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Princeton, New Jersey

PACKAGED IN REUSED PLASTIC BOTTLES, TERRACYCLE PRODUCT FINDS A PLACE AT HOME DEPOT

While a student at Princeton University in 2001, Tom Szaky used his vermicomposting system to process dining hall residuals, create a business plan and later attract angel investors. With space in the New Jersey EcoComplex, the company went on to win the national Carrot Capital Business Plan challenge with an offer of up to \$1 million in funding, but instead raised over \$1.2 million from private investors in April 2003. Five months later, the company launched its TerraCycle Plant Food. In March, 2004, it was announced that Home Depot will be marketing the bottled product to its print and online divisions. A liquid organic product for potted plants packaged in reused plastic (soda) bottles, it's priced at \$6.95 and can be purchased online at www.homedepot.com. The company has also organized the TerraCycle School-Wide Recycling Event Program, which seeks to set up worm bins in classrooms to let students observe the vermicomposting process from start to finish, using organic residuals from their own cafeteria. More details on TerraCycle are planned for a future issue. Visit the company on-line, www.terracecycle.org.

Morris, Minnesota

MAKING A COMMUNITY SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ENERGY

A study commissioned by the University of Minnesota at Morris (UMM) to evaluate local alternative energy potential has determined that biogas produced by a manure anaerobic digester has the power to supply 50 percent of the energy needed to run the UMM campus. A dairy 12 miles from Morris is expanding its herd to more than 9,000 animals, which will generate up to 10 million cubic feet of manure annually, says Ed Larson, Morris city manager. The methane gas from the digester could be economically pumped from the dairy into the city of Morris, notes the study.

"The technology is there because it's being done other places," explains Larson. His city is trying to acquire funds to verify the plan's feasibility, which he believes is "viable." Concludes the city manager in a news report by the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute: "We've been told by the legislature that cities need to be creative and innovative. We are trying to do that and establish revenue streams to offset (state) cuts to local government aid."

Annapolis, Maryland

STATE LEGISLATURE DEBATES DECONSTRUCTION BILL

Maryland House Bill 1157 — "Economic Development, Construction Projects, Demolition" — would facilitate use of salvage and deconstruction materials for resale, reuse or remanufacture. Jim Schulman, executive director of Washington, DC-based Sustainable Community Initiatives writes that the bill would enhance markets for salvaged building materials, assist start-up deconstruction and reuse businesses, create training and contracting opportunities, as well as reduce dust exposure during demolition. Schulman urges Maryland residents to communicate their support for the legislation by writing to Maggie McIntosh, Chair, Maryland House of Delegates Environmental Matters Committee, Lowe House Office Building, Rm. 141, 84 College Ave., Annapolis, MD 21401-1991.

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

DAIRY FARMER THRIVES ON COMPOSTING SIDELINE

In the April 17, 2004 issue of Lancaster Farming, Dave Lefever describes how Clifford Hawbaker has begun composting on his Hamilton Heights Dairy Farm

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which has been in the family for six generations. Managing manure without causing odors is critical since the farm "is practically surrounded by growing residential developments, plus an elementary school, a church and golf course." Writes Lefever: "The manure-handling setup has created a composting side business while reducing odors and nutrient runoff to practically nothing. Wastewater is recycled for flushing freestall floors. The aerated wastewater is ultimately dispersed on the pastures through a permanent network of pipes and irrigation jets. ... Hawbaker monitors the compost for temperature and quality, selling the finished product under the "Garden of Eden" label for \$16 to \$20 per cubic yard depending on volume." A report on Cliff Hawbaker and his composting methods will appear in a coming issue of BioCycle.

Boston, Massachusetts

STATE ESTIMATES ON FOOD RESIDUALS GENERATION AND RECOVERY Officials at the EPA and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) estimate that food residuals make up 11.4 percent of the MSW stream or 26.2 million tons; in Massachusetts, that adds up to nearly 900,000 tons per year. Major sources include left-over food and soiled paper from homes, restaurants and institutional dining halls as well as residual materials from food preparation etc. at grocery stores, canning, freezing and preserving operations. DEP estimates that less than five percent of all food residuals in Massachusetts are diverted to composting operations and backyard bins. Across the state, there are currently 30 food and organic material composting operations, with a combined permitted capacity to accept 150,000 tpy. However, many facilities are not located near primary food residuals sources, while some are not fully utilized.

A goal has been set by DEP to reduce MSW 70 percent by 2010, and that means diverting an additional 300,000 tons of food residuals. To achieve that objective, DEP staff have taken these steps: Provide financial assistance to organics processors to increase composting capacity through its Recycling Industries Reimbursement Credit (RIRC) grant and Recycling Loan Fund programs; To collect food residuals more efficiently, the agency has developed an organics "density-mapping" database so haulers can find generators in specified geographic areas; To implement cost-effective source separation programs, DEP works with generators on food diversion techniques; To build end markets for compost by state agencies, DEP works with the Highway Department and procurement office. DEP may also add food residuals to the list of materials banned from landfill disposal once an adequate diversion infrastructure is in place. For additional details, see the DEP composting web page at www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/compost, or contact Sumner Martinson (617) 292-5969 or e-mail at Sumner.Martinson@state.ma.us.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

REGIONAL COMMERCIAL RECYCLING GROUP PLANS ADDITIONAL OUTREACH

Executive Director David Biddle of the Greater Philadelphia Commercial Recycling Council (GPCRC) recently outlined its accomplishments since being founded in 2001 and also proposed new directions in the next two years. Recent projects have involved on-line clearinghouse (www.gpcrc.com) partnerships with 12 groups and agencies, and comprehensive waste audits and recycling program designs for more than 30 businesses and institutions in the region. Recycling opportunities in excess of 40,000 tons have been identified with cost savings estimated at \$4 million annually. With rising disposal costs and improved markets, Biddle emphasizes that "we need to chart a new course to get local businesses and institutions on track so they can stop throwing money away." New directions will focus on specific sectors of the region's economy, perform basic research and needs assessment for each sector, and set specific recycling goals over the next five to ten years.

King County, Washington

LOCAL COMPOSTING COMPANY JOINS RECYCLED MATERIALS PROGRAM

The newest partner in King County's LinkUp program — designed to assist companies in using more recycled materials — is Cedar Grove Composting of Maple Valley. Currently, the county is focusing on five priority materials for recycling: yard trimmings, food residuals, paper, wood and electronics. Together, these materials account for nearly 54 percent of the waste in the county's landfill. Cedar Grove processes four of these five priority materials (all except electronics) in its composting process. The LinkUp team will work with Cedar Grove to help expand its customer base.

In the food residuals arena, Cedar Grove was taking material from a residential collection pilot launched by King County in 2002. Some 1,700 residents in Issaquah, Lake Forest Park, Redmond and Kirkland participated by diverting food scraps and soiled paper as well as yard trimmings. As a result of the pilot's success, Kirkland expanded its program to 45,000 households; Redmond was expected to expand as well (see "Composter Upgrades To Receive

Postconsumer Food Residuals," February 2004). King County will undertake a commercial food residuals collection pilot soon. The Maple Valley composting site processes about 25,000 tons of material in peak months, and is expecting to receive significantly increased food residuals volumes. It installed the GORE Cover Systems for composting the postconsumer food residuals. Cedar Grove sells approximately 500,000 bags of compost each year to home gardeners in addition to its commercial and municipal accounts. The company is opening a second yard trimmings composting facility in Everett this summer.

Mount Carmel Township, Pennsylvania
BIOSOLIDS APPROVED AS GROUND COVER IN
MINE RECLAMATION PROJECT

After a controversial two-year permit process, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approved application of biosolids as ground cover for a mine reclamation project. "The most important thing is that we once again are going to perform a process that has helped to reclaim hundreds of acres of mining land," noted Brian Rich, vice president of Reading Anthracite Co., which applied for the permit. "Anyone who has visited any of our (other biosolids) sites has seen how this process works and how the Pennsylvania Game Commission is using the land for hunting or wildlife habitat." Tom Sebastian, one of five Mount Carmel Township supervisors, said that while he is disheartened by the decision, he understood why it was made. "I guess DEP felt they had to give it to them because there were no violations in their plant. The good news in the whole project is that they will be monitoring them and having the biosolids tested before they hit the soil," Sebastian said. Any load that fails such tests will be rejected, he pointed out. According to DEP, the revised permit allows the coal company's sister firm, Waste Management and Processors, Inc., to use up to 60 dry tons of biosolids per acre on the 50-acre tract. Added DEP Pottsville district mining manager Roger Hornberger: "These permit revisions contain extensive compliance measures to minimize or control any problems with odors. We are also requiring erosion and sedimentation controls to ensure water runoff is collected at these sites, and we are establishing monitoring points for local streams and groundwater. The permit revision applications were reviewed extensively by our hydrogeologists, and they determined that no local water sources would be adversely affected by the application of this material."

Olympia, Washington
WASHINGTON STATE TO STUDY ELECTRONICS RECYCLING

In late March, Washington Governor Gary Locke signed a bill (HB 2488) that directs the state's Department of Ecology (DOE) to research methods to finance the recycling of consumer electronic wastes. The DOE's final report is due in December 2005. The electronics recycling legislation grew out of a 2002 survey by Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation (WCRC). More than 90 percent of consumers responding to the survey agreed that manufacturers of electronic products should be responsible for designing them to be easily recyclable and less toxic. They also agreed that when electronic products contain toxic lead and mercury, manufacturers should provide a safe and convenient way to recycle them.

In response to the survey, WCRC and members of the Northwest Product Stewardship Council began advocating legislation to require electronics manufacturers to develop collection and recycling programs. Manufacturers would finance the programs by including recycling costs in the purchase price of new TVs, CPUs and computer monitors. In response to objections from the Association of Washington Business and computer manufacturers such as Hewlett-Packard, the bill that finally passed the Washington State Legislature was watered down to simply require two reports on existing programs and recommendations for implementing and financing statewide electronics recycling. Jeff Kelley-Clarke, Director of the Snohomish County (WA) Solid Waste Division, was quoted by the Everett Herald as saying that the bill is "a step in the right direction, but certainly this is not an end in itself." According to Sego Jackson, a Snohomish County solid waste planner who served as a delegate to the development of the National Electronics Product Stewardship Initiative, "We've nearly studied this to death nationally, but it appears we now have to bring local stakeholders together to look at the same information and options state-by-state. Resulting state legislation will either develop a patchwork of different systems across the nation, or serve as the driver to bring about a unified national system through federal legislation."

WCRC's survey results and its "Citizens Guide to Producer Responsibility" can be found at www.wastenotwashington.org. To stay abreast of regional and national electronics recycling efforts, see the Northwest Product Stewardship Council web site: www.productstewardship.net. Information on the National Electronics

Product Stewardship Initiative is at: www.nepsi.org.

Portland, Oregon

ARTISTIC RECYCLED STEEL AT THE SATURDAY MARKET

While in Portland for the March BioCycle West Coast Conference, we met Doug Puckett, owner of an enterprise called Circles of Steel at the city's Saturday Market (which is also open on Sundays). The 39-year-old sculptor sells his lamps, clocks and other creations at the Market as well as in dozens of garden shops and stores from Albany, Oregon to Longview, Washington. As described in recent newspaper articles, Puckett collects all kinds of steel castoffs — gears from trucks, railroad spikes, horseshoes, frying pans, rebar strips. After hours of cleaning grimy oil and attached junk off the steel, he creates lamps, kinetic sculptures of dogs with bobbing heads, garden ornaments, and much more — using his skills in welding and sculpting. "Steel can be liquid, steel can be solid, steel can be hard, and it can be anywhere in-between," he recently told a reporter. "It's not like I'm a big ecowarrior saving the world. It's not really recycling — it's recapturing. ... And I'm finally doing what I enjoy." As his business card explains, Circles of Steel creates hand-crafted steel products made from recycled materials — "Artistic, Beautiful, Functional!" Visit his website at: www.circlesofsteel.net.

Cumberland, Kentucky

DECLINING COAL INDUSTRY PAVES WAY FOR SMALL-SCALE AQUACULTURE

Located in rural Appalachian Kentucky, the economy of the Pine mountain region has for years depended on the declining coal industry. Of necessity, community leaders are seeking new and diverse jobs to support its workforce, explains the Southern Region SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education). The Southeast Community College (SECC) established a small-scale rainbow trout production facility to test the theory that impaired water from abandoned underground coal mines could be used to grow marketable fish. "That environment proved to be ideal for production and the trout have thrived," notes the Southern Region SARE which is based in Griffin, Georgia. In partnership with the Conservation Fund's Freshwater Institute, SECC obtained funding from the Steele Reese Foundation to construct a facility at James A. Cawood High School for rearing talapia. That project has likewise thrived and is now also producing red-clawed crayfish. Building upon these efforts, the collaborators now believe that local farmers can benefit from the developed technology and enter commercial ventures capable of generating a sustainable income.

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