

## Dutchess County Celebrates Earth Day with Improved Recycling Rate

Poughkeepsie... The Dutchess County Division of Solid Waste Management has released its 2013 Annual Summary in celebration of Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The summary provides an update on Dutchess County's recycling rate, amount of waste generated last year, as well as an overview of activities and accomplishments as related to the County's "Rethinking Waste" Local Solid Waste Management Plan.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro noted, "Our Rethinking Waste plan established an ambitious goal for recycling in our County. We are striving to nearly triple the 2010 recycling rate of just 23% with a plan to bring the recycling rate to nearly 60% by 2021. We are already more than halfway to our goal with better than projected 2013 recycling rate figures. Now we are eager to keeping pushing that rate higher and higher every year. "

The Rethinking Waste local solid waste management plan was adopted by the Dutchess County Legislature and approved by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 2013. Rethinking Waste outlines the management of solid waste for the next ten years and sets annual goals for steadily increasing the recycling rate through promotion and education, with the 10 year goal of getting Dutchess County to a 59.5% recycling rate. Rethinking Waste projected the 2013 recycling rate to be 28.2%

According to the 2013 Summary, the 2013 recycling rate was calculated at 31.8%, with over 87,000 tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) recycled. The combined MSW and Construction and Demolition (C & D) debris recycling rate was 40.5%, exceeding the projected rate of 31.6%. Over 146,000 tons of the remaining waste was converted to electricity at the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency's waste to energy facility, and over 42,000 tons were landfilled in upstate New York.

The increases in the recycling rate since the publication of Rethinking Waste are due to several factors including:

- Single stream recycling. Now that all recyclable materials can go in one bin, recycling is easier. The jump in recycling due to single stream was first identified in 2012.
- Dedicated effort to identify recycling previously not counted. Recycling not counted before includes containers recycled through the bottle bill act, vehicles dismantled and recycled, scrap metal recycling, and recycling that is self-hauled out-of-state by commercial and industrial entities and;

Dutchess County Government has been aggressively promoting single stream recycling at county facilities. Waste audits have conducted at almost all county facilities and new recycling efforts have resulted in disposal costs savings of over \$24,000 per year.

Among the areas the County is focused on improving is composting and food scrap diversion, an essential part of recycling and a critical component to increasing the County's recycling rate. Currently there are no residential programs for food scrap diversion. However, there are several institutions currently diverting food scraps from the waste stream including the local colleges, and the number of entities keeping food scraps out of landfills and the waste to energy facility has increased since the adoption of the Rethinking Waste plan.

The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requires an update on local solid waste management plans every two years, with Dutchess County's update due in 2014. However, Dutchess County Deputy Commissioner of Solid Waste Management Lindsay Carille felt providing an annual update to residents helps to build awareness of recycling efforts and encourages more people to get involved with recycling activities.

"Highlighting our increased recycling rate and all the significant accomplishments concerning recycling and composting in the past year will hopefully encourage others to increase what they reuse and recycle every day," said Ms. Carille.

Both the Rethinking Waste local solid waste management plan and the 2013 Summary update report can be found on the Division of Solid Waste Management's publication webpage at <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/SolidWasteMgmt/21906.htm>

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