



Winter 2014 Newsletter | Volume 22 | No. 4



POSTER CONTEST.....PG 4
Learn about this contest as well as a school grant opportunity.



HOME & GARDEN SHOW PG 5
Get a free blue bin, a compost sample and info from OCRRA at our booth (#4010).



BLUE RIBBON RECYCLING PG 5
Resolve to be a business recycling standout this year, apply online today.



WASTE-TO-ENERGY CONTRACT PG 7
Learn what benefits this contract extension brings to our community.



FACEBOOK PG 8
Learn how you can get a free blue bin from OCRRA year-round.

Electronic Waste Recycling Solutions

Ann Fordock, Recycling Specialist

A new element of New York's 2010 electronics law means old TVs can no longer be put out on the curb for disposal. As of January 1, 2015, a statewide ban went into effect that prohibits individuals and households from throwing electronic waste, including TVs, into the trash. While this may sound ominous, the law encourages people to recycle their electronic or e-waste, which is better for the environment.

What is e-waste?

- Televisions
- Computers
- Monitors
- Computer peripherals (key boards, mice, fax machines, scanners, printers, etc.)
- Small electronic equipment (tablets, VCRs, MP3 players, DVD players, digital converter boxes, cable or satellite receivers, video game consoles, etc.)
- Small scale servers
- Cables, cords and wires affixed or associated with the above referenced items

Where to RECYCLE it:

Battery World (Syracuse):
Accepts electronics and projection and flat screen TVs for free. They will also accept tube TVs or monitors for a fee. Call 437-1404 for details.

Best Buy (Various Locations):
Takes electronics, including all types of TVs and monitors that are 32 inches and smaller. Call 1-888-BESTBUY for details and restrictions.

Bruin Computer (Liverpool):
Accepts electronics, but no TVs. Call 410-0050 for details.

Environmental Products and Services of Vermont (Syracuse):
Accepts TVs that are physically broken for a fee. Call 451-6666 for details.

Salvation Army (Various Locations):
Takes TVs and electronics. Working and non-working TVs of all sizes are accepted. However, TVs and monitors cannot be physically broken in any way. Call 445-0520 prior to dropping off any electronic waste. Pick up services may be available. Call for details.

Please note, you must call in advance of dropping off at any of the locations above to confirm they will accept your e-waste.

As part of the law that went into effect January 1, manufacturers are required to take back what they sell. You may contact the manufacturer of your e-waste (or the manufacturer of your replacement electronic) for details on their collection program. Visit www.tinyurl.com/DECLIST-Manufacturers for manufacturer contact information.

Remember, **do not** put your old TV or other e-waste out to the curb, this will only create an eye-sore and endanger the environment.

If you have any questions, please call OCRRA at 453-2866.

Ann Fordock can be reached at afordock@ocrra.org.



Throwing televisions and other electronic waste out (or worse yet, on the roadside) is harmful to the environment and as of January 1, 2015 it is now illegal under NY State law. Recycling old e-waste is easy if you know what to do. Visit www.OCRRA.org for a list of local drop offs or to find manufacturer take back programs.



Save the world a little each day.



WHAT ABOUT CELL PHONES?

Under the New York State Wireless Recycling Act, effective January 1, 2007, all wireless telephone service providers that offer phones for sale will accept your cell phones for reuse or recycling. Cell phones contain many hazardous materials including mercury and lead, that if improperly disposed can harm the environment, and potentially become detrimental to humans and wildlife. Many organizations collect cell phones as donations for refurbishment and redistribution.

Please visit www.ocrra.org/show_detail/107.

SUNY Upstate University Hospital Heals the Earth

Hospital diverts over 150,000 pounds of food scraps from trash since program inception

Dave Nettle, Recycling Specialist

A recent Harris Poll study of healthcare professionals reported that 54% say their hospitals currently incorporate sustainability into purchasing decisions and 80% expect that to be the case within two years. According to the study, 64% of respondents said green initiatives are an important factor for patients when choosing a hospital. Healthcare professionals also believe green initiatives make good financial sense for hospitals, the survey said.

Several local hospitals, including Upstate University Hospital in Syracuse, are among our community's sustainability leaders.

By teaming up with its food service provider (Morrison Healthcare, a member of Compass Group) and OCRRA, SUNY Upstate University Hospital has diverted over 150,000 pounds of food scraps from the trash since 2011.

OCRRA worked with Upstate on general recycling and waste reduction programs in 2011. OCRRA then suggested partnering with their food service provider to collect food scraps for composting.

GOAL: Divert this heavy, wet material out of the trash and the waste water system (think garbage disposals).

OCRRA met with SUNY Upstate Director of Environmental Services Susan Campanaro; SUNY Upstate Operational Supervisor of Environmental Services Jason Rupert; and Morrison Healthcare Executive Chef Thomas Kiernan to discuss the potential project. These supportive personnel committed to reducing the hospital's environmental impact by implementing an ambitious food scrap recovery program. The main Morrison cafeteria kitchen, Tim Horton's and Espresso Oasis Coffee Bar became active contributors to the food diversion program. OCRRA provided employee training and supplied posters and decals to help employees maximize collection.

SUNY Upstate University Hospital continually strives to improve their sustainability program. Adding food scrap separation was a logical avenue for the hospital to pursue. It helped the hospital and the

food service vendor achieve their respective sustainability goals.

The environmental services department bids out and awards the food waste pick up services to a local waste and recycling hauler. This hauler then transports the pre-consumer food scraps to OCRRA's Amboy Compost Site in Camillus.

The setup in each kitchen or food preparation area is simple, with each employee receiving training. Collection buckets are within easy reach of each employee. The small buckets are dumped into a larger receptacle which is then brought to an even larger outdoor vessel provided by the hauler.

In 2013, the hospital diverted 104,000 pounds of food waste which helped them contribute to the SUNY Upstate President's climate action plan goals - without incurring any substantial cost increases. The future financial goal is to maximize cost-effectiveness as the volume of food waste increases.

Rupert enthusiastically supports the program stating, "I strongly recommend and encourage other in-



Morrison Healthcare food services employee Betty Stroman separates food scraps in a SUNY Upstate University Hospital kitchen. Food scraps are sent to the OCRRA Amboy Compost Site where they are processed into nutrient-rich compost that residents can purchase and use in their gardens and landscapes.

stitutions to engage with OCRRA as they are knowledgeable and can provide resources to ensure your program is a success."

Processing the hospital's material at OCRRA's Amboy Compost Site, where yard and food waste are transformed into a nutrient-rich soil amendment, closes the loop. (Residents

can purchase this material for use in their gardens and landscaping!)

The food waste brought to the Amboy Compost Site minimizes one of the hospital's waste streams and repurposes it into something that gives back to the environment!

Dave Nettle can be reached at dnette@ocrra.org.

Earth Day: Come Out and Clean Up the County!

OCRRA celebrates Earth Day 2015 on Friday, April 24 & Saturday, April 25



Groups large and small, young and old can make a difference cleaning up on Earth Day. The InterFaith Works of CNY Group, that collected litter along North McBride Street in Syracuse was one of hundreds of groups that participated in the 2014 Earth Day Litter Cleanup. Visit OCRRA.org and register your group for the 2015 event today!

Join Us and Celebrate...

earthday
april 24 & 25, 2015

Registration Deadline –
Friday, April 17, 2015

Visit OCRRA.org for details and to
register your cleanup group.



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brought to you by

OCRRA

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KRISTEN LAWTON
Public Information Officer

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The Garden GURU

Terry Ettinger
Instructional Support Specialist, SUNY - ESF

Now that many of us are hunkered down for the winter, we'll be spending a lot more time with our houseplants. And, as the season's bitter cold, cloudy skies and short days drag on, we'll increasingly worry about our houseplants' yellowing, drooping and dropping leaves. Not to mention annoying gnats, aphids, mealybugs and other tiny critters.

Regardless of the malady, the remedy always begins with the potting soil in which your plants are growing. It must anchor plants securely in their pots while also serving as a reservoir for water, nutrients and possibly surprisingly, oxygen, too.

For many years my potting soil recommendation has been to use a mix

containing 75 to 85 percent sphagnum peat moss - not sedge peat, not hypnum peat, not compost or composted forest products. The remaining 15 to 25 percent of the mix was to consist of perlite and/or vermiculite. Many common potting soils such as 'Pro-Mix' and others meet these specifications.

The high percentage of sphagnum peat moss along with the perlite and vermiculite insures that this mix will retain a lot of water and nutrients in a form that is readily available to plant roots. It also insures that the mix remains well-drained which is key to keeping roots supplied with oxygen. Also, because sphagnum peat moss decomposes relatively slowly, several years can pass be-

fore your plants need to be repotted.

While I stand by the above recommendation for your houseplants, it's possible my recommendation could change in a year or two depending upon the results of an informal experiment I'm conducting in the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry greenhouses!

The experiment involves repotting nearly two thousand tropical plants into a mix consisting of roughly 65% OCRRA food waste compost, 25% wood chips generated by the SUNY-ESF Woodsman team, and 10% perlite.

We started repotting plants into this mix in August and the results, so far, are encouraging. Nothing has died (certainly a step in the right direction), and most species are thriving!

One interesting observation is that this mix supports a great crop of mush-

Compost Instead of Potting Soil for Houseplants?



Terry Ettinger, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry greenhouse manager inspects the foliage of banana plants growing in a potting mix consisting primarily of OCRRA food waste compost. These plants are part of an experiment SUNY-ESF is doing on ideal potting soil mixes. Most species are thriving in the OCRRA mix!

rooms! According to one of our faculty, mycologist Dr. Tom Horton, they're in the genus *Coprinellus* (inky cap mushrooms). The inky caps, well-known for their efficiency in decomposing wood, don't harm the plants and were likely introduced to the mix as spores on the wood chips, not in the compost.

So, while I'm not ready to recommend food waste compost as part of potting soil mix for your houseplants just yet, make sure to check out the next edition of this newsletter for what I believe is a perfect use for this great material!

Terry Ettinger can be reached at tlettinger@esf.edu.



Recycling Rhoda

Talks Trash - and Recycling!

Believe it or not, in the Chinese calendar, 2015 is the Year of the GREEN sheep. Hey, would I lie to you? So, in the spirit of this emerald creature, I invite my readers to "follow me" (I know, baaaaaad figure of speech) by adopting some of my personal environmental resolutions for the New Year:

1) Recycle More Clothes and Textiles!

Hard to believe, but, on average, residents toss out about 70 pounds of clothing and textiles (and I'm not just talkin' clothes, think towels, linens, blankets and even shoes) each year. That adds up to over 20 mil-

lion pounds across Onondaga County alone. What are we thinking?!? Snap to it and clean out those closets and deliver these materials to a drop-off location in our community. Visit www.tinyurl.com/CNY-textiles to find a drop-off location near you (and I mean now)! Working together, we can prevent the trashing of this material and support recycling jobs to boot.

2) Never put TVs and Computer Monitors Out on the Curb for Disposal!

These items have cathode ray tubes (CRTs)

that contain LOTS of lead, a neurotoxin. As of January 1, 2015, these items are BANNED from the trash across New York State. They can't go in the trash. You have to recycle them.

Drop off these items, and other electronic equipment, for recycling at multiple locations across our community, including Best Buy and the Salvation Army. Visit www.tinyurl.com/Ewaste2015 for details. Learn more by heading to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's website, www.bit.ly/

NYewaste. The DEC's website also provides guidance for businesses on how to recycle electronics, regardless of the manufacturer.

Manufacturers that sell electronic equipment in New York State are required to accept their brand of equipment for recycling, as well as one piece of the same type of electronic waste of any manufacturer's brand.

3) Keep Mercury-Containing Items Out of the Trash!

Mercury is one of the most toxic items in our homes. It can be found

in old thermostats, thermometers and even in compact fluorescent light bulbs (you know, those curly style light bulbs). OCRRA provides several convenient, year-round drop-off options for these products. Visit OCRRA's searchable database at www.ocrra.org/how-do-i or call 453-2866 for details. One of those friendly OCRRA-type people will get you headed in the right direction.

Happy New Year, auld lang syne and what not,

Recycling
Rhoda

2014 State Recycling Leadership Award goes to one of OCRRA's Own

Greg Gelewski takes home the gold for local compost efforts



Greg Gelewski, OCRRA Recycling Operations Manager and 2014 NYSAR³ Leadership Award recipient.

The New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling (NYSAR³) honored OCRRA's Greg Gelewski with the 2014 Recycling Leadership Award for his efforts to advance organics recovery in New York State.

Gelewski, OCRRA's Recycling Operations Manager, spearheaded the construction and development of the state's largest municipal food composting operation. OCRRA's Amboy Compost Facility in Camillus currently processes 3 million pounds of commercial food scraps a year. The facility uses aerated static pile technology, which reduces material processing times by 60%!

Gelewski passionately promotes the industry and readily guides others who are eager to learn about composting and aerated static pile technology. He writes compost-related articles for professional publications, ensures that OCRRA's compost meets the U.S. Composting Council's "Seal of Testing Assurance" requirements, secured "Pride of New York" status for OCRRA's bagged compost and forged a unique partnership with ARC of Onondaga, enabling OCRRA to bag its compost so it could be sold at retail locations in our community.

Gelewski has grown both parts of the program: incoming food waste and outgoing compost/mulch. His leadership efforts have brought numerous public and private sector generators into the composting program, including Wegmans, Syracuse University and SUNY Upstate Medical University.

Gelewski makes it look easy, but his peers know hard work and extreme dedication made this project, and this award, possible.

Congrats, Greg!

Got a Green School? Get Some Extra Credit

Theresa Mandery, Recycling Specialist

Has your school implemented an exemplary recycling program that you would love to see recognized? Do you know a few students that are as artistically talented as they are recycling-minded? Then, please take note of the following opportunities to help your school gain some well-deserved acknowledgement, praise and perhaps even a little seed money.

New York Recycles Poster Contest:

This fun competition, sponsored by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, asks K-12 students to express their passion for recycling and commitment to waste reduction as a work of art – a colorful poster, that is. Twelve winners are selected from entries across the state to have their artwork featured in a wall calendar that is distributed throughout New York. Additionally, the schools with winning entries receive a recycled content tote bag filled with educational materials and videos. Encourage your creative students to put together posters illustrating recycling, composting, litter prevention or any other waste-related theme, and submit them by May 22, 2015. Check out the contest details and past winners at: www.dec.ny.gov/education/32506.html.

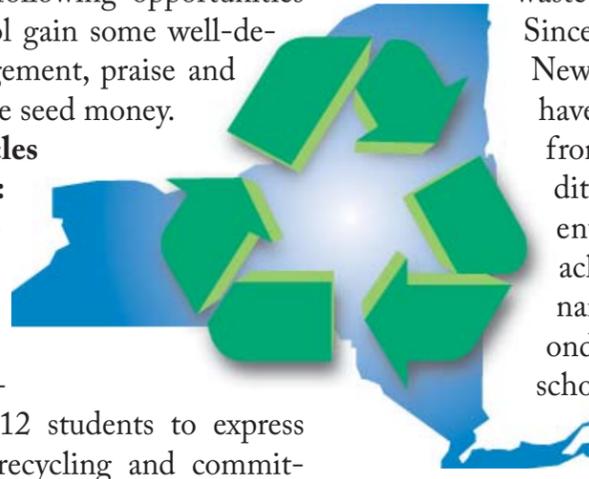
NYSAR³ Green Schools Grant: Do you have a new idea that could help elevate your school's recycling program? Apply for the Spring 2015 Green Schools Grant.

In 2005, the New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse & Recycling (NYSAR³) established this grant program for public and private schools (K-12) to provide start-up money for recycling and waste reduction programs. Since that time, over 70 New York State schools have benefited financially from the program, in addition to the countless environmental benefits achieved by these dynamic projects. All Onondaga County K-12 schools are eligible and could potentially be awarded \$500 per school to rejuvenate existing programs or to develop new ones that are centered around the three R's (reduce, reuse, recycle).

Visit www.nysar3.org/page/green-school-grant-program-16.html to learn more, including how to apply and details on previous winning projects.

If you want to celebrate your school's achievements or if you are looking for a fun project for your students, check out **OCRRA.org** for links to all sorts of resources and contests. Do not forget – OCRRA is here to help. If you need assistance setting up a school recycling program or need some ideas to help you receive recognition, contact us today!

Theresa Mandery can be reached at tmandery@ocrra.org.



Removing Mercury from the Waste Stream

OCRRA partnered with Covanta, the operator of the Waste-to-Energy Facility, on October 23, 2014 to host a mercury collection event. Thanks to resident participation, over 330 thermometers and 115 thermostats were collected! **That means approximately 790 grams of mercury were removed from the environment, which is comparable to recycling 197,750 compact fluorescent light bulbs.**

Residents can recycle mercury thermometers and thermostats year-round at OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site (and get a \$5 Home Depot Gift Card from Covanta and / or a replacement thermometer). Visit www.tinyurl.com/mercurydropoff for details.



OCRRA Public Information Officer Kristen Lawton (left) and Covanta Client-Waste Solutions Manager Kathleen Carroll (right) take stock of the hundreds of mercury thermometers and thermostats that were collected for recycling at the October 2014 event at OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site in Jamesville. For year-round recycling options visit www.tinyurl.com/mercurydropoff.

Get a Jump on Planning Your Spring Projects – Visit the Home and Garden Show March 19-22

Onondaga County residents can get a free blue bin and compost sample at the OCRRA booth

Greg Gelewski, Recycling Operations Manager

While it may seem like winter just arrived, pretty soon we will all be thinking about spring time! This means gardening and cleaning up all those things we neglected since last fall...

For some help with that, visit OCRRA at the Home and Garden Show (brought to you by the Home Builders and Remodelers of Central New York). Join us March 19 - 22 at the NYS Fairgrounds to learn more about OCRRA's community programs and scope out home-related items that are available from more than 400 vendors.

Booth #4010 in the Center of Progress Building will highlight OCRRA's state-of-the-art composting process which generates high-quality compost and mulch. Both of these products are *Pride of New York* certified, so you know you are buying

a locally made agricultural product for your garden or landscaping needs. You can get a sample of our U.S. Composting Council certified compost or buy it by the 40 lb. bag right at the show! (\$5 per bag or \$20 for five bags; cash or checks only).

The OCRRA booth will also offer information on our community's award-winning recycling program, our year-round household hazardous waste drop-off program and other waste reduction tips.

OCRRA is giving out free blue bins to residents that show proof of county residence and selling backyard compost bins for \$49 each. (Only cash or checks made out to "Plastics Solutions, Inc." will be accepted for the compost bins.)

The Home and Garden Show is a chance to talk to industry professionals and is your one-stop shop

Home and Garden Show 15

for help, repairs, remodels, designs, landscape maintenance, building a home and even recycling.* Learn more here: www.hbrcnyc.com/homegarden

Show Hours:

Thursday, 5:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Friday, 2:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, 10:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Interested in being an exhibitor at the show? Limited booth space is still available. Call 315-463-6261 for details.*

Greg Gelewski can be reached at ggelewski@ocrra.org.



Greg Gelewski, OCRRA recycling operations manager, explains the composting process to attendees of the 2014 Home and Garden Show at the NYS Fairgrounds. Stop by the 2015 show, March 19–22, to get a free compost sample, a new blue bin and tons of useful recycling and composting information. **OCRRA will be in the Center of Progress Building, Booth #4010.**

Start the New Year by Going GREEN and Becoming BLUE Ribbon Certified



OCRRA Business Recycling Certification shows customers your environmental side

Dave Nettle, Recycling Specialist

As a daily practice, does your business use recycled content copy paper, double side documents, recycle paper and bottles and cans? If so, you just might qualify for OCRRA's prestigious recycling certification! The Blue Ribbon Recycler certification recognizes businesses that go above and beyond the average business' recycling and waste reduction practices.

Last year, ACR Health made a resolution and applied to OCRRA's Blue Ribbon Recycler Program. ACR Health is a not-for-

profit, community-based organization providing a range of support services to individuals with chronic diseases in Syracuse. ACR Health's application and subsequent site inspection garnered them Blue Ribbon Recycler status.

In addition to recycling typical blue bin items, ACR Health started a "green team" to spearhead their efforts and help employees follow established recycling and waste reduction guidelines. They also began purchasing paper office products with recycl-

ed content and using certified green cleaning products. They banned the purchase of Styrofoam products and installed a water cooler to discourage disposable water bottle purchases. They also participate in Terracycle's recycling program, where they collect more than 14 categories of products, containers and packaging for recycling (from juice pouches to used toothbrushes). The majority of these items are not included in OCRRA's blue bin recycling program. As a bonus, ACR benefits with a small



OCRRA Recycling Specialist Dave Nettle (left) presents ACR Health employees Lisa Mulcahey and Ekrem Berbatovci with a Blue Ribbon Recycler Certificate. ACR Health is one of a select group of local businesses that achieved this sought after recognition. To apply for certification, visit www.tinyurl.com/BlueRibbonRecycler.

Continued on page 7

Onondaga County's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update

A planning tool for the next decade, as required by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Amy Miller, Agency Engineer

OCRRA and Onondaga County are in the process of updating our community's Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan. The previous plan was done in 1991 and has served the County well for more than 20 years, but it is time for an update. In fact, an update is required by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

The proposed plan update charts the course for the next decade. This includes evaluating the current programs, identifying new opportunities, projecting future changes, considering alternatives, assessing the County's comprehensive solid waste management system for consistency with the State's goals, identifying the best solid waste management system framework for Onondaga

County, describing the critical elements and programs, and laying out an implementation schedule for new priorities.

It is not enough to simply ensure that the waste generated in Onondaga County has a place to go; Onondaga County and OCRRA are committed to administering and implementing a top-performing, environmentally sound, cost-effective, financially sustainable, comprehensive system that is a model for other planning units. That, in a nutshell, is the purpose of this plan update.

Does the plan update commit OCRRA/Onondaga County to any specific course of action?

No, it is simply a planning tool. For example, the plan update discusses exploring a regional solid waste partnership with Cortland

County; however it does not commit OCRRA/Onondaga County to pursuing the partnership.

Where can I access the proposed update?

Visit www.ongov.net/environment/swmp.html to review the draft plan update.

I submitted a comment during the public comment period. What happens now?

All comments will be thoroughly reviewed and included in the final plan update. Responses to substantive comments will be provided in a responsiveness summary, which will also be incorporated into the final plan update. The draft plan update may be revised based on the comments received.

What are the next steps for finalizing the plan update? What is the schedule?

Once public comments are incorporated into the



final plan update, there are two subsequent steps: 1) NYSDEC must approve the plan update, and 2) the Onondaga County Legislature must pass a resolution adopting the plan update. The goal is to finalize the plan by late Spring 2015.

What if conditions change and the plan needs further updating?

Every two years, OCRRA and Onondaga County sub-

mit a "compliance report" to the NYSDEC. These reports are an opportunity to review the progress made toward implementing the goals discussed in the plan update, and revise these goals, as necessary, to meet current solid waste management needs.

Amy Miller can be reached at amiller@ocrra.org.



Household Hazardous Waste...

CONQUERED BY:



Lorraine Melita of Baldwinsville (and friend Frank O'Donnell)

Melita is OCRRA's Fall Household Hazardous Waste appointment raffle winner. Melita won a basketful of green cleaning products. Lorraine could not have done it without her friend Frank O'Donnell's help. Get rid of your household toxics, safely at OCRRA's year-round drop off; make an appointment at OCRRA.org and be entered for a chance to win, too!

The Fabric of Our Community

Residents help OCRRA launch successful textile recycling event

Andrew Radin, Director of Recycling and Waste Reduction

On America Recycles Day, Nov. 15, over 500 local residents joined OCRRA and dropped off over 31,000 pounds of clothing and textiles (six truckloads worth) at a collection event hosted by Destiny USA. All materials were donated to the Rescue Mission to help change lives in our community.

Did you know that residents can donate clothes and textiles all year long?

All dry clothes, even if they are ripped, stained, missing buttons or have broken zippers; all textiles including towels, blankets and sheets are eligible for recycling. For a list of drop off locations visit www.tinyurl.com/CNY-textiles.



Dewitt resident Chris Lamphier, left, is unloaded by volunteers Steve Middleton (middle) and Brad Siegel (right) during OCRRA's textile collection event on Saturday, November 15, 2014 at Destiny USA. An estimated 31,680 pounds of textiles (6 truckloads) were collected from over 500 participants. Donate textiles year-round, visit www.tinyurl.com/CNY-textiles for drop-off locations.

Textiles and clothing do not belong in the blue bin.

Andrew Radin can be reached at aradin@ocrra.org.



From the Executive Director's desk...

A Solid Waste Management Update

OCRRA, Covanta, waste-to-energy, trash, recycling... what's the deal?

Mark Donnelly, Executive Director

If you have been following the news regarding solid waste you may be aware that OCRRA recently extended the contract with Covanta, the operator of the Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility, to turn our trash into electricity. The 20-year extension enables our community to continue recovering energy and metal from non-recyclable trash that would otherwise be landfilled.

At OCRRA, we firmly believe that reduction, reuse and recycling come first. As a community, you do a TERRIFIC job with the 3Rs! Over the years Onondaga County has maintained at least a 60% recycling rate! That means 60% of our waste is recycled, instead of thrown out. This is head and shoulders above other communities in our state and many in the nation. But, what do you do with the things that can't be recycled or reused? Even after 20 years, we're

still left with two primary options – WTE and landfilling. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) prefer WTE over landfilling, as it has fewer environmental impacts.

By extending the agreement with Covanta, OCRRA maintains consistency with the USEPA and NYSDEC's preferred waste management practices. This is one of the many reasons that continuing the relationship with Covanta is in the best interest of our environment and those that live in our community.

Other reasons include:

- **Funding remains intact** for blue bin recycling, household hazardous waste disposal, mercury removal, transfer station operation, compost site operation, education and other critical

environmental services. (OCRRA is a public benefit corporation that is supported by our own revenues, not direct tax dollars.)

- The Onondaga County Legislature can prohibit or allow out-of-county waste to be processed at the WTE Facility, at their discretion. (If this contract extension was not agreed upon, the Facility would become privately operated by Covanta; under that scenario, Covanta could import trash from outside our borders without Legislative approval).
 - **OCRRA maintains oversight** of Facility operations, veto power over what specific types of waste can be processed there and continues to provide transparency to our community. We are very concerned with the environment, just like you!
- For the past 20 years, the state-of-the-art WTE Fa-



OCRRA recently extended a contract with Covanta, the operator of the Waste-to-Energy Facility (pictured here), to turn our community's trash into electricity for the next 20 years. This solidifies funding for OCRRA's green services and allows OCRRA to maintain oversight of the Facility.

cility has operated well within NYSDEC and USEPA permit limits (with emissions that are well below what is considered a risk to human health). As part of negotiations with Covanta, OCRRA pushed to acquire improvements to the Facility that will allow even more efficient environmental compliance.

WTE is a safe, effective way to turn trash into a valuable commodity, save

natural resources and provide long-term support of critical green programs in Onondaga County.

OCRRA is pleased to have reached an agreement with Covanta and looks forward to continuing our great environmental track record and operational history, the latter which was recognized by the Solid Waste Association of North America in 2011.

Mark Donnelly can be reached at mdonnelly@ocrra.org.

BLUE Ribbon Certified *Continued from page 5*

financial reimbursement for this effort. Since starting the Terracycle program in 2012, they have removed over 49,000 items from the waste stream!

Certified Blue Ribbon Recycler programs are very diverse. Each business has different initiatives in place, making their program unique.

OCRRA invites your workplace to join a growing number of businesses improving the local economy, protecting the environment and enhancing the quality of life in Onondaga

County. Make a green resolution this year and apply to become a Blue Ribbon Recycler.

As a Certified Blue Ribbon Recycler your business would receive:

- A **decals and certificate** to display at your workplace.
- A **certification letter** that highlights your specific recycling and waste reduction practices. The letter can be posted on your website or used when pursuing potential clients and customers.
- **Recognition** on OCRRA's website and / or in the OCRRA Newsletter (distributed quarterly to more than 100,000 local recipients).
- A **digital Blue Ribbon Recycler seal** for use on your company letterhead, website and e-mail signatures.
- An opportunity to schedule a **promotional event** at your workplace to recognize your recycling efforts and boost morale.
- Eligibility to win the **OCRRA Recycler of the Year Award**.

Becoming a Blue Ribbon Recycler is simple. Visit OCRRA.org and complete the online application that identifies specific measures taken to reduce, reuse and recycle waste materials. The application process is free.

Once this is complete, a visit from an OCRRA Recycling Specialist verifies that specified measures are in place at your business.

If all requirements are met, OCRRA issues your company a *Blue Ribbon Recycler Certification*, which is valid for two years. (After the two-year period,

businesses may apply for recertification.)

If all requirements are not met initially, an OCRRA Recycling Specialist will offer suggestions to help you achieve certification.

Go green, save money and help protect the environment – apply to become a 2015 Blue Ribbon Recycler!

Dave Nettle can be reached at dnette@ocrra.org.



Facebook Question of the Quarter



BLUE BINS



Crystal Thibault sent us a question that many people wonder about:

Q: Hello, how do I get a new recycling bin for my parents and myself?

A: In most cases you can pick up a bin (with proof of residence) at a location designated by your town or village. Some municipalities will deliver a bin to you. Check out OCRRA's website for a list of how each municipality distributes blue bins on behalf of OCRRA. www.tinyurl.com/bluebininfo

Follow OCRRA on Facebook and ask us all your recycling and disposal questions!

How Do I Get Rid Of...

NEW!

Check out OCRRA.org's improved searchable database. It is a quick and easy reference for waste reduction, recycling and disposal options. Just click on the green tab at the top of the page, enter your item in the search field and OCRRA will do the rest!

www.ocrra.org



cartoonstock.com

Green Up Onondaga County

Taking Orders Through March 9

For a better, greener tomorrow...

Plant a Tree!

Annual Tree & Shrub Sale

Bare-Root Stock - Featuring Non-Invasive and Native Species

- ✿ Conifers
- ✿ Deciduous Trees & Shrubs
- ✿ Conservation Pacs
- ✿ Bluebird & Bat Houses
- ✿ OCRRA's Premium Compost (40 lb. bags)



Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District
Call us for an order form at 315-457-0325 or visit our website www.ocswcd.org

Mark Your Calendar

Search our disposal database



ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

Year-Round at Various Local Businesses

See page 1 for details.

HOME & GARDEN SHOW

MARCH 19-22
NYS Fairgrounds
(OCRRA = Center of Progress Building #4010)
See page 5 for details.

earthday

april 24 & 25, 2015

Register at OCRRA.org by April 17.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF

Year-Round by Appointment
ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTS & SERVICES
6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Register at OCRRA.org.