

Finally: Kudos to receiver for hitting dump deadline; making improvements

Almost 17-1/2 years after it was supposed to be shut down, the Ordot dump will finally be closed on Wednesday, and the new Layon Landfill will open the next day.

A 2003 federal consent decree required the government of Guam to close the dump because the local government proved unable or unwilling to do so. Even after that, it took the federal court's appointment of a receiver over solid waste operations in Guam, and millions of dollars in fines, to finally get the process started.

The federal receiver, Gershman, Brickner & Bratton Inc., has the island's thanks for fixing and improving the government's solid waste program.

•It hit deadlines to get Ordot dump shut down and the new landfill constructed and ready to open on time.

•It reduced expenses for solid waste operations.

•It increased the number of registered trash customers significantly -- as well as trash fee collections -- while implementing a new trash cart-based collection system.

•It reduced the amount of waste going into the Ordot dump, and that which will go to the new landfill, by banning corrugated cardboard, yard waste and construction waste. This helped extend the useful life of the dump and will make the landfill last longer as well.

•It also has launched a pilot project for curbside recycling, which may eventually lead to islandwide residential recycling, which further extends the life of the landfill and helps make Guam more "green."

In short, the receiver has transformed the way the island deals with its waste.

We still have a long way to go. We must do more to prevent people from littering and dumping their trash illegally.

But we're off to a good start. Now it's up to all of us to ensure we keep moving forward in the right direction.

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