



## Green Scene: Creating Sustainable Projects

by Jason Tankersley • published in the October 2009 issue

**T**he Fairfax Companies, LLC is a small family business started here in Tucson in the late 1980's by Ron Tankersley. After taking the company over about seven years ago, I decided the company needed to focus on socially responsible and environmentally friendly business strategies. Not knowing that eventually this was going to be such a hot topic and green was going to be the in thing, we began recycling practices at our Speedway facility and green land development on our other properties.

The Speedway Recycling and Landfill Facility is now the leader in Southern Arizona when it comes to recycling construction waste but to be truly sustainable we needed to go even farther with our business practices. We are currently transforming Speedway into a one stop shop with regards to construction and landscape supply. We have begun to process the materials that have been dumped in the landfill since we opened nineteen years ago.



Recycling materials at the Speedway Recycling and Landfill

are compacted and the land is prepared to be built upon or used to operate other businesses. We are currently processing landscape waste for compost, mulch, and fuel for biomass power plants. The smaller waste concrete delivered by our customers is then stockpiled and recycled. Located close to major a transportation corridor, it allows for the efficient delivery of our products and easy access for our customers.

In seventeen years, we have recovered more than thirty acres of an old sand and gravel pit; twenty seven of which are slated to be the first large scale LEED certified development in Marana called Marana Gateway Center. Phase 1 will consist of over 250,000 square feet of mixed use live/work, office, retail, dining, and ecologically sustainable light industrial components. Phase one will devote half an acre to a transportation hub, creating vehicular free access to the center of each facility. Each building at Marana Gateway Center will be equipped with rainwater retention tanks, solar power, gray water collection, and built with recycled materials (some recycled right on site).

By reprocessing and separating the landfill materials, we have been able to reclaim the valuable metals that were dumped years ago and create marketable recycled products that can be used by our customers such as AB aggregate, top soil, compost, mulch, decorative rock, horse bedding, and rip rap. By being able to supply our customers with these recycled products when they are on site eliminates the need for them to travel to multiple locations for their building or landscape materials, cutting significantly their carbon footprint. It also impacts our customers' wallets by saving them time and fuel.

Ina Road Land Reclamation Facility is our Northwest location. At Ina, we are reclaiming an old sand and gravel pit using inert materials. These inert materials

This twenty seven acre site is the first phase of what eventually will be a 150 acre multi-use development all built upon land that was previously not developable.

Phase 2 of Marana Gateway Center will consist of 64 acres of high density affordable housing, campus office complexes, a community recycling center, and natural drainage corridors. The Santa Cruz River creates a natural buffer on the western edge of the site and will have a river park spanning from Ina Road all the way to Cortaro Road.

Phase 3 will be the largest part of the development and is still many years out. It will have an emphasis on office, retail, and neighborhood shopping. Phase 3 will also feature mixed income housing. We are still in the very early stages of Marana Gateway Center but expect to break ground sometime in 2011.

I have always believed that it is our responsibility to utilize an asset for more than one thing. I have believed that in order to maximize your ROI, one must be creative and think out of the box. It is my hope that with this last economic crisis, the trend towards sustainability will continue and more business owners will take it upon themselves to lead this country back to prosperity using socially and environmentally sustainable business practices. Marana Gateway Center will have a place for them to set up shop.

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