

MEDIA RELEASE

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WestRock and OCRRA Launch Project to Enhance Recycling, Energy Production and Local Jobs

Local 100% recycled paper mill byproducts to be diverted from landfills, recovering resources for recycling and energy



On March 22, 2017, OCRRA Board Chair John Copanas looks on as OCRRA Executive Director Dereth Glance signs an agreement with WestRock that will increase local jobs and recycling.

SYRACUSE, N.Y., March 23, 2017 – The Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) and WestRock Company (NYSE: WRK), a leading provider of differentiated paper and packaging solutions that operates a 100% recycled containerboard mill in Solvay, N.Y., announced a joint effort to convert the mill’s recycling byproducts into electricity and capture thousands of tons of metal for recycling. This collaboration will support local recycling jobs and energy production.

“We are excited to build on our long legacy of recycling by working with the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency to turn the Solvay Mill’s manufacturing residuals into electricity,” said Nina Butler, WestRock’s chief sustainability officer. “This project is perfectly aligned with WestRock’s sustainability goals to reduce the landfill disposals and increase recycling in the communities where we work.”

WestRock is one of the premier containerboard mills in the northeast, handling recycled material from the local region and beyond. The Solvay Mill recycles over 850,000 tons of old corrugated containers and other paperboard material each year.

“OCRRA is proud to collaborate with WestRock’s Solvay Mill to divert valuable resources from the landfill, to generate electricity and to recover 3,000 tons of metal that would otherwise be buried forever,” said John Copanas, OCRRA board chair. “Onondaga County residents are world-class recyclers; we are thrilled to support a local business in achieving its sustainability goals that align so well with OCRRA’s mission.”

Onondaga County residents and businesses recycle over 18,000 tons of cardboard each year. WestRock’s Solvay Mill receives cardboard from the county and other recycling programs in the region and turns it into new cardboard.

Byproducts of the cardboard recycling process include staples, packing tape, labels and baling wire, all of which are found in the paper material delivered to WestRock. Historically, WestRock’s byproducts have been sent to an out-of-county landfill. The OCRRA–WestRock project ensures that this material will be shredded at OCRRA’s Ley Creek Transfer Station. Its metal component, projected to be more than 3,000 tons a year, will be recovered and recycled.

In addition, the remaining byproducts will be transformed into electricity at OCRRA’s Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility in Jamesville, N.Y. This will generate 25 million kwh/year or enough to power an additional 3,800 homes.

Because of this collaborative effort, each year, hundreds of thousands of miles of diesel-fueled tractor trailer transport will be avoided.

“The OCRRA–WestRock project helps our community be more sustainable, while recovering thousands of tons of resources,” said Dereth Glance, OCRRA executive director. “It is a win-win for the local economy and the environment because it:

- Diverts 44,000 tons annually from an out-of-county landfill,
- Recycles 3,000 tons of metal a year,
- Generates 25 million kwh/year, enough power for 3,800 additional homes.”

The cardboard recycling byproducts, which would normally be disposed of as trash, fall within the parameters of OCRRA’s existing operating permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). OCRRA has one of the strictest WTE Facility air emissions permits in effect in the nation. With the addition of these cardboard recycling byproducts, the WTE Facility will continue to operate below its stringent permit limits.

Annually, OCRRA’s WTE Facility produces enough electricity to power 15% of our community’s households, some 30,000 homes, and 9,000 tons of metal are recovered from the waste stream at the Facility. With the addition of the WestRock material, it is expected that 25 million kilowatt hours of energy, or enough electricity to power roughly 3,800 additional homes will be generated and 3,000 additional tons of metal will be recovered and recycled each year.

About OCRRA: OCRRA is a not-for-profit public benefit corporation created by the New York State Legislature in 1990 to deliver a comprehensive solid waste management and resource recovery system to Onondaga County residents.

OCRRA's system includes: a strong recycling and composting program, a foundation for local waste disposal at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, two convenient trash and recycling drop off sites, a robust education component and programs for hard to manage materials, such as household hazardous waste, batteries, fluorescent bulbs and other mercury-containing devices.

OCRRA's award-winning programs are funded by trash drop-off fees and the sale of electricity generated at the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, NY. Learn more and get involved at www.OCRRA.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#).

About WestRock

WestRock (NYSE:WRK) partners with our customers to provide differentiated paper and packaging solutions that help them win in the marketplace. WestRock's 39,000 team members support customers around the world from more than 250 operating and business locations spanning North America, South America, Europe and Asia. Learn more at www.westrock.com.

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