reduces the risk.

According to the DEQ, since 1993, more than 23,000,000 tires have been collected and recycled in Virginia. The project in New Kent, is one of four that Sandy supervises in greater Richmond. He hopes to have it done by the end of the month.

"This site, from what I understand, after we do the cleanup, is going to be marketed for sale," Sandy said.

So far, Sandy says his team has recycled 500,000 tires this year, with the goal of a million statewide by the end of the year.

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