



Fall 2013 Newsletter | Volume 21 | No. 3

Oxygen + Concrete + Commercial Food Scraps...

OCRRA's recipe for the Amboy Compost Site's success

Greg Gelewski, Recycling Operations Manager



TOXICS DROP-OFFPG 2
Free year-round disposal offered to residents.



BLUE RIBBON RECYCLER PG 3
ACR Health honored for their green practices.



MERCURY PG 3
Rhoda sounds off on proper mercury disposal practices.



WASTE-TO-ENERGY TEST RESULTS PG 4
Get the inside scoop on how well our local WTE Facility runs.



ASH-FOR-TRASH DEAL PG 7
The facts behind the proposed Cortland-Onondaga ash-for-trash swap.

By the time this newsletter hits the streets, OCRRA will have transformed more than just the facade of its Amboy Compost Site. The significant improvements that recently swept the site began in 2007 with the demolition and reconstruction of a handful of old storage buildings and the launch of a small food scrap composting pilot project.

Today, scores of local businesses send their food scraps to OCRRA for processing into compost. With 20-plus years of composting experience under their belt, OCRRA knew filling this niche in the community required thinking outside the box. With the groundbreaking expansion outlined below, OCRRA is crafting the future of composting in Onondaga County!

The innovative Amboy Compost Site now features:

- an improved customer service and drop-off area,
- a large receiving building for mixing incoming commercial food scraps and yard wastes,
- eight, 20' x 100' concrete aeration bunkers, which is where all the action takes place – these bunkers eliminate the need to manually mix materials, and instead use trenched floors and motors to pump air into the material to speed up the decomposition process,
- a large, paved, aerated curing pad,
- a water tank where liquid runoff from the composting process is captured and reused, and
- a massive one-acre storm-water retention pond.



Large-scale composting is the next wave in solid waste management. OCRRA is a statewide leader in advancing this technology thanks to local business participation and recent renovations to the Amboy Compost Site. Here a Adhan Piping employee installs a trench drain in front of the eight new compost bunkers. Water collected in this drain is piped into a collection tank and recycled back into the compost process during the curing phase.

This pioneering setup uses aerated static pile (ASP) technique, which allows for better oxygen and temperature control. It is far more efficient than traditional composting processes that use piles that must be mixed on a regular basis. The OCRRA ASP system is a faster process that yields very high-quality compost.

After an aeration period of 21-28 days, the composted materials from the bunkers are mixed into a larger pile so it can reach maturity. This curing process allows OCRRA to further blend materials and add moisture if needed, which reduces odors and increases compost maturity and stability. At this point, the compost is finely screened, stockpiled and is ready for distribution within 90 days of entering the Compost Site.

In addition to this process, OCRRA also has third party labs provide testing, whose results are submitted to the U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance

(USCC STA) Program for review.

Since applying to the program in 2010, OCRRA's materials have consistently exceeded stringent NYS DEC and US EPA requirements, such that they qualify as USCC STA material. Only one other compost facility in Central New York can boast this accomplishment.

This prestigious designation means **OCRRA's compost is always a high-quality material that is consistent from batch-to-batch**, ensuring that your plants get the best nutrient content possible. Additionally, OCRRA's composting process generates enough heat to make it **virtually weed, seed and pathogen-free!**

OCRRA's award-winning compost program and recipes have not changed; OCRRA simply implemented new technologies that allow for continued production of top-notch compost for our community. The benefits of compost are vast; mixing it with soil:

- **creates more fertile soil** by making it easier for soil to hold nutrients for slow-release to plants,
- **reduces the need for chemical fertilizers** and pesticides, due to an increase of available micronutrients and beneficial organisms which provide similar benefits to these other products,
- **assists in stormwater management** by filtering unwanted sediment and chemicals out of the soil, creating healthier plants and a cleaner water supply,
- **prevents erosion** as compost makes soil more porous. In turn, water percolates through instead of washing soil away during a rain storm.

Visit either the Amboy or the Jamesville Compost Site to see our operations, drop off yard waste or take away compost and mulch. Hours, directions and fees may be found at **OCRRA.org**.

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

The Inside Scoop on Toxic Household Waste Disposal

Where and how to properly dispose of these items for free (and possibly win a raffle in the process)

Ann Fordock, Recycling Specialist

National estimates indicate all homes have between three and eight gallons of hazardous material lurking around.

Improper handling of household hazardous wastes, including **automotive products, cleaning supplies, oil-based paints, fluorescent bulbs, garden supplies and pesticides*** can contaminate surface water, groundwater and air. In turn, this can harm wildlife, pets and humans.

You should not dispose of your household toxics down the drain, on the ground, down a storm drain or in your garbage can. Lucky for you, managing these items safely is easy with a little help from OCRRA. And, if you are **really lucky** you might even win a prize while you are at it!

OCRRA offers Onondaga County residents free year-round disposal for toxic household items (excludes residents of the Town and Village of Skaneateles).

Chances are, you have a bunch of hazardous products hiding out in your home. There is that oven cleaner under the kitchen sink, leftover bottle of paint thinner in the basement, and wasp spray out

in the garage. **Scour your basement, garage, kitchen and bathroom for any old, unusable or unnecessary products.** You may be surprised at how many hidden "toxic gems" you find.

So now that you have an idea of what qualifies as household hazardous waste (HHW), how do you get rid of it properly? Schedule an appointment using OCRRA's online HHW form at **OCRRA.org!** It only takes a few minutes to complete the form (providing you are prepared to list the type and estimated quantity of materials you are bringing to the drop-off point).

You can select the time and date that you want to drop off (**Monday-Friday 6:30 am - 6:00 pm**). Appointments must be scheduled at least 5 days in advance to allow for appointment processing, which includes OCRRA staff reviewing your drop off list and notifying you if any items are not accepted or are considered non-hazardous (potentially saving you a trip in!). After your information is reviewed, you will receive an email confirmation with directions to the drop off location and a form you must print and bring



Robert Biswanger of Liverpool arrives for his Household Hazardous Waste appointment with his materials properly packaged (containers tightly sealed and in a plastic-lined box). OCRRA and Environmental Products and Services of Vermont now provide residents safe and easy household hazardous waste disposal, Monday-Friday, year-round. Learn how to pack your materials safely and make your appointment at **OCRRA.org** today!

with you on the day of your appointment. If you don't have internet access, please contact OCRRA by calling 453-2866 to schedule a drop-off.

Please note that the location we will direct you to is not at an OCRRA site; it is Environmental Products and Services of Vermont (EPSoV), a company that specializes in proper disposal of hazardous materials. EPSoV has worked quietly behind the scenes at almost every HHW Event that OCRRA has offered over the past few decades. EPSoV will unload your vehicle and get you on your

way in short order.

While there is no fee to you as the resident, OCRRA underwrites the costs associated with this environmental program, which are based on the volume, weight, and types of materials dropped off. On average, it costs OCRRA \$50 per vehicle to ensure that your materials are safely managed.

Please note, there is a limit on how much material you can bring in; there is a maximum of 20 gallons of liquids and 30 pounds of solids per visit.

Bet you are still waiting to hear about the prize...

how about a basket of non-toxic cleaning products and supplies? Or a 2014 Season Pass to the OCRRA Compost Sites? Once you make your online appointment, you are entered into our quarterly raffle. So what are you waiting for? Search your home for toxics, estimate how many solids and liquids you have on hand and go to **OCRRA.org** to make your appointment today!

Visit **OCRRA.org for a more extensive list of household hazardous waste items.*

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



PAINT FACTOIDS:

- **Only oil-based paints are hazardous.** As a result, OCRRA does not collect water-based or latex paints because with a little special preparation, you can properly dispose of these paints with your regular trash. **Just dry latex paint out with kitty litter or paint hardening crystals.** Once it is dry, take the lid and the paint can and throw them separately into your trash.
- When your trash makes its way to the Waste-to-Energy Facility, where it is converted into electricity, **huge magnets will extract the metal paint cans and they will be recycled!**



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OCRRA

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KRISTEN LAWTON
Public Information Officer

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Recycling Rhoda

Let's Talk Trash...and Recycling too!

Dear Recycling Rhoda,

A mercury thermometer has long been a fixture in my medicine cabinet, but I think it's finally time to toss it. Just as I was about to throw it in the garbage, my husband started raving about the dangers of mercury poisoning. I decided to write to you for a verdict on thermometer disposal, mostly just to put an end to his crazed ranting.

Regards,
Exasperated in Elbridge

Dear Exasperated,

While I'll be the first to say husbands aren't always right about household matters, in this case, yours has the skinny on mercury. I know, you are crushed. This is the deal: a mercury thermometer (or a mercury thermostat, for that matter), should NEVER go in the trash or the blue bin.

The reason? Mercury released into your surroundings from a broken thermometer or thermostat is dangerous to human health and the environment. Mercury and its compounds can cause neurological problems and other ailments in people exposed to them. Thus, mercury thermometers and thermostats are going the way of the horse and buggy.

How can you tell if there's mercury in your thermometer? Mercury is a silver white to gray substance. If your thermometer is filled with a red liquid, your thermometer contains red dyed alcohol or mineral spirits and not mercury.

Here's how to get rid of a mercury thermometer or thermostat – to the benefit of your health, the

environment and your husband's ego:

- 1) **Bring it to OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site** located in Jamesville, Tuesday through Saturday from 7:00 am - 2:30 pm.

If you bring in a mercury thermometer, you will receive a mercury-free thermometer in the mail in exchange, courtesy of Covanta Energy, the company that runs the local Waste-to-Energy Facility where our trash is converted into electricity.

BONUS: Covanta Energy also provides a \$5 Home Depot gift card to residents who bring in a mercury thermom-

eter or thermostat! One gift card per resident drop-off, regardless of the number of items turned in. This is a complimentary gift Covanta provides to encourage the proper management of mercury-containing items.

- 2) Drop it off, year-round Monday-Friday, along with other household toxics, at **OCRRA's Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off**.

Don't just stop by the drop point though, or you'll be out of luck sister, you must make an appointment in advance online at **OCRRA.org**.

- 3) Visit **thermostatrecycle.org** to find local places

that will accept thermostats for recycling. By safely managing your mercury-containing products at the end of their useful life, you are helping keep our waste stream clean and toxic free.

So, put that thermometer where it belongs and remember that proper recycling will not only protect the environment, but might also remedy a lover's spat!

Namaste,

Recycling Rhoda



ACR Health employees Lisa Mulcahey and Ekrem Berbatovci show off a small percentage of the packaging that community members and employees drop-off at their local office for recycling. ACR Health sends drink pouches, candy wrappers, plastic wrap and other items to Terracycle for recycling. They receive a small reimbursement in return for their green efforts.

Go Green – Become Blue...

Just like ACR Health

(formerly AIDS Community Resources)

ACR Health's active green team spearheaded the Terracycle collection program (see photo caption), as well as initiatives that included purchasing recycled content bath tissue and toilet paper; eliminating Styrofoam products from the workplace; and adding certified green cleaning products to the custodial roster.

www.blueribbonrecycler.com

Apply online today...

Application fee waived through end of 2013!

Turning Trash into Energy

Annual Waste-to-Energy Facility Stack and Ash Testing Results

Amy Miller, Agency Engineer

While you read this article, the Onondaga County Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility is busy turning our County's non-recyclable trash into electricity – enough to power about 30,000 homes. Air pollution control equipment and continuous monitoring systems are in place to make sure it is done safely. Read on to discover what testing is done at the WTE Facility and learn what this year's WTE report card says.

Q: What is the purpose of annual air emissions stack testing?

A: Stack testing is an important tool that measures the amount of regulated pollutants being emitted from a facility. Stack testing consists of a series of sampling events, in which a probe is inserted into the stack to collect a representative sample of the gases released, over a defined amount of time. Sampling and laboratory analysis must be conducted in accordance with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) protocols. **NYSDEC oversees, and is generally onsite during stack testing at the Onondaga County WTE Facility.**

Q: Does the Facility conduct any other air emissions testing besides the annual stack testing?

A: Yes. The Facility has a continuous emission monitoring system (CEMS) that measures combustion efficiency, air pollution equipment performance and stack emissions. The CEMS monitors carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, oxygen, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides (NOx) as well as opacity and combustion temperatures.

Q: How do the 2013 stack test results look?

A: The results from the 2013 stack testing indicate that the Facility is operating acceptably and that the air pollution control devices are functioning properly. All but one of the tested constituents were considerably below the permit limit. For boiler Unit #1, one tested constituent had a result above the permit limit, as indicated by the "fail" for PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons).

Q: Can you explain the PAHs result in more detail?

A: The PAHs result for boiler Unit #1 was slightly above the permit limit; however the results for boiler Units #2 and #3 were below the permit limit. Historically, the WTE Facility has never had a PAHs result above the permit limit.

The Facility's continuous emission monitoring system, as well as the results for other simultaneously tested constituents, indicate the air pollution control equipment was functioning properly and that the boiler was combusting waste efficiently. As a result, it is unclear why Unit #1's PAHs levels were slightly above the permit limit. **To gain a better understanding, PAHs will now be tested annually rather than every five years as required by the Facility's air permit.**

Q: What causes PAHs emissions?

A: PAHs are a large family of structurally and chemically related compounds. PAHs emissions are generally the result of the incomplete and low-temperature combustion of organic material. Automobile exhaust, cigarette smoke and fireplaces emit PAHs. High temperature furnaces, like those at the WTE Facility, produce significantly fewer PAHs.

Having thoroughly reviewed the Facility's operational data, there are no indications of incomplete combustion. For example, carbon monoxide emissions are a strong indicator of incomplete combustion; the carbon monoxide results were consistent with normal Facility operations and, as such, they do not suggest any operational problems at all.

Q: Should I be concerned about the PAHs result?

A: No. While some individual PAHs are of great concern to human health, the levels reported for Unit #1 are less than 10% of the level determined to be acceptable in the Facility's Health Risk Assessment, which was part of the detailed permitting process required prior to building the WTE Facility.

Q: What is the basis for the PAHs permit limit?

A: The current permit limit for PAHs is not a health-based limit. It is based on very limited information available during the early 1990s from other out-of-state WTE facilities. The initial operating permit required that a Facility-specific permit limit be developed based on data collected over the first four years of the Facility's operation.

Once Facility-specific data was available, it indicated that the PAHs permit limit should be increased. However, there was a provision in the permit that did not allow an increase in the permit limit. As such, the limit was never revised, despite the fact that data indicated future testing would likely result in a permit exceedance.

In retrospect, it is evident that a higher Facility-specific permit limit should have been established. OCRRA is appropriately requesting that the current permit limit be revised to reflect Facility-specific data, but at a level well below the Health Risk Assessment level.



Onondaga County trash is sent to the local Waste-to-Energy Facility where it is burned at high temperatures and converted into electricity (enough to power 15% of the homes in our County). State-of-the-art pollution control equipment and annual testing continues to confirm that the Facility is operating acceptably and that the air pollution control devices are functioning properly.

2013 ANNUAL STACK TEST RESULTS

	Constituent	Average Measured Emissions ¹			Permit Limit ²	Pass/Fail? P/F	
		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3			
TESTED ANNUALLY	FEDERAL	Cadmium (mg/dscm @ 7% O ₂) ³	< 2.0E-04	< 1.8E-04	< 1.8E-04	3.5E-02	P
		Cadmium (lb/hr) ³	< 3.1E-05	< 2.9E-05	< 2.9E-05	1.9E-03	P
		Carbon Monoxide (lb/hr)	1.33E+00	1.08E+00	1.29E+00	8.04E+00	P
		Dioxins/Furans (ng/dscm @ 7% O ₂)	1.3E+00	2.2E+00	6.8E-01	3.0E+01	P
		Hydrogen Chloride (ppmdv @ 7% O ₂)	2.9E+00	3.7E+00	3.7E+00	2.5E+01	P
		Hydrogen Chloride (lb/hr)	6.73E-01	8.69E-01	9.23E-01	5.24E+00	P
		Hydrogen Chloride Removal Efficiency (%)	99.6	99.5	99.4	>=95	P
		Lead (mg/dscm @ 7% O ₂) ³	2.30E-03	2.63E-03	1.79E-03	4.00E-01	P
		Lead (lb/hr) ³	3.51E-04	4.10E-04	2.93E-04	3.81E-02	P
		Mercury (lb/hr)	5E-04	5E-04	3E-04	4E-03	P
		Nitrogen Oxides (lb/hr)	4.6E+01	5.0E+01	4.9E+01	5.8E+01	P
		Particulates (gr/dscf @ 7% O ₂)	< 2.2E-04	2.6E-04	3.0E-04	1.0E-02	P
		PM ₁₀ (gr/dscf @ 7% O ₂)	3.6E-04	2.5E-04	2.8E-04	1.0E-02	P
		PM ₁₀ (lb/hr)	1.23E-01	< 9.10E-02	1.04E-01	3.16E+00	P
		Sulfur Dioxide (lb/hr)	5.46E+00	3.99E+00	1.90E+00	1.62E+01	P
		STATE	Ammonia (ppmdv @ 7% O ₂)	2.5E+00	2.2E+00	1.3E+00	5.0E+01
Ammonia (lb/hr)	2.72E-01		2.43E-01	1.48E-01	4.88E+00	P	
Dioxins/Furans-2,3,7,8 TCDD TEQ (ng/dscm @ 7% O ₂)	2E-02		3E-02	1E-02	4E-01	P	
Dioxins/Furans-2,3,7,8 TCDD TEQ (lb/hr)	2.62E-09		5.42E-09	1.69E-09	1.29E-07	P	
Mercury (µg/dscm @ 7% O ₂)	3.0E+00		3.5E+00	1.9E+00	2.8E+01	P	
Mercury Removal Efficiency (%)	95	93	97	>=85	P		
TESTED EVERY 5 YEARS	FEDERAL	Arsenic (lb/hr)	< 2.8E-05	< 2.9E-05	< 2.9E-05	7.8E-04	P
		Beryllium (lb/hr)	< 7.02E-06	< 7.14E-06	< 7.26E-06	1.15E-05	P
		Hydrogen Fluoride ⁴ (lb/hr)	< 2.85E-02	< 2.86E-02	< 2.85E-02	1.65E-01	P
		VOCs - Total Hydrocarbons (ppmdv @ 7% O ₂)	1.3E+01	3.3E+00	3.8E+00	3.0E+01	P
		VOCs - Total Hydrocarbons (lb/hr)	1.34E+00	3.44E-01	4.02E-01	2.76E+00	P
		Chromium (lb/hr)	4.57E-04	3.11E-04	3.57E-04	1.93E-03	P
		Copper (lb/hr)	4E-04	4E-04	3E-04	4E-03	P
		Formaldehyde (µg/dscm @ 7% O ₂)	< 1.7E+01	< 1.7E+01	< 1.4E+01	5.0E+01	P
		Hexavalent Chromium - Cr ⁺⁶ (lb/hr)	3E-04	1E-04	2E-04	3E-04	P
		Manganese (lb/hr)	2.2E-04	2.6E-04	3.6E-04	2.3E-02	P
		Nickel (lb/hr)	6E-04	6E-04	5E-04	4E-03	P
		PAHs (µg/dscm @ 7% O ₂)	< 1.1E+00	< 2.7E-01	2.3E-01	1.0E+00	F
STATE	PCBs (µg/dscm @ 7% O ₂)	< 1.1E-02	< 2.4E-02	< 1.2E-02	5.3E-02	P	
	Vanadium (lb/hr)	< 3E-05	< 3E-05	< 3E-05	6E-04	P	
	Zinc (lb/hr)	4.97E-03	4.06E-03	3.88E-03	6.45E-02	P	

NOTES:

- ¹ Based on three test runs
- ² NYSDEC Title V Permit #7-3142-00028

Last Revised: 10/14/2013, AKM

UNITS:

- @ 7% O₂ = concentration corrected to 7% oxygen
- gr/dscf = grains per dry standard cubic foot
- ng = nanograms
- ppmdv = parts per million dry volume
- µg = micrograms
- lb/hr = pounds per hour
- mg = milligrams

Q: What are the permit limits for PAHs at other WTE facilities in New York?

A: The Onondaga County WTE Facility's permit limits tend to be far stricter than other facilities across the state, and the PAHs permit limit is no exception. There are ten WTE facilities in New York State. **Six of the ten facilities do not even have a permit limit for PAHs.** Two other facilities have a permit limit much higher than the Onondaga County WTE Facility's permit limit and one other facility has a fairly comparable permit limit.

Q: What is the purpose of the semi-annual ash testing and how do the 2013 results look?

A: A representative sample of combined bottom and fly ash is collected according to NYSDEC protocols. This sample is then analyzed by an independent laboratory for leachable metals, according to EPA's Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP). TCLP analysis simulates landfill conditions (the final disposal site for the ash) and determines whether the ash exhibits hazardous characteristics. **Over the life of the Facility (including the most recent 2013 results), TCLP analysis has always indicated that the ash is non-hazardous.**

Q: Who can I contact for more information?

A: For more detailed information on the test results please contact OCRRA's Agency Engineer, Amy Miller, at 315.295.0743 or amiller@ocrra.org.

For additional questions of OCRRA's Public Information Officer, contact Kristen Lawton at 315.295.0733 or klawton@ocrra.org.

2013 ASH RESIDUE CHARACTERIZATION TEST RESULTS			
Semi-Annual Test Results - June 2013			
Constituent	Test Result	Permit Limit	Pass or Fail
Cadmium	0.20 mg/L	1 mg/L	Pass
Lead	0.25 mg/L	5 mg/L	Pass
CONCLUSION			
Ash residue does NOT exhibit a hazardous characteristic. As such, it should continue to be managed as a non-hazardous solid waste.			

There's Big Business in Becoming a Blue Ribbon Recycler

Dave Nettle, Recycling Specialist

Want to be part of an elite group that prides itself on preserving natural resources and making good business sense at the same time? It is easy to do and can have a positive impact on your customers, employees and your bottom line.

In 2009, OCRRA established a business recognition program called the Blue Ribbon Recycler Program. It honors local companies that prove their commitment to the environment on a daily basis through recycling and waste reduction practices.

The American Heart Association is one of more than 60 companies that achieved this distinction. Bryan Schmitt, American Heart Association Administrative Associate notes, **"The Blue Ribbon Recycler Program has truly been a cost savings for our**

organization. We made the switch from standard copy paper to 30% recycled copy paper. We requested and were approved to have a duplex feature put on both of our new color copiers. As a result, we cut down on our paper costs, electricity and

"It honors local companies that prove their commitment to the environment on a daily basis..."

supplies and we understand that we are making a difference each day in the world we live in.

We value and truly appreciate the work that OCRRA does and we are honored to be named an OCRRA Blue Ribbon Recycler. I hope our story is seen by other organizations, schools and companies in

Central New York and they take the step forward in becoming a Blue Ribbon Recycler."

There are some great benefits to achieving Blue Ribbon Recycler status. OCRRA lists all businesses that have met our standards for the recycling certification on our website and in our quarterly newsletter, which reaches over 100,000 local residents. What better way to get your name out amongst potential customers who are looking for an eco-conscious business partner?

OCRRA also provides each business with a Blue Ribbon Recycler decal and a digital graphic that can be added to your website or letterhead. These are both great marketing tools that will help you promote your accomplishment.

So why are you waiting



Bryan Schmitt, administrative associate with the American Heart Association, one of OCRRA's Blue Ribbon Recyclers, says using recycled content copy paper and duplexing all print jobs helps them save money. Purchasing recycled paper and double-sided copies are easy ways businesses can help preserve forests and their bottom line. Tell us what you do to be green and apply to be a Blue Ribbon Recycler today at OCRRA.org.

to show off your true recycling colors? Join over 60 local businesses that have excelled in recycling and waste reduction by apply-

ing to become Onondaga County's next recycling achiever at OCRRA.org. Dave Nettle can be reached at dnette@ocrra.org.

Beneath the Surface: Cooking Fats, Oils and Grease (FOG)

Little considered wastes that cause big problems downstream

Tim O'Dell, Sanitary Engineer, Onondaga County Water Environment Protection

People generally think of waste as the stuff they throw in the garbage, like dirty tissues or non-recyclable packaging, but what about cooking fat, oil or grease? Most people do not know the best way to properly dispose of these items, referred to as FOG for short.

Approximately 30% of all the food we eat con-

tains FOG; this includes meats, sauces, gravies, salad dressings, deep fried items, cookies, pastries, cheese, butter and more.

Technically, FOG is any thick material, including grease, that has the potential to clog sewer pipes and cause raw sewage backups into households, businesses, streets, parking lots and even bodies of water.

These overflows are a potential threat to your health and the environment, not to mention they are gross and costly. A single home cleanup can range from hundreds to thousands of dollars. Blockages caused by grease, even downstream of your home's plumbing, cost you, the taxpayer, via sewer user fees.

Because the food indus-

try utilizes grease traps on a wide-scale, households contribute the largest amount of FOG to the sewer system. In fact, FOG is the #1 cause of sewer backups in homes!

FOG is most commonly found in the kitchen, which is why it is often, wrongly, poured down the drain. FOG should never be poured down the drain or flushed down the toilet.



Fats, oils and grease (FOG) from cooking clogs pipes (like the one above, right) and can inflict costly damage to property as well as the environment. Prevent sewer backups by throwing FOG in the trash instead of down the drain. Or, recycle it for free at the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant on Hiawatha Boulevard in Syracuse.

FOG DISPOSAL TIPS

- **Wipe greasy dishes, pots and pans with a paper towel before washing.** Throw the towels in the trash.
- **Pour used cooking grease or fryer oil into a container.** Once the container is full (and cool) seal it and throw it in the trash – then OCRRA will convert it to electricity!
- **Recycle it** – seven days a week between 9 am and 5 pm – at the Metropolitan Syracuse Wastewa-

ter Treatment Plant (650 Hiawatha Boulevard West in Syracuse). No appointment is required. Just head to the Waste Hauler Control Office and a friendly staff member will assist you. *(Use main entrance and take your first right; the Waste Hauler Control Office will be on your left.)*

- **Skip the garbage disposal.** Disposals do not dissolve FOG, so clogged pipes still occur. Recycle or trash your FOG.



From the Executive Director's desk...

Collaboration Breeds Success

Mark Donnelly, Executive Director

Inter-municipal agreements (IMAs) are the wave of the future. When municipalities combine resources, services and technology, they maximize benefits for all involved. Cortland and Onondaga counties are working on a proposal that will provide more efficient waste disposal services while saving money and reducing the total environmental impact.

Currently, Onondaga and Cortland counties are developing an IMA proposal that will be presented to our respective Boards of Directors and Legislatures. Officials from these groups will examine the facts, ask questions, **listen to their constituents and then decide what is best for their county.**

As the Executive Director of OCRRA, an agency whose environmental track record is second to none, I see this IMA as an environmental and financial boon for both counties. I encourage you to analyze the

facts for yourself. Reach out to OCRRA or Cortland County for answers to your questions. Let knowledge guide your decision on this partnership, then let your county legislator know your thoughts. **Without community support, this innovative collaboration will not take place.**

FACTS:

Cortland County operates a landfill. Onondaga County has a Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility where our community's trash is converted to electricity – enough to power 30,000 homes a year!

Both operations are in need of an economic infusion. An ash-for-trash IMA could provide financial salvation to both counties AND improve adherence to the NYS DEC and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's preferred waste management hierarchy, which promotes WTE over landfilling. Furthermore, in the absence of an

IMA, Cortland's landfill technology may soon require an additional investment in landfill gas collection infrastructure.

With approval from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, this IMA would allow Cortland County to convert their landfill from one that accepts trash to one that only accepts inert ash, like the non-hazardous ash produced at the Onondaga County WTE Facility. This would eliminate landfill gas emissions (specifically methane – a potent greenhouse gas), a clear environmental advantage!

This arrangement would also increase OCRRA's electricity and metal revenues from the WTE Facility, while increasing the Facility's operating efficiency.

DETAILS:

Each year, starting after May 2015, Cortland could send 25,000 tons of trash to Onondaga County for processing at the WTE Facility.

Waste Management Hierarchy



The proposed ash-for-trash agreement would bring Cortland and Onondaga Counties in better adherence to the US EPA approved waste management hierarchy, which prioritizes the processing of trash through waste-to-energy over landfilling.

ity. In exchange, OCRRA would send ash to the Cortland County Landfill. The very same trucks that bring ash to Cortland County would return to Onondaga County with trash.

Currently, OCRRA sends ash to High Acres Landfill outside Rochester. Sending it instead to Cortland County would cut OCRRA's transportation distance in half, which would **reduce fuel consumption and associated air emissions**, decrease truck maintenance

costs and eliminate Thruway tolls. This single component of the Cortland arrangement would **save over 2 million pounds of greenhouse gases a year!**

This exchange would also take advantage of the return trip from Cortland. Currently, OCRRA trucks return from Rochester empty. At present, the WTE Facility is operated at about 90% of capacity. Cortland County's trash would bring utilization to about 97%, and increase boiler efficiency as an added benefit. Emissions from the WTE

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The proposed Cortland-Onondaga County inter-municipal agreement would improve trash management operations for both counties through an exchange of Cortland County trash for Onondaga County WTE Facility ash. Environmental and financial benefits for both counties would accompany this partnership.

Ash-for-Trash

Get the facts about the proposed Cortland-Onondaga County inter-municipal agreement at **OCRRA.org**.
Form your opinion and make your voice heard.

CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR TODAY AT:
tinyurl.com/ContactYourLeg

This consolidation cannot move forward without their approval.

Collaboration Breeds Success continued from page 7

Facility would still need to meet the Facility's strict permit requirements.

Paramount to WTE Facility operations is ensuring that the Facility's emissions are protective of human health and the environment. **A state-of-the-art air pollution control system is integrated into the Facility** so that it may comply with one of the strictest air permits in the nation. Emissions from the Facility are carefully monitored through a Continuous Emissions Monitoring System (CEMS) and annual stack testing.

Each year, OCRRA posts detailed WTE Reports, as well as all of the annual air and ash testing results (tinyurl.com/wteinfo). OCRRA and Covanta Energy, the operator of the WTE Facility, take great

pride in the Facility's strong operational and environmental track record.

FINANCES:

OCRRA is not funded by taxes. Our operational revenues allow us to provide our community top-notch environmental services (blue bins, household hazardous waste drop-offs, recycling education, and recycling supplies for businesses, just to name a few.) The fees residents and haulers pay to drop-off trash at our sites (tip fees) largely fund OCRRA's green programs.

Right now, the WTE Facility is under utilized, as there is not enough trash to operate it at maximum efficiency. Here are three main reasons why:

1) The economy. When there is less to spend,

there is less trash to throw out. Since the economic crash in late 2008, trash volumes have decreased by 10%. (tinyurl.com/wtereports)

2) Packaging reductions. As manufacturers work to save money, they are reducing packaging and not just recyclable packaging, but the kind that goes in the trash. Less packaging means less trash.

3) YOU! Onondaga County residents lead the pack with a 60% recycling rate. While this is a terrific accomplishment, more recycling means less trash. This means less tip fee revenue and less energy production at the WTE Facility, **which means less funding for green programs.** What a dichotomy!

As OCRRA sees reductions in areas we cannot control, such as trash tonnage and electricity revenues, it is important to **find ways to cut costs or find new revenue sources, so that we continue to provide our community with award-winning environmental programs.** This IMA will provide cost savings to OCRRA.

From Cortland County's perspective, OCRRA's ash exceeding 25,000 tons would be disposed of at a negotiated rate, providing a significant amount of additional revenue and making Cortland County's land

fill operations financially sustainable.

CALL TO ACTION:

Additional details about the proposed IMA are available at tinyurl.com/ash4trash. Please take the time to review the frequently asked questions and contact us with inquiries.

Once you formulate an educated opinion, share it with your county legislator so your voice can be heard. For a list of local legislators and their contact information, visit www.ongov.net/legislature.

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

Deep frying your turkey this Thanksgiving?
Be sure to recycle your fryer grease (see page 6 for details).

Facebook Question of the Quarter...

PAPER BAGS

Q: The paper bags with the handles from department stores like Macy's, Lord & Taylor – can these be used for recycled mail before placing in our blue bin? If yes, do I need to rip out the handles and discard handles with the regular trash?

A: Those paper bags from department stores can certainly be used for gathering your junk mail; great idea! And, no, the handles (even the twine-y ones) do NOT have to be removed before recycling in the blue bin.

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



Mark Your Calendar

Search our disposal database

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF

Year-round by appointment at Environmental Products and Services. Mon.-Fri., 6:00 am – 6:30 pm Register at OCRRA.org.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

Year-round at various local businesses. **FREE** Visit OCRRA.org for details.

MERCURY THERMOMETER DISPOSAL

Year-round Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site Tue. – Sat., 7:00 am – 2:30 pm. (Get a \$5 Home Depot gift card for drop-off too!)