

Salem to turn trash into gas, then into cash

BY JOEL THURTELL

Free Press Staff Writer

Salem Township in northeast Washtenaw County is awaiting a \$15,000 advance on royalties it anticipates from sales of methane gas from its municipal landfill, and it hopes that is only the beginning.

Thanks to a 20-year contract signed Jan. 5 with GSF Energy Inc., an Illinois-based firm, Salem should collect between \$200,000 and \$300,000 a year in gas revenues starting early next year, said John Birkinbine, GSF's midwestern business development manager.

Income from gas sold to Consumers Power Co. through a GSF-owned processing plant eventually could equal revenues from the township's 1.2 mill property tax, said Salem Township Supervisor Richard Sackett.

Methane and carbon dioxide are produced as trash decays.

The firm is planning to pump an expected 2.5 million cubic feet of methane a day from 60 perforated pipes sunk into the 160-acre landfill's core. A small plant will filter water and carbon dioxide from the methane and pump the gas to a Consumers pipeline north of the landfill.