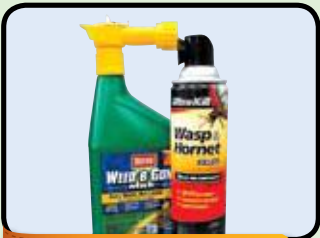




## MASTRI AWARD ..... PG 2

Corcoran High School receives 2019 recycling excellence award.



## TOXICS ..... PG 3

Make an online appointment and get rid of household toxic waste for free!



## WASTE-TO-ENERGY.. PG 4

Local facility again scores well on annual report card.



## COMPOST AVAILABILITY..... PG 6

Find out what is in and out of stock at OCRRA's Compost Sites.



## BLUE RIBBON RECYCLER ..... PG 8

SWBR Architects receives stellar business recycler certification from OCRRA.

# What's Really Supposed to Go in Your Recycling Bin?

Kristen Lawton, Public Information Officer

It has happened to us all. You have an item to get rid of, maybe it is a plastic cup, an egg carton, a Lean Cuisine box from the freezer section or a shampoo bottle and you are just not sure where to put it. Is it trash? Or, maybe recycling? Just to be on the safe side, you throw it in the recycling; after all, if it is not recyclable, surely it can be sorted out at the recycling facility, right?

No, it can't.

This act is referred to as "wish-cycling." Wish-cycling is a well-intentioned act that has negative consequences.

With recycling markets in a sustained depression, it is more costly than ever to recycle. The markets are flooded with material.

Only the cleanest of recyclables are sought after by manufacturers looking to turn them into new products. Clean recyclables are recyclables with little or no wish-cycling items mixed in.

So, what can Onondaga County residents do to help sustain recycling in our community? Make sure

to only recycle the items on the list featured below:

- Plastic bottles, jugs, jars and wide-mouth dairy tubs (rinsed);
- cardboard, dry good boxes (e.g., cereal or tissue), newspapers, magazines, and office papers;
- milk and juice cartons;
- metal cans and glass jars.

Please keep other items, especially plastic bags and plastic wraps, OUT of the recycling bin. Plastic bags and wraps are the largest contaminant in Onondaga County recycling. **Plastic bags should never go in the blue bin, not loose and not filled with recyclables.** Any recyclables that are put in the bin in a plastic bag end up as trash. They do not get recycled.

Feel free to put your recycling in a plastic bag to transport it to your bin, but empty the items into your bin before leaving it at the curb, otherwise, your recycling efforts are in vain!

Plastic bags can be recycled at big box retailers, grocery stores and chain pharmacies, they simply

have to be clean, dry and devoid of labels (cut or peel them off).

Wish-cycling, or putting items in the recycle bin that do not actually have a market and cannot be sold and turned into new items, only hurts our community's recycling program.

More wish-cycling means more contamination of our recycling stream. There is a high probability that bales of recyclables that are contaminated will be rejected by manufacturers and end up as trash. So, by wish-cycling, the very thing you hoped would get recycled is the thing that causes tons of other good recyclables to be thrown out instead of recycled.

To combat wish-cycling, refamiliarize yourself with the recycling rules; cut out the ones below or download them from **OCRRA.org**. Share them with your friends and family.

Have a question? Search our website, ask us on Facebook, email us at **info@OCRRA.org** or call us and we will help you out. If you don't have time for that, when

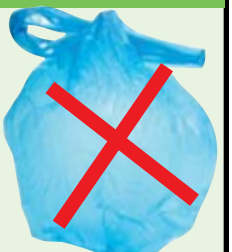
in doubt, throw it out. It sounds counterintuitive, but it will reduce contamination and help sustain our community's award-winning recycling program.

Thank you for helping to save the world a little each day!

Kristen Lawton can be reached at [klawton@ocrra.org](mailto:klawton@ocrra.org).

## BLUE BIN NO-NO

### Plastic Bags & Wraps



Stretchy plastic bags and over wraps (found on cases of water bottles or bulk paper towels, for instance) should NEVER go in the blue bin. They can be recycled at large groceries, big box retailers and chain pharmacies. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/plasticbags-wraps](http://www.tinyurl.com/plasticbags-wraps) to find a nearby drop off location. See page 8 for more details.



## Curbside Recycling



Newspapers, magazines, catalogs and softcover books  
Keep loose. Don't tie.



Cardboard, pizza, pasta, cereal boxes, etc.  
Flatten.



Papers, mail, envelopes



Milk and juice cartons  
Empty and rinse.



Plastic bottles and jugs  
Empty and replace cap.



Cans and jars  
Empty and rinse. Labels are ok.



Plastic dairy tubs  
Empty and rinse; no lids.

# UPDATE: Rock Cut Road Transfer Station Remains Closed for Upgrades

Cristina Albunio, Agency Engineer

OCRRA broke ground at the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station in Jamesville this past spring to modernize it, so that it complies with the NYS-DEC’s recently revised Solid Waste Management Facility Requirements. OCRRA is working closely with four prime contractors: Murnane Building Contractors (gen-

eral contractor); O’Connell Electric Company (electric contractor); King & King Mechanical (HVAC contractor); and Burns Bros Contractors (plumbing and fire suppression contractor). GHD is providing engineering oversight during construction. The modifications to the Facility include construction of two new build-

ings and an addition to one existing building. An electric shredder and automated scales will be used at the remodeled site to better serve customers. Construction is anticipated to be finished in 2020; OCRRA will begin phasing in operations thereafter. Cristina Albunio can be reached at [calbunio@ocrra.org](mailto:calbunio@ocrra.org).



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Jamesville, 2019.

# Corcoran High School is 2019 Winner of Vonnell Masti Recycling Excellence Award

*School’s stellar recycling aptitude is an example to all schools*

Theresa Evans, Recycling Specialist

Congratulations to Corcoran High School in Syracuse, the 2019 winner of OCRRA’s Mastri Recycling Excellence Award. This annual award is given to a school within the City of Syracuse, in honor of Dr. Vonnell Mastri, a former educator at Onondaga Community College and City of Syracuse appointee to the OCRRA Board of Directors at the time of her death.

The passionate leadership of Corcoran Science Teacher Brian Pudney and Head Custodian Kent Gingold inspire building-wide recycling success. What makes Corcoran’s recycling program special is how actively involved and engaged the students are in the entire process. Students in Environmental Science classes learned about recycling and created hall posters to encourage their peers to join the school’s recycling efforts. Student members of the Environmental Science Club, distributed extra recycling bins and boxes to classrooms in need. Additionally, students in the Discipline, School Culture and Climate Committee, walked through the school’s surrounding neighborhood on Earth Day to collect lit-



Photo Credit: Corcoran High School, Syracuse, 2019.

Posters created by Environmental Science students at Corcoran High School in Syracuse encourage their peers to recycle at school. This is just one aspect of Corcoran’s fantastic recycling efforts, which garnered them recognition as OCRRA’s 2019 Mastri Recycling Excellence Award Winner.

ter and recyclables, to help the planet and beautify the Syracuse community. Art classes also did multiple projects where students created a mixed media image using found objects. “This allowed students to be creative and think about the amount of waste they produce, as well as think of new ways to reuse our trash,” said Pudney. The faculty and staff are also enthusiastic participants in Corcoran’s waste reduction and recycling programs. “Recycling is part of our culture, and it is valued by the staff and the students,” said Pudney. “Here at Corcoran we pride ourselves on

empowering our students in a way that makes them culturally responsive, and take pride in and ownership of their actions.” The plentiful recycling efforts of the administration, teachers, custodial staff and the students themselves make for a great team at Corcoran High School. OCRRA applauds them all. Other schools in the City of Syracuse that would like recognition for their recycling efforts, or that would like recommendations for improvement to get their program to Mastri-level recycling excellence, should contact OCRRA today. Theresa Evans can be reached at [tevans@ocrra.org](mailto:tevans@ocrra.org).

## Shred-o-Rama



**88,000 POUNDS SHREDDED & RECYCLED!**

Photo Credit: Erica Hasenjager Photography, 2019.

More than 2,400 cars lined up for the 2019 Shred-o-Rama at the NYS Fairgrounds on Saturday, July 13. Thanks to Confidata, ProShred and SimpleShred who volunteered their mobile shredding services. And, thanks to event sponsor Assemblyman William Magnarelli’s office and the young men and women from On Point For College who unloaded over 88,000 pounds of confidential documents for shredding, giving them one more life to live in the form of paper towels, napkins and toilet paper. \$6,500+ in voluntary donations were collected for the Muscular Dystrophy Association by the National Association of Letter Carriers. This was the 15<sup>th</sup> year that OCRRA held the event, and it represented the largest volume of paper shredded so far. To find out when OCRRA’s next shredding event will take place, join our email list at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org).

## BLUE BIN NO-NO



**Frozen Food Boxes:**  
They have a coating that keeps your food fresh, which cannot be recycled.  
**All frozen food boxes go in the trash.**

# Get Rid of Your Household Hazardous Waste Safely and at No Cost

Chanel Quail, Recycling Specialist

As summer turns to fall, many take advantage of the weather and clean out their garage, shed or basement.

Once complete, there are often toxic materials that need proper disposal, such as pesticides, pool chemicals, oil-based paints, turpentine, and any product whose label has descriptions such as toxic, flammable, poisonous or corrosive.

These household toxics should never be dumped down the drain, in the backyard, nor thrown in the trash or recycling bin.

Instead, take advantage of OCRRA's free, year-round drop off program for common household toxics.

This drop off program is free to Onondaga County residents in OCRRA's service area, and it is easy!

Visit **OCRRA.org** and search "household toxics" to make an appointment or call OCRRA at (315) 453-2866. Appointments are available Monday-Friday between 6:30 am and 6:00 pm, year-round excluding major holidays.

After making an appointment a confirmation message is sent that includes instructions on how to package your items and where to bring them (Environmental Products and Services – off Hiawatha Boulevard, near the 690 west on ramp).

While the drop off is free to residents, OCRRA underwrites the cost of disposal, so please maximize your appointment and bring in as much as you can per appointment.

Don't have much to drop

off? While there is a limit of 20 gallons of liquids and 30 pounds of solids, please feel free to ask friends, family or elderly neighbors if they have anything to dispose of and bring their items in under your appointment.

Want more details on what qualifies as a household toxic? Visit **www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAtoxics** to see a list.

Removing these dangerous products from the waste stream and the environment protects humans and wildlife.

Make an appointment today and help save the world a little each day®.

Chanel Quail can be reached at [cquail@ocrra.org](mailto:cquail@ocrra.org).

**Save the world  
a little each day.**



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Syracuse, 2019.

Environmental Products and Services team member Jimmy Puglia removes household toxics from a resident's vehicle at a recent drop off. Let OCRRA safely manage your household hazardous waste by making an appointment online at **www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAtoxics**. The free program runs Mon.-Fri., from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm, all year long.



## Recycling Rhoda

Talks Trash – and Recycling!

### Safe Sharps Disposal

Dear Recycling Rhoda,  
I'm newly diabetic and just started using insulin shots. What the heck am I supposed to do with the old needles after I'm done using them? Can I put needles in the trash? In the blue bin? Thanks for helping me get rid of my medical sharps...

- Nettled by Needles  
in Nedrow

Dear Nettled,  
When you are done stabilizing your sugar, simply take your used needles to one of the many, many, MANY health centers, hospitals and police stations in Onondaga County that accept used sharps

via a drop-off program. Rhoda can't even remember them all, there are so many to choose from!

Just hop on the internet and visit **www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAsharps** to find the closest take-back location to your home.

If dropping your sharps off seems like TOO MUCH WORK, then there is another option: you can also put them in a clean, heavy plastic bleach or laundry detergent bottle with a screw-on cap.

Make sure that the bottle you use is leak-proof, that you label it as "SHARPS," in large, noticeable writing,

and that the cap on top of the bottle is screwed back on and taped shut. Then, and only then, put the entire bottle in the trash. It's like arts and crafts, but for garbage.

Used sharps should never, and I mean NEVER, go in the blue bin. That could lead to your hauler's staff or employees at the recycling facility getting injured or sick. Please, let's avoid this.

Prevent this hazard by making sure your sharps containers are labeled, sealed shut and that they go in the TRASH, and only the trash. From there, they will be combusted

and turned into electricity, along with the other trash collected in our community, at the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville.

The electricity generated from the combustion of trash is enough to power 30,000+ houses in Onondaga County each and every year!

Thus, it turns out that using, and then properly disposing of medical sharps helps foster good health not only for yourself, but for the environment too.

Recycling  
Rhoda

## Electronics



Photo Credit: iStock.com, 2019.

Recycle old electronics (TVs, computers, monitors, keyboards, printers, digital music players, DVD players, video game consoles, etc.). Visit **www.tinyurl.com/electronics2019** for a list of drop off locations. Most electronics can be recycled at no cost, however, TVs have a charge at all locations except the Salvation Army. Some restrictions apply. Call before dropping off.

Thank you!

# Waste-to-Energy Facility Safely Transforms Trash into Enough Electricity to Power 15% of Onondaga County Homes Each Year

Again, local facility scores extremely well on annual, third-party stack and ash tests

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 more than 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, where 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 is 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 WTE Facility.**

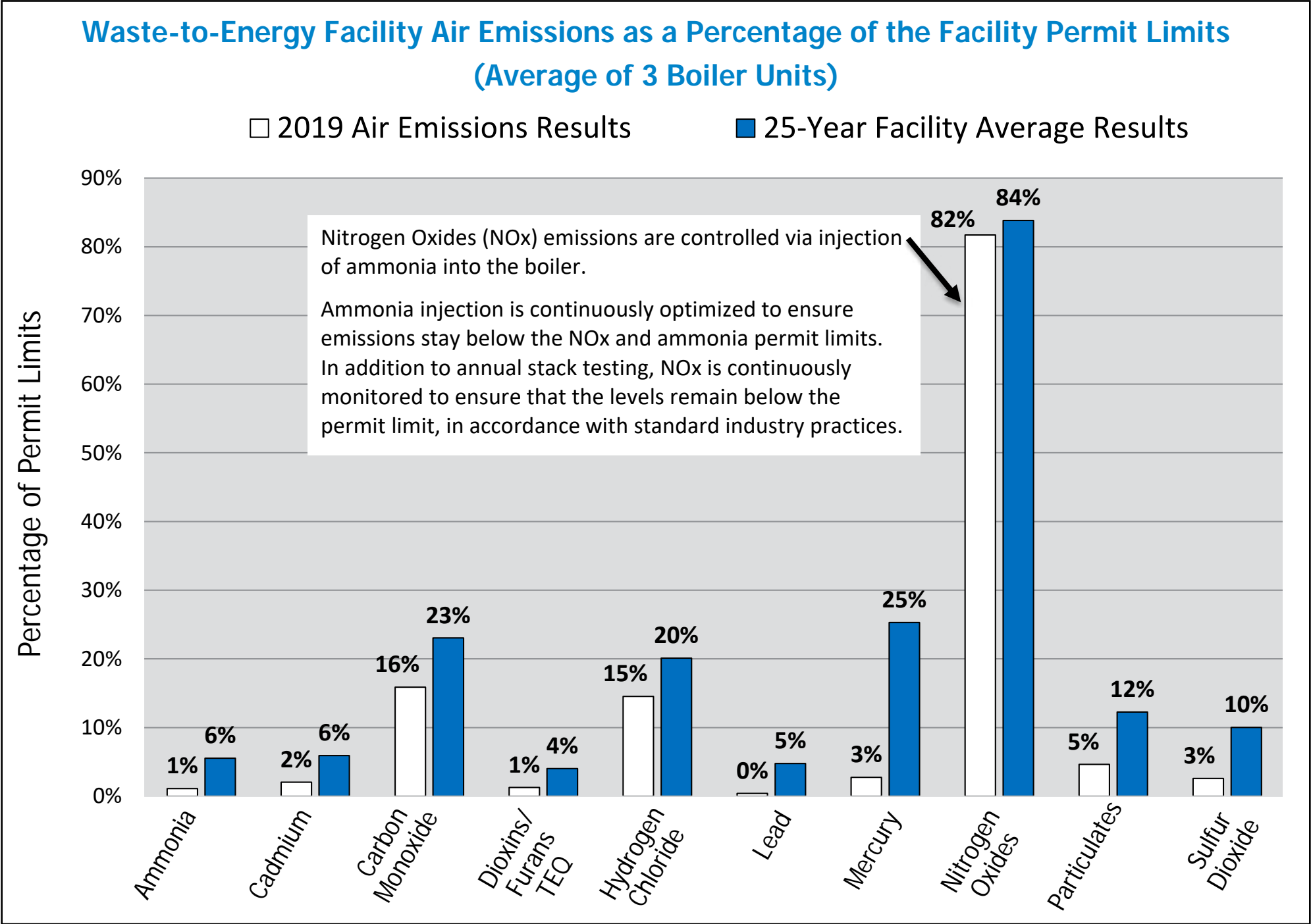
**Q: How do the 2019 stack test results look?**

A: The results from **the 2019 stack testing indicate that the Facility is operating acceptably and that the air pollution control devices are functioning properly.** As shown by the graph below, many of the tested constituents were considerably below the permit limit.

**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, as well as opacity and combustion temperatures. Additional constituents are tested every five years via stack testing.

ASH RESIDUE CHARACTERIZATION TEST RESULTS			
Semi-Annual Test Results - October 2018			
Constituent	Test Result (mg/L)	Permit Limit (mg/L)	Pass or Fail
Cadmium	0.05	1	Pass
Lead	0.35	5	Pass
Semi-Annual Test Results - April 2019			
Constituent	Test Result (mg/L)	Permit Limit (mg/L)	Pass or Fail
Cadmium	0.06	1	Pass
Lead	0.05	5	Pass
CONCLUSION			
Ash residue does NOT exhibit a hazardous characteristic. As such, it should continue to be managed as a non-hazardous solid waste.			



**FACT:** All the electricity used to power the WTE Facility is generated on-site by the trash that our community produces.

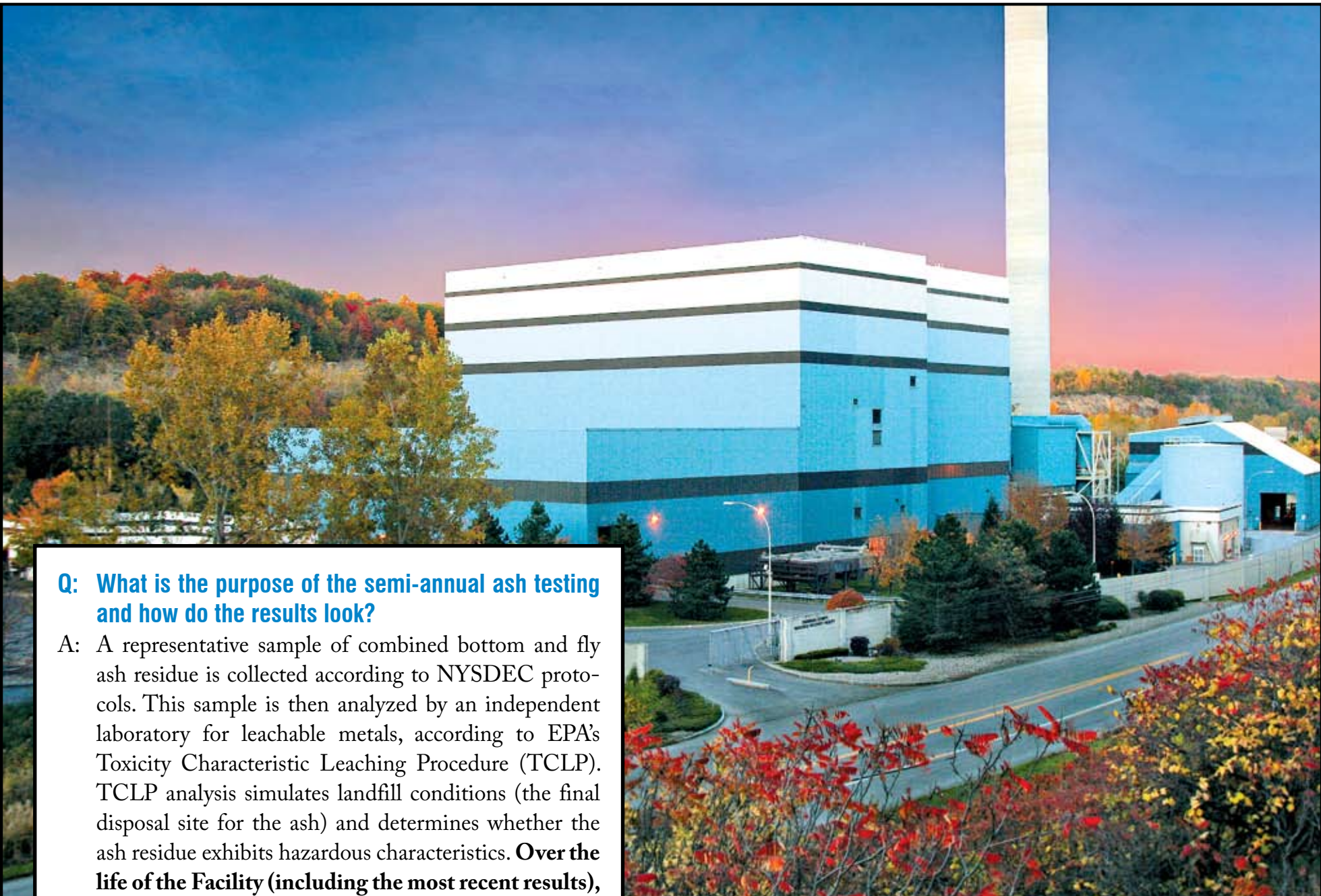


Photo Credit: Covanta, Syracuse, 2008.

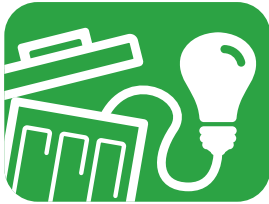
**Q: What is the purpose of the semi-annual ash testing and how do the results look?**

A: A representative sample of combined bottom and fly ash residue 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 residue exhibits hazardous characteristics. **Over the life of the Facility (including the most recent results), TCLP analysis has always indicated that the ash residue is non-hazardous.**

**Q: Who can I contact for more information?**

A: For more detailed information on these test results please contact OCRRA's Engineer, Cristina Albulio, at (315) 453-2866 or calbulio@ocrra.org.

Onondaga County trash is sent to the local Waste-to-Energy Facility where it is burned at 2000°F – with extensive pollution controls – and converted into electricity (enough to power 15% of homes in our County), all while staying well-below NYSDEC permit limits.



2019 ANNUAL STACK TEST RESULTS

		Constituent	Average Measured Emissions <sup>1</sup>			Permit Limit <sup>2</sup>	Pass/Fail P/F	3-Boiler Average	% Permit Limit <sup>3</sup>
			Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3				
TESTED ANNUALLY	FEDERAL	Cadmium (mg/dscm @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	0.000229	0.000194	0.000288	0.035	P	0.000237	1%
		Cadmium (lb/hr)	0.0000366	0.0000302	0.0000504	0.0019	P	0.0000391	2%
		Carbon Monoxide (lb/hr)	1.29	1.21	1.33	8.04	P	1.28	16%
		Dioxins/Furans (ng/dscm @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	0.194	1.16	1.45	30	P	0.93	3%
		Hydrogen Chloride (ppmdv @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	3.16	2.58	3.38	25	P	3.04	12%
		Hydrogen Chloride (lb/hr)	0.773	0.611	0.902	5.24	P	0.762	15%
		Hydrogen Chloride Removal Efficiency (%)	99.5	99.6	99.5	> 95	P	99.5	--
		Lead (mg/dscm @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	0.000916	0.000513	0.00139	0.400	P	0.000940	0%
		Lead (lb/hr)	0.000147	0.0000797	0.000243	0.0381	P	0.0001566	0%
		Mercury (lb/hr)	0.000141	< 0.0000592	0.000129	0.004	P	0.0001097	3%
		Nitrogen Oxides (lb/hr)	49.3	45.0	47.9	58	P	47.4	82%
		Particulate (gr/dscf @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	0.000482	0.000411	0.000501	0.010	P	0.000465	5%
		PM <sub>10</sub> (gr/dscf @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	0.000317	< 0.000288	0.000327	0.010	P	0.000311	3%
		PM <sub>10</sub> Filterable (lb/hr)	0.120	< 0.109	0.124	3.16	P	0.118	4%
		Sulfur Dioxide (lb/hr)	0.126	1.10	0.0278	16.2	P	0.4179	3%
	STATE	Ammonia (ppmdv @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	< 0.468	< 0.438	< 0.512	50	P	0.473	1%
		Ammonia (lb/hr)	< 0.0529	< 0.0485	< 0.0634	4.88	P	0.0549	1%
		Dioxins/Furans-2,3,7,8 TCDD TEQ (ng/dscm @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	0.000877	0.00833	0.0196	0.4	P	0.009602	2%
		Dioxins/Furans-2,3,7,8 TCDD TEQ (lb/hr)	0.000000000138	0.00000000133	0.00000000346	0.000000129	P	0.00000000164	1%
		Mercury (µg/dscm @ 7% O <sub>2</sub> )	0.883	< 0.378	0.738	28	P	0.666	2%
		Mercury Removal Efficiency (%)	98.8	99.2	98.9	> 85	P	99.0	--

NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Based on 3 test runs for each unit; used for compliance with permit limit.  
<sup>2</sup> NYSDEC Title V Permit #7-3142-00028  
<sup>3</sup> Based on 3-Boiler Average; informational only; not used for compliance.

UNITS:

gr/dscf = grains per dry standard cubic foot  
ppmdv = parts per million dry volume  
lb/hr = pounds per hour  
dscm = dry standard cubic meter  
@ 7% O<sub>2</sub> = concentration corrected to 7% oxygen

ng = nanograms  
µg = micrograms  
mg = milligrams

# OCRRA Compost is in High-Demand: Call Ahead for Supply Updates

Dale Cocca, Recycling Specialist

Before heading out to OCRRA's Compost Sites this fall, call OCRRA at (315) 453-2866 to ensure there is material available. Quantities of ½" and ¼" **compost** are being rationed this season at one to two yards per customer, or by the trunk load, due to high-demand. If material is not available at the sites, visit one of the many retailers that carry OCRRA ¼" compost in bags. See list of retailers below.

Looking for **mulch**? OCRRA's Jamesville Compost Site, has an ample supply of double ground mulch for fall landscaping projects. The Amboy Compost Site has a smaller supply of mulch available.

Due to the success of OCRRA's compost in various habitat restoration

efforts by Honeywell and its partners in the Onondaga Lake Cleanup Project, significant quantities of compost have been pre-ordered for 2019 and 2020 for this purpose. While OCRRA reserved quantities for preexisting customers based on historical demand, and ramped up production to provide for the restoration efforts, overall customer demand continued to grow. Certainly this is a good thing in the long term, but causes issues in the near term.

In an effort to provide for the many parties in its community that have come to value its products, OCRRA is limiting compost sales to one to two yards of compost per customer for the remainder of this season.



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Camillus, 2019.

Before heading out to OCRRA's Compost Sites this fall, call (315) 453-2866 to ensure material is available. While there is plenty of **mulch** at the Jamesville Site – and some at the Amboy Site, due to high-demand, ½" and ¼" **compost** are being rationed at one to two yards per customer, or by the trunk load. If compost is not available at the sites, visit one of the many retailers that carry OCRRA ¼" compost in bags.

Over the past six years OCRRA's compost operation grew in production, and it simultaneously worked to grow a base of customers for the valuable

compost being produced. Having a shortage of material is a natural pitfall in any growing industry. OCRRA apologizes for any inconvenience and appreciates your

patience as we continue working to grow the use and production of compost in our community. Dale Cocca can be reached at [dcocca@ocrra.org](mailto:dcocca@ocrra.org).

## Winterize with OCRRA Compost this Fall for an Amazing Garden Next Spring!

These fine retailers sell OCRRA's high quality compost by the bag at their own price point. Call for details.

### North Area

- B'ville Supply – Baldwinsville
- Ballantyne Gardens – Liverpool
- CountryMax – Cicero
- CountryMax – Lysander
- CountryMax – Oswego
- Deaton's Agway – Pulaski
- Green Acres Lawn & Garden Center – Liverpool
- Pond & Rock Shop – Cicero
- T.J.'s Lawns Plus – Phoenix
- Village Ace Hardware – Baldwinsville

### South Area

- Bob's True Value – Syracuse
- Carol Watson Greenhouse LaFayette
- CountryMax – Cortland
- CountryMax – Norwich
- Green Hills Farms – Nedrow
- Neil Casey's Farm Market – Tully
- Valley View Gardens – Cortland
- Watson Farms Landscaping & Garden Center – LaFayette

### East Area

- Aspinall's – Chittenango
- CountryMax – DeWitt
- EverGreen Landscaping and Garden Center – Syracuse
- Green Scapes – Jamesville
- Manlius True Value Hardware – Manlius
- Spruce Ridge Landscaping & Garden Center – Cazenovia
- Syracuse Cooperative Market – Syracuse
- Village Ace Hardware – Fayetteville
- Vollmer Farms – East Syracuse
- Wagner Farms – Rome

### West Area

- Maldonado Gardens – Elbridge
- Oliver's Produce – Marcellus
- Silver Spring Farm Market – Onondaga Hill
- Sollecito Landscaping Nursery – Syracuse
- Town Square Ace Hardware – Skaneateles



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From the Executive Director’s Desk...

Only Upstream Solutions Can Curb our Wasteful Tide

DERETH GLANCE, Executive Director, OCRRA

The United States is number one, when it comes to per capita garbage production. Only China and India beat the U.S. in garbage production; however, they dwarf us in terms of population. After 30 years of adopting a mantra of “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle,” the data is clear that the slogan is not enough. Real policy change that shifts the responsibility of product and packaging disposal from local governments upstream to manufacturers is the ultimate solution.

**Curbside recycling programs are in crisis.** Over the past two decades, the United States grew dependent upon the export market, dominated by China. When China closed its doors to recycling imports — which were often laden with contamination from garbage — recycling markets became over-supplied.

Recyclables began going to other Southeast Asian countries including Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and India. Many of these countries are beginning to reject the onslaught of foreign recyclables too. Market prices for commodities fell, even those with strong domestic markets like cardboard and plastics.

While Onondaga County’s plastic, metal, and card-

board are recycled in the United States, our mixed paper, which comprises more than 50% of blue bin material, is currently being sent to India.

**Onondaga County materials continue to be recycled during this sustained recycling recession, but the commodity values continue to dip.** At the same time, the costs to sort and deliver the recyclables to market remains the same — creating a growing gap that could impact the longevity of many municipal recycling programs.

These low commodity prices do not reflect the material’s true value. Paper, plastic, metal and glass all have value, but they need to be clean. That is why it is so important for Onondaga County residents to brush up on the recycling rules (see page 1) and only put items on the list in the recycling bin. Wish-cycling, or adding items to the bin that you aren’t sure are recyclable, or wish were recyclable, only contaminates the good recycling. This “dirty-cycling” devalues all our recycling. Many non-recyclable items cannot be sorted out of the recycling in the automated process. They simply end up contaminating the good recyclables, which renders them less saleable, jeopardizing the longevity



Photo Credit: iStock.com, 2019.

Help reduce waste in New York State! Send an email to elected officials asking them to support extended producer responsibility for packaging, which will reduce the amount of non-recyclable packaging in circulation. All you need to do is visit [www.nypsc.org](http://www.nypsc.org), sign your name and hit send on the pre-populated email to show your support. It will not take long, but can have a lasting impact. Make a difference today!

of our community’s recycling program.

When manufacturers produce products and no longer have responsibility for the materials they sell to consumers, it falls on local governments and entities like OCRRA to manage these products at their end-of-life. Skyrocketing costs are making it impossible for some communities to continue recycling. This is forcing them into short-sighted decisions to treat recyclables as trash, which is certainly not a good long-range solution.

**The answer is making sure recycling is integral to all products for their full life-cycle.** That’s why OCRRA is focusing on extended producer responsibility or EPR, which is a law that places respon-

sibility for material management on the manufacturer, at the inception of product development. So, when a widget is produced, the full life-cycle is considered in its design, supply chain and delivery strategy. This brings recyclability to the forefront of product and packaging design as opposed to an afterthought or – a non-thought. Models in British Columbia and Europe, as well as bottle deposit laws commonly found in the United States, demonstrate that when manufacturers retain responsibility for recovering materials, everyone wins, including the environment.


Curbside recycling collection is a convenient and effective mechanism to reduce trash and capture commodities. The mech-

anism is currently broken, but not beyond repair. Adopting EPR legislation can effectively address this fracture, reduce the undue burdens on local governments, create jobs in NYS, and reduce our nation’s waste problem, while conserving valuable resources. Be a part of the solution and help advance EPR legislation. Contact your state representatives and let them know you support EPR and need their leadership to do the same. Simply visit [www.nypsc.org](http://www.nypsc.org) and sign your name to the pre-populated email to urge action on the state level!

Together, we make a difference. Thanks for doing your part to help save the world a little each day.

Dereth Glance can be reached at [dglance@ocrra.org](mailto:dglance@ocrra.org).

**BLUE BIN NO-NO**



**Oatmeal Tubes:** While they appear to be made of paper, they are a mix of multiple materials and cannot be recycled in Onondaga County. **Put them in the trash.**

# Mercury Thermometer & Thermostat Collection Event

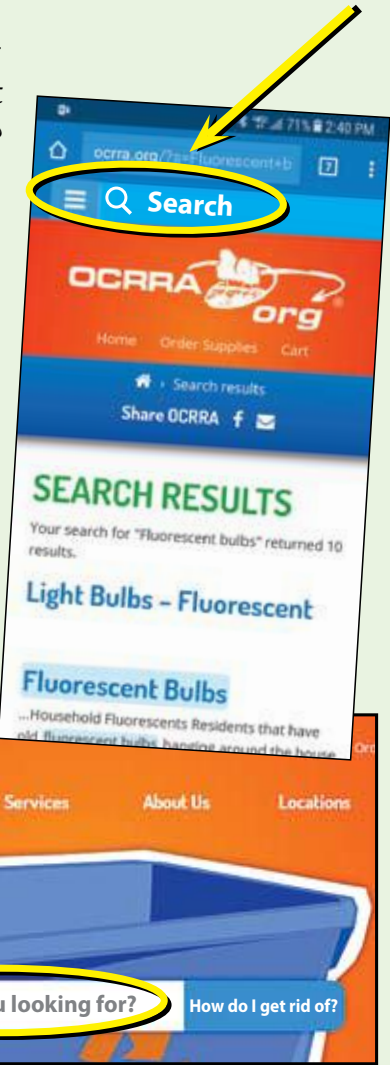


Photo Credit: Erica Hasenjaeger Photography.

Mercury is a neurotoxin that can harm humans and animals. On August 3, OCRRA and Covanta hosted a Mercury Thermometer and Thermostat Collection Event at Environmental Products and Services in Syracuse. 112 thermostats and 188 thermometers were collected. That means residents removed 636 grams of mercury from the environment! This is equivalent to the amount of mercury found in 159,000 compact florescent lightbulbs. OCRRA extends a huge thank you to everyone that attended!

# How Do I Get Rid of...?

Do you have questions about how to get rid of a certain item? Not sure if it is recyclable, trash or needs special disposal? Visit [www.OCRRA.org](http://www.OCRRA.org) and search for your item in our “How do I get rid of...” database. It has details on hundreds of items and can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!



# QUESTION OF THE QUARTER



- Q:** I want to recycle plastic bags, but I don't get why they can't go in my blue bin! Why do I have to bring them to a retail location for recycling? That's way too much work!
- A:** The curbside collection of materials is a dirty affair. Plastic bags must be VERY clean (and dry) to be recycled. Any plastic bags that end up in your blue bin get too dirty from mixing with all the materials during transit. **You should never put your recycling in plastic bags. These items get thrown out, not recycled.**

Plastic bags are not a friend of recycling sorting equipment. What happens is they wind up like a rope and wrap around the spinning sorting equipment. Several times a day the entire mechanical line of sorting equipment has to be stopped and workers need to climb into the machinery and cut the “ropes” of plastic out. This slows down the recycling process. Any plastic bags that do end up going through the sorting process (and not getting caught in the equipment) often end up in the bales of paper, which contaminates the paper and reduces the value it can be sold for, thereby increasing the cost of our community's recycling program.

**Plastic bags and wraps should never go in the blue bin as they end up as trash or contaminate the other good recyclables.** However, they can be dropped off for recycling at big box retailers, grocery stores or chain pharmacies - providing they are stretchy, clean and dry. (If a plastic film **stretches**, but doesn't **tear** like cellophane, it should be recycled at a store drop-off location.)

What's acceptable at these locations? Grocery and retail bags; dry cleaning bags; newspaper and bread bags; and stretchy plastic wraps found around paper towels or cases of water bottles - and even shipping materials like air pillows and bubble wrap are acceptable. They must be clean, dry and devoid of labels. Visit [www.ocrra.org/how-do-i-get-rid-of/plastic-bags/](http://www.ocrra.org/how-do-i-get-rid-of/plastic-bags/) to find a nearby drop off location.

# Go Green ~ Become Blue...



Photo Credit: OCRRA, Syracuse, 2019.

# Become a Blue Ribbon Recycler!

SMBR Architects reduced their waste by shifting to digital communications and drawings in all practical areas, opting out of mailed catalogs, using double-sided printing, and even coordinating with a neighbor that has food waste pickup to have their break room food scraps composted.

Left to right:  
Yang Song, Marlene Rizzo and Dylan Smith.

Join an elite crew of local businesses that can boast being Blue Ribbon Recyclers!

Apply for certification at:  
[www.tinyurl.com/BRRecycler](http://www.tinyurl.com/BRRecycler)

# Mark Your Calendar

PLASTIC BAGS AND WRAPS  
**RECYCLE YEAR-ROUND**  
Bring to participating retailers.  
See article above.

MAIN OFFICE  
CLOSED  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11**  
**& FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29**

ALL OCRRA  
SITES CLOSED  
**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28**  
**Happy Thanksgiving!**

JAMESVILLE COMPOST SITE  
Closed for the Season  
**NOVEMBER 30, 2019**  
Reopens **April 2, 2020**  
Amboy is open year-round.

HOUSEHOLD TOXICS  
DROP-OFF  
**Year-Round by Appointment**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTS & SERVICES**  
**M – F, 6:30 am – 6:00 pm**  
Register at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org).

**FACT:** Want to recycle compact fluorescent light bulbs? Home Depot and Lowe's accept CFLs (the small “twirly” kind only).