

Spring 2025 Newsletter | Volume 34 | No.1 | 100 Elwood Davis Road, North Syracuse, NY 13212-4312 | 315-453-2866 | OCRRA.org

## Earth Day Litter Cleanup Registration Deadline Coming Up

Lisa Piering, Recycling Specialist

Grab some gloves, litter grabbers and garbage bags. It is almost time to join thousands of volunteers for OCRRA's Earth Day Litter Cleanup. There are a few important dates and decisions to keep in mind.

First, decide if you want to clean as an individual or organize a team. Then, choose a public space to pick up litter in Onondaga County during the official cleanup event on Friday, April 25 and Saturday, April 26. Participate one day or both! You'll need this information during registration.

Since OCRRA needs time to gather and mail out materials for volunteers, the registration deadline is Tuesday, April 15. Online registration at www.OCRRA.org/Events is preferred. If that is not possible, cut out, fill in and mail us the registration form below, using the address noted. Alternatively, you may register over the phone by calling OCRRA at 315-453-2866. Group leaders can register on behalf of an entire team.

In mid-April, OCRRA will mail out stickers for bags of litter collected, along with disposal instructions. Where you choose to pick up litter will determine where you need to drop it off, based on guidelines set by each municipality. OCRRA will provide instructions based on the cleanup site you provide during registration. It is free to drop off bags of litter at designated locations during the official event days, if the stickers we mail to volunteers are attached.

The stickers also help OCRRA properly tally the amount of litter volunteers will tackle together in Onondaga County. More than 3 million pounds of litter has been collected since 1994, thanks to the dedi-



Workers at WestRock show off a bin full of litter they collected as part of OCRRA's Earth Day Litter Cleanup. More than 4,000 people participated in the 2024 event.

cated volunteers who join this event each year. Litter cleanups are a wonderful way to strengthen local bonds, while also making our neighborhoods prettier and healthier.

Lisa Piering can be reached at Ipiering@ocrra.org.



# Same 25 OCRRA Earth Day Litter Cleanup 2025 Registration Form

**NOTE: Online registration preferred: www.OCRRA.org/Events** 

Alternatively, return this form by fax to (315) 453-2872 or mail to: OCRRA, 100 Elwood Davis Rd., North Syracuse, NY 13212

Group Name: Number of Volunteers: Organizer's Name: (our main contact)	Stickers: You will receive two trash bag stickers per worker.  IF that isn't enough, how many extra stickers do you need?
Address: (where instructions/stickers can be sent)	<b>Municipality:</b> City/town/village where you'll clean. Official local government name - no hamlets. We'll send your group instructions based on this municipality's Earth Day litter drop-off rules.
Phone: Email Address :  Days your group will be cleaning: Friday, April 25 Saturday, April 26 Both	Area you are cleaning: Choose a public space in Onondaga County.  Be specific (including cross streets) to avoid cleanup overlap.
Questions? Call (315) 453-2866.	

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: APRIL 15** 

# **Zonta Club Collects 1,012 Pounds of Film Plastics**

#### Group wins recycling challenge and donates prize

Tammy Palmer, Public Information Officer

As a former member of OCRRA's Board of Directors, Eileen Gilligan knew plastic grocery bags, newspaper sleeves, bubble wrap and other film plastics never belong in curbside recycling bins. They wrap around equipment used to sort recyclables, get too dirty to be recycled and end up as trash. However, film plastics can be recycled when dropped off in collection bins at big box stores and chain supermarkets, where they are not mixed with other recyclables, so the material stays clean.

Through OCRRA, Gilligan discovered the NexTrex Recycling Challenge. The goal: collect 1,000 pounds of film plastics for recycling within one year and win a bench made from recycled plastics. Trex Company, Inc., which recycles film plastics into outdoor furniture and decking, created the challenge. When Gilligan pitched the idea to colleagues in Zonta Club of Syracuse, they didn't flinch. The group committed to the goal and executed their plan with the kind of determination that left little doubt they would succeed.

"We worked on this project for nine months," Gilligan recalls. "At times it seemed never-ending, but it was worth it to know that we prevented over half a ton of plastic from being landfilled, incinerated or blown away in the wind!"

According to the rules, Gilligan was required to find a drop-off location that works with Trex Co., Inc., then carefully weigh and document each load delivered. Because of the quantity being dropped off by Zonta Club, Gilligan made special arrangements with a local shipping partner.

Fortunately, the average resident has many options to simply drop off a bag or two of film plastics. New York State requires big box and chain grocery stores to provide a collection bin for recycling. Visit www.OCRRA. org/filmplastics to find out what is acceptable in the bins. Not all film plastics are recyclable.

Zonta Club members partnered with several businesses in the area, regularly collecting film plastics from PetSmart and Talbots in Fairmount, Chico's in Dewitt, Shute's Water Systems in Lafayette, The Retreat in Liverpool, Brian's One Day Cleaners in Westvale and Wells Fargo in Syracuse. Use the QR code on this page to watch a video of their early efforts on OCRRA's YouTube channel.



Collection bins for film plastics, similar to this, can be found at chain grocery and big box stores across New York State.

"With guidance from OCRRA, we are proud to say that we met the NexTrex Recycling Challenge," Gilligan adds. The bench they won will be donated to Girls,

Inc. of the YWCA, a decision that complements Zonta Club's mission of empowering women through service and advocacy. Visit **www.tinyurl. com/NexTrexChallenge** to learn how the recycling

challenge works. Gilligan hopes more community groups will consider the idea to help Onondaga County reduce waste, prevent litter and recycle right.

Tammy Palmer can be reached at tpalmer@ocrra.org.

IMAGE ABOVE: After successfully completing the NexTrex Recycling Challenge, Zonta Club earned a bench, similar to the one shown, made from recycled plastics.



Eileen Gilligan weighs a bag of film plastics to document Zonta Club's progress in the NexTrex Recycling Challenge.



Plastic bags improperly mixed with curbside recyclables wrap around rollers on equipment used to sort different types of recyclables.



#### GO BEHIND THE SCENES WITH OCRRA!

Watch the journey of film plastics! Follow along as members of Zonta Club of Syracuse collect and weigh material before dropping off several bags at a local grocery store. Then, see how Trex Co. recycles film plastics to create deck boards and patio furniture. Visit www.YouTube.com/OCRRA to browse our videos section. Click the playlists tab for videos about film plastics.

## **OCRRA COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**



Classmates in the FOCUS Greater Syracuse Citizens Academy listen as OCRRA Public Information Officer Tammy Palmer talks about recycling in Onondaga County. Palmer was joined on the panel by WEP Commissioner Shannon Harty and OCWA Executive Director Jeff Brown.



The Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) brought visitors from across the region to OCRRA's Amboy Compost Site for an educational tour. NERC hosted a conference in Syracuse in partnership with the Center for Sustainable Materials Management (CSMM) at SUNY ESF.





# Recycling Rh&da

### Sharps

Dear Rhoda,

I recently finished treatment that required daily injections. What do I do with all of the used needles now?

— Convalescina in Clav

Dear Convalescing,

With treatment finished, you're probably eager to kiss those needles goodbye! The trick is to make sure no one else gets poked. Loose needles, lancets and other sharps are a safety hazard for waste and recycling workers.

They're also made of more than one material (e.g. plastic and metal). Mixed materials, sharps and items that may contain biological waste NEVER belong in a curbside recycling bin. But, you shouldn't toss a loose bundle of needles in the trash either. There are a few options for safe disposal of sharps.

- 1) Several health centers and hospitals accept sharps from residents with medical conditions that require at-home, self-injections. Visit www.OCRRA.org/sharps for more information.
- 2) Several police stations also accept sharps from residents to encourage safe disposal. The following police departments have confirmed they are able to collect sharps:

#### **POLICE DEPARTMENT:**

#### Baldwinsville

16 West Genesee St, Baldwinsville, NY 13027

#### Cicero

6200 State Rt 31, Cicero, NY 13039

#### Geddes

1000 Woods Rd., Solvay, NY 13209

#### Marcellus

6 Slocombe Ave., Marcellus, NY 13108

#### North Syracuse

600 South Bay Rd., North Syracuse, NY 13212

3) Sharps can also be placed in clean, biohazard-labeled sharps containers or in clean, heavy plastic bleach or laundry detergent bottles with a screw-on cap. Containers must be leak-proof, labeled as "Sharps" and the tops should be taped shut. Then, they can go in the trash.

This guidance does not apply to schools and businesses. Organizations should contact their local/state health department or an environmental firm that is permitted to manage biohazard medical waste.

Workers who spend their day grabbing our waste and recycling don't want to unexpectedly grab a loose needle used by a stranger. While you convalesce, catch up on laundry. You can use the empty detergent bottle, tape and a marker to help your haulers avoid unnecessary pain and stress.

Recycling Rhoda

### **How Do I Get Rid of Confidential Documents?**

Tammy Palmer, Public Information Officer

After sorting through paper-work at tax time, you may be inspired to get rid of a few old files. Shredding banking, medical and similar confidential documents can help protect you from identity theft. However, shredded paper never belongs in a home recycling bin. The tiny pieces are too small to capture after being mixed with other materials. Paper and other items placed in your recycling bin should not be smaller than the long edge of a business card.

Remember, all recyclables must be loose; nothing should be bagged. That means you cannot put shredded paper inside of a paper bag for home recycling. Only loose materials are properly sorted at the facility that separates and sells recyclables. Bags full of items look like trash and are sorted as trash. With hundreds of tons of recyclables delivered each day, it is not possible to manually open and inspect bag contents.

### SHOULD I PUT CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS IN THE TRASH?

You may put shredded paper in the trash and it will be converted into electricity at the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, where our community's trash generates enough electricity to power roughly 30,000 homes each year.

However, for a nominal fee, shredded paper can also be dropped off for recycling at Bodow Recycling on 1925 Park Street in Syracuse (off Hiawatha Boulevard, near Destiny USA). Enter the building off Exchange Place through the bottle return entrance. Call ahead for hours and other details.

You are also at-risk for identity theft if confidential documents that have not been shredded are put in a trash can. Elected officials in the area occasionally host free confidential document shredding events that are unaffiliated with OCRRA. While we do not manage those events or registrations, OCRRA is happy to share upcoming dates at www.OCRRA.org/Events. Please note that these events only accept drop-offs of confidential documents.

### WHAT QUALIFIES AS A CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT?

You can reduce costs and save time by learning which paperwork really needs to be shredded. Confidential documents include bank information, credit card statements, medical documents, tax forms and other records containing account numbers. Items containing only your name and mailing address are NOT confidential, such as phone books,



magazines, newspapers, junk mail, receipts, hanging file folders, 3-ring binders, plastic file folder envelopes, photos and photo albums.

If you are unable to register for a free drop-off event, OCRRA partners with a local shredding company that offers reduced-cost shredding services for materials from households, if you present the coupon on this page. Simple Shred accepts cash and checks, but no credit cards. In addition to Simple Shred, you may also contact Confidata or your nearest Staples or UPS Store for pricing and material preparation instructions. The list of shredding services to the right may also be used by residents with large volumes of material or businesses.

#### SHREDDING LOCATIONS

#### **SIMPLE SHRED, LLC**

315-684-9900 or 315-247-5260 www.simpleshredny.com

#### **CONFIDATA**

1-800-627-4733 **www.confidata.com** 

#### IRON MOUNTAIN

1-800-934-3453 **www.ironmountain.com** 

#### **PROSHRED**

315-251-2936 www.proshred.com

#### **SHRED-IT**

1-800-69SHRED www.shredit.com

Taking a few simple steps to properly identify and manage confidential documents could save you time, money and the headache of dealing with identity theft, scams and fraud.



### **OCRRA Board Bids Fond Farewell to Don Lawless**

For 16 years, a familiar face and experienced voice was reliably present on OCRRA's Board of Directors. Don Lawless played an integral role in shaping the Agency. While he has passed the baton to a new appointee this year, his influence will continue to impact Onondaga County for decades.

Though he began 2009 as a new member of the Board, Lawless was no stranger to waste management. After serving in the Vietnam War, a paratrooper who was awarded a Bronze star, Lawless left active duty in the Army in 1969. He soon found himself on the solid waste beat as a reporter for the Post-Standard. A decade later, his regular coverage of trash-related disagreements between the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County led to a job offer from County Executive John Mulrov.



**Don Lawless** 

"The County's garbage team was disbanded until 1987 when Mulroy and new mayor Tom Young reached an agreement to develop the trash project as a joint venture," Lawless recalls.

He soon joined a team of Onondaga County employees who worked to develop a comprehensive solid waste management program. With Lawless serving as project director, the team significantly expanded recycling efforts and brought a Waste-to-Energy Facility to our community. Along the way, Lawless stayed in the Army Reserve, advancing to full Colonel and a Brigade Commander before retiring in 1995.

After leading the transition from the Solid Waste Disposal Authority (SWDA) to OCRRA, Lawless opted not to pursue an opportunity to remain as OCRRA's Executive Director, so he could guide the Agency's newly formed Board of Directors in filling the position. Years later, while serving on OCRRA's Board, Lawless was temporarily tapped to become the acting director during another search for a new executive director. His transition in and out of the role was seamless.

With the exception of the Audit Committee, Lawless served on every committee at some point during his service on the Board, serving as Chair for a few. In recent years, he has played a vital role in planning for the redevelopment of Ley Creek to meet the needs of a growing county for years to come. As Chair of the Board's Ley Creek Ad Hoc Committee, his guidance has been invaluable.

As several fresh faces take their seats on OCRRA's Board of Directors, Lawless can finally step back. "I miss all the good people at OCRRA and the opportunity to resolve problems facing the organization," Lawless writes. "I had a good run." A grateful team of Board members and staff agree. His tireless service for decades has made an enormous difference in the past, present and future of our community.

# **Confidential Document Shredding Special** 50¢ per pound

Year-round, Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cash or check only. NO credit cards.

Items will not be shredded instantly, but will be destroyed in 24 hours or less following drop-off.

- No appointment necessary. Unlimited drop-off.
- No business docs. Onondaga County household materials only.
- Prohibited items: Cardboard, 3-ring binders, hanging file folders, plastic folder holder envelopes, large metal binder clips (staples, paper clips and rubber bands are okay).

1925 Park St., Syracuse (Bodow Recycling Building)

**COUPON EXPIRES:** 

**December 31, 2025** 



Enjoy photos, videos and great tips to reduce, reuse and recycle on our **NEW** Instagram page.

Find us at: www.instagram.com/ocrra.cny

### **Spring 2025** | **Volume 34 No.1**

This quarterly publication is brought to you by



100 Elwood Davis Road | North Syracuse, NY 13212-4312

TAMMY PALMER **Editor** and **Public Information Officer** (315) 453 - 2866 info@OCRRA.org

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Printed on Recycled Paper



## Demo Work Begins at Ley Creek Transfer Station

Cristina Albunio, Director of Engineering

OCRRA has depended on the Ley Creek Transfer Station for many decades and the building has reached the end of its useful life. Originally built in 1971, Ley Creek Transfer Station is conveniently located near 7th North Street, adjacent to I-81 and the New York State Thruway, in the town of Salina. The facility was expanded in 1991 and served as one of OCRRA's two transfer stations until it closed in 2023.

Commercial haulers and residential customers had historically brought municipal solid waste, as well as construction and demolition debris, to the Ley Creek Transfer Station for drop-off. Throughout 2023 and 2024, OCRRA began dismantling the facility and planning for big changes on the horizon.

So far, two electrical transformers and one fuel station have been removed from the site. OCRRA has also requested a modification to the site's solid waste permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). An approved modified permit will allow OCRRA to reconstruct and operate a new building that is expected to serve the Onondaga County community for many years to come.

The new building will include a 40,000 square foot tipping floor that can manage up to 1,200 tons of waste per day. As our community grows and changes, a facility of this size will provide some of the capacity needed to collect and transfer waste to its final destination. For example, trash goes to our Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility. Waste that cannot be managed there, including some construction and demolition debris, may be transferred to a landfill.

During the first half of 2025, the existing transfer station's building will be removed and the site will be cleared to make it shovel-ready for reconstruction once the necessary funding is secured. OCRRA will also begin final design work this year. The new transfer station could cost approximately \$50 million to build. Ancillary support will also be needed, including a fueling station and a vehicle maintenance facility. This investment is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of OCRRA's comprehensive municipal solid waste management system.

Cristina Albunio can be reached at calbunio@ocrra.org.



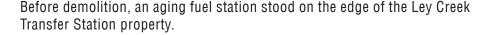




Photo Credit: OCRRA, Syracuse, 2024

After demolition, the fuel station was among the first structures removed to make way for a modern facility.

### What if Curbside Trash or Recycling Doesn't Get Picked Up?

Remember, OCRRA does not haul curbside waste. Rather, the Agency has locations where trash and recycling materials can be dropped off. Each municipality determines how residential waste will be delivered to OCRRA's sites. Some communities have DPW crews to pick up curbside materials. Others hire private haulers through competitive bidding. Municipalities may also leave it up to residents to hire a hauler or take materials to Rock Cut Road Transfer Station. If there's a problem with your normal pickup, check in with your municipality or private hauler for more information.



### **ROCK CUT ROAD TRANSFER STATION** 5808 Rock Cut Road | Jamesville, NY 13078

Residents must unload their own material.

Monday - Friday: Saturday: 3:30-6 p.m. 8 a.m. – noon

Visit www.OCRRA.org/locations for fee information.





### From the Executive Director's Desk...

### **Energy Recovery is a Solution to Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Onondaga County's trash is turned into electricity for 30,000+ households

Kevin Spillane, OCRRA Executive Director

I grew up in the Finger Lakes, a beautiful area with lots of local fishing, the wildlife refuge and outside activities galore. Because of that experience, being surrounded by boundless landscapes of lakeshores and farms, I am sensitive to the impact of waste disposal and how it can intrude on our most idyllic settings. In the shadow of all that natural landscape, I watched as the local landfill grew and grew.

Don't get me wrong, I have been a public environmental manager for most of my adult life and I am very realistic about the need for solid waste disposal facilities. I have had my fair share of "not in my back yard" meetings over the years. Because of the spectacle that landfill became as it rose unnaturally above the surrounding hillsides, it became a priority for me to ensure the public facilities I managed would be environmentally sound and not a burden on the community I serve. Instead, they should become assets the community can depend upon.

In our community, we depend on the Waste-to-Energy (WTE) Facility that was built 30 years ago, upgraded and maintained over the years. It is now capable of 361,000 tons of waste disposal every year. Your garbage, that you wheel to the end of your driveway every week, ends up at this renewable resource. Through combustion, all the things you cannot use, reuse or recycle are turned into enough electricity to power 30,000 homes in Onondaga County.

Landfills, however, are not a renewable resource. This fact is outlined by the Office of the NYS Comptroller in their December 2018 report, Local Governmental and the Municipal Solid Waste Landfill Business. However, until we can feasibly reach zero waste at some point in the future, solid waste is a renewable resource right here in your backyard at our Wasteto-Energy Facility.

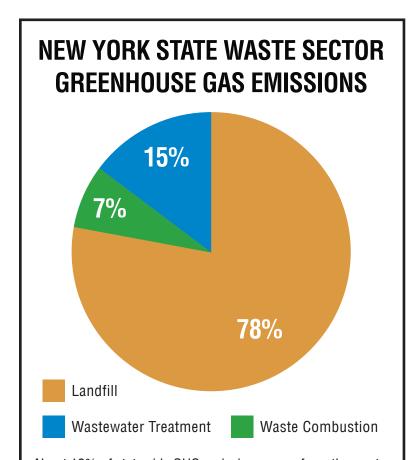
Climate change is a growing concern we hear a lot about now. Waste disposal, including waste combustion, does generate and emit greenhouse gases that can affect our climate. However, 78% of waste-related greenhouse gas emissions in New York State come from landfilled waste, while only 7% come from combusted waste. This fact comes from a draft implementation plan for New York State's Climate Act, a law designed to reduce our generation of greenhouse gases.

I don't want to get all wonky, but what the State's data essentially says is that landfilling generates approximately four times more greenhouse gas emissions per ton, as compared to waste combustion, mostly in the form of methane gas. That doesn't even take into consideration that our WTE Facility has a built-in system to recover valuable ferrous and nonferrous metals from the solid waste delivered to our facility, which gets recycled. The system also avoids the greenhouse gases that would be created by mining for those materials.

Everything isn't perfect. We do have leftover ash that needs to be landfilled. In the end, combustion of solid waste still reduces the amount of landfill airspace needed. Plus, those



The Waste-to-Energy Facility on Rock Cut Road in Jamesville converts trash into enough electricity to power roughly 30,000 households in Onondaga County.



About 12% of statewide GHG emissions come from the waste sector. Most reflect the long-term decay of organic materials buried in a landfill, which will emit methane at a significant rate for more than 30 years, according to the NYS Climate Action Council's December 2022 Final Scoping Plan report.

harmful gases from landfills, mostly in the form of methane from rotting food waste, are eliminated through the waste-to-energy process.

New York State's next step is a Cap-and-Invest program. The idea is to establish a cap on greenhouse gas emissions that gets lower over time, leading to cleaner air. Then, invest proceeds in programs that further reduce emissions. On the surface, it seems like a great plan. How the plan is applied raises some concerning questions.

Entities facing a cap on emissions, such as our Wasteto-Energy Facility, will have to pay what amounts to a fee for allowances of greenhouse gases. However, all indications suggest landfills will not pay the same share under New York's initial proposal. Under that scenario, Onondaga County's WTE plant will pay more per ton than a landfill, even though the State determined landfills are generating 78% of the most harmful greenhouse gases – methane.

OCRRA strongly believes local waste management is critically important to avoid emissions generated by transporting waste to regional or out-of-state landfills. Processing solid waste at our WTE plant in Jamesville can reduce greenhouse gas emissions much more significantly than the other waste disposal options. The energy recovery, greenhouse gas avoidance and reduction techniques from combustion of solid waste significantly supports climate protection goals. We strongly urge your participation as New York State reviews the Cap-and-Invest proposal, to ensure local residents are not paying more than their fair share for their waste disposal needs.



### **OCRRA Compost and Mulch Reminders**

#### **BUY COMPOST**

Help plants grow better by adding nutrients to soil and retaining moisture with OCRRA compost. This all-natural soil amendment is made locally using food scraps and yard waste.

- Trunk Load (Car, van, and SUV owners hand load their trunk): \$10
- **Cubic Yard** (OCRRA loads your truck or trailer):
  - 1/2" Screened \$16 / cu. yd. only at Jamesville Compost Site.
  - 1/4" Premium \$20 / cu. yd. only at Amboy Compost Site
- Bag (1 cu. ft.) 1/4" Compost:
  - Visit either OCRRA Compost Site \$5 each or 5 bags for \$20
- Visit a local retailer that sells OCRRA's bagged compost. Prices vary. Call to confirm availability.





#### **BUY MULCH**

Suppress weeds, retain moisture (so you don't have to water as much) and give your garden or landscaping a finished look by adding OCRRA wood mulch.

- Trunk Load (Car, van, and SUV owners hand load their trunk): \$5
- **Cubic Yard** (OCRRA loads your truck or trailer):
  - Double Ground Mulch \$14 / cu. yd. only at Jamesville Compost Site.
  - Triple Ground Mulch \$16 / cu. yd. at both sites.

Please note: No site pass is needed to buy compost or mulch.

Amboy Compost Site accepts cash, checks or credit cards.

Jamesville Compost Site accepts cash or checks.

Commercial customers are encouraged to visit OCRRA.org

to review new 2025 delivery fees.



#### **2025 COMPOST SITE PASS**

Drop off unlimited food scraps and yard waste all year with an OCRRA Compost Site Pass. The \$25 pass is only available to residents of Onondaga County. It comes with two FREE bags of OCRRA Premium Compost. Food and yard waste are accepted at Amboy and Jamesville Compost Sites. Food scraps can also be dropped off at Rock Cut Road Transfer Station during residential hours. Visit a compost site to buy a pass in-person or go to www.OCRRA.org/shop to order a pass online.



# Mark Your Galendar

## JAMESVILLE COMPOST SITE OPEN

**APRIL 3 - NOV. 22** 

Thurs. - Sat. 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

www.OCRRA.org/compost

## AMBOY COMPOST SITE SATURDAY HOURS

#### **BEGINNING APRIL 5**

Mon.- Sat.

7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

www.OCRRA.org/compost

#### **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

APRIL 5: E-waste recycling
MAY 10: Confidential
document shredding
MAY 17: Paint recycling

www.OCRRA.org/events

### CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY

**MAY 26** 

All OCRRA sites closed for Memorial Day

www.OCRRA.org/locations