

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
September 7, 2017  
For Immediate Release



## **OCRRA Wins Top Environmental Award in North America** *2017 SWANA Gold Excellence Award Bestowed upon OCRRA for Compost Program*

SYRACUSE, N.Y., September 7, 2017 – The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) awarded the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) the SWANA Gold Excellence Award in the Composting category. The award will be presented at SWANA’s annual conference, WASTECON®, on Tuesday, September 26, in Baltimore, Maryland.

OCRRA’s compost program is recognized for:

- engaging 7,000 school students each day in separating their food scraps for composting at the Amboy Compost Facility,
- composting 15,000 tons of food scraps and generating 30,000 cubic yards of certified compost since 2013,
- helping 450,000 Onondaga County residents achieve a nearly 60% recycling rate,
- having the largest municipally managed food recovery program in New York State, and
- being one of a handful of municipal operations in NY producing compost certified by the US Composting Council’s Seal of Testing Assurance Program.

Using compost has many environmental benefits; smart gardeners understand how vital it is to achieving beautiful landscapes. Compost maximizes nutrients in the soil so plants thrive; retains moisture so plants do not need as much water; suppresses the spread of plant disease so gardens stay healthy; and reduces the need for chemicals and pesticides, which keeps pollutants out of our water supply.

SWANA’s Excellence Awards Program recognizes outstanding solid waste programs and facilities that advance the practice of environmentally and economically sound solid waste management through their commitment to utilizing effective technologies and processes in system design and operations, advancing worker and community health and safety, and implementing successful public education and outreach programs. Programs also must demonstrate that they are fiscally and environmentally responsible through their compliance with all applicable federal, state and local regulations.

The winning entry can be viewed here: <https://swana.org/Awards/Excellence.aspx>

“Through education and engaging businesses and residents in our community, we are able to reduce the amount of waste produced in Onondaga County,” said Greg Gelewski, OCRRA operations manager. “In addition, our community’s efforts are reaching farther than our borders as OCRRA’s composting program is being used as a model for replication in other New York communities and beyond.”

You can buy OCRRA’s locally made compost by the bag at more than 30 retailers in Central New York. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/Compost-2017](http://www.tinyurl.com/Compost-2017) for a list of locations.

**About OCRRA:** OCRRA is a not-for-profit public benefit corporation created by the New York State Legislature in 1990 to deliver a comprehensive solid waste management and resource recovery system to Onondaga County residents.

OCRRA's system includes: a strong recycling and composting program, a foundation for local waste disposal at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, two convenient trash and recycling drop off sites, a robust education component and programs for hard to manage materials, such as household hazardous waste, batteries, fluorescent bulbs and other mercury-containing devices.

OCRRA's award-winning programs are funded by trash drop-off fees and the sale of electricity generated at the Waste-to-Energy Facility in Jamesville, NY. Learn more and get involved at [www.OCRRA.org](http://www.OCRRA.org), or follow us on [Facebook](#).

**About SWANA:** For more than 50 years, the Solid Waste Association of North America has been the leading professional association in the solid waste field. The association serves more than 9,000 members throughout North America, and thousands more with conferences, certifications, publications and technical training courses.

**OCRRA CONTACT:**

Kristen Lawton, Public Information Officer  
(315) 295-0733, [klawton@ocrra.org](mailto:klawton@ocrra.org)

**SWANA CONTACT:**

Wendy Melis, Marketing Director  
[wmelis@swana.org](mailto:wmelis@swana.org)

###