



Summer 2017 Newsletter | Volume 26 | No. 2



**BATTERIES.....PG 2**

July is curbside battery collection month. Find out how easy it is to properly manage your alkaline batteries.



**BLUE RIBBON RECYCLER.....PG 2**

Arcadis changed locations but kept their exemplary recycling practices.



**PROPANE TANKS....PG 3**

Rhoda schools the community on how to handle old propane tanks.



**COMPOST AND MULCH .....PG 4 & 5**

OCRRA sells a variety of locally-made garden products. Learn where you can find them.



**MERCURY AND MEDS.....PG 8**

Protect the environment; drop off mercury thermometers / thermostats and old medication at Monday, August 7 event.

## Compost – Key to a Sustainable Future

*Dale Cocca, Recycling Specialist*

Soil is 95% rock, in the form of silt, sand and clay. This is why compost is absolutely essential. It adds nutrients to our native soils and helps plants thrive. Most of our food and almost every other agricultural product, from cotton to timber, relies on healthy soil to prosper. Healthy soil starts with compost. As U.S. cropland loses 1.7 billion tons of topsoil to erosion every year and another 60 million tons of food gets landfilled or incinerated, the call to compost is more urgent now than ever. Gardens thrive when compost is added as a soil amendment.

### Compost:

- Returns essential nutrients to soil, reducing or eliminating the need for man-made fertilizers,
- Enhances soil's ability to retain moisture, protecting against drought,
- Mitigates erosion due to the physical structure of the humus in compost,
- Adds microorganisms necessary for a healthy and balanced soil ecosystem.

### Without compost we:

- Rely on expensive, fossil-fuel derived fertilizers to add nutrients to our dwindling soil supply,
- Use more water for irrigation,
- Lose valuable organic material to the trash.

OCRRA recognizes the importance of organic resources, which is why the Agency operates two compost facilities, one in Jamesville on Route 91, and one in Amboy, on Airport Road. OCRRA's state-of-the-art Amboy Compost Facility is a model for other entities, such as Ulster County, NY; Town of Bethlehem, NY; Fort Drum; Chittenden County, VT, as well as facilities around the globe.

During an Amboy Facility visit in May, Peter Moon, a compost consultant and industry expert from O2 Compost in Washington State, described the Amboy Facility as "well run with good housekeeping practices." Moon has a lot to compare the OCRRA Facility to, having been involved in over 1,000 composting projects around the world.

OCRRA's composting



Gardens thrive when compost is added as a soil amendment. OCRRA Compost is available by the cubic yard at the Amboy and Jamesville Compost Site and by the bag at 30+ retailers in Central New York.

process has already benefitted many in Onondaga County. Combined, last year the Amboy and Jamesville Sites saw nearly 30,000 residential visits and more than 6,870 commercial / municipal visits. Residents and commercial entities alike can drop off yard and food waste and pick up Pride of New York mulch and compost.

In 2016, the Amboy Facility alone produced 14,560 cubic yards of US Composting Council Certified Compost. That is enough compost to cover 108 acres (98 football

fields) with a 1-inch blanket of compost.

Additionally, more than 10,000 bags of premium compost were made available for sale at 30+ local retailers in Central New York. Check out this video to see OCRRA's cutting-edge compost process in action: [www.tinyurl.com/AmboyVideo](http://www.tinyurl.com/AmboyVideo). To learn more about OCRRA's Compost Sites, pricing and how to buy compost, visit [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org) or check out pages 4 and 5.

Dale Cocca can be reached at [dcocca@ocrra.org](mailto:dcocca@ocrra.org).

## Rid your Home of Household Toxics



Take advantage of OCRRA's no charge drop off program for items such as oil-based paints, pool chemicals, herbicides and pesticides, automotive products, adhesives, driveway sealer, smoke detectors and more\*. Make an appointment online at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org) or

call (315) 453-2866. Schedule the date and time that works best for you, any time Monday-Friday between 6:30 am and 6:00 pm. An appointment confirmation with preparation instructions and directions to the drop off-site, Environmental Products and Services of

Vermont (EPSVT), is automatically sent out. EPSVT is a company that specializes in proper disposal of hazardous materials.

\*Visit [www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAtoxics](http://www.tinyurl.com/OCRRAtoxics) for an extensive list of acceptable household hazardous waste items.

# Properly Manage Your Alkaline Batteries in July

Ann Fordock, Recycling Operations Manager

Join your neighbors, or remind them to participate, in OCRRA's July curbside battery collection program. The month-long curbside collection is for old alkaline batteries only, including 9-volt batteries, commonly used in smoke detectors, as well as A through AAAA, C and D batteries.

This program starts with a yellow bag, the dedication to recycle and a quick walk to the end of your driveway. Working together, your neighborhood's efforts will keep alkaline batteries out of the trash and protect our environment.

Simply get a yellow bag from OCRRA, fill it with old alkaline batteries and place it on **TOP** of your closed **garbage bag or can**. The battery bag must be visible or it will be treated as trash, which is clearly not the objective. Providing it is visible on top of your garbage, your hauler will pick it up, consolidate it with the other battery bags collected

along their route and deliver the batteries to OCRRA. Please note: these batteries should **NEVER** go in your blue bin.

To get a yellow bag, call (315) 453-2866 or send an email to [info@OCRRA.org](mailto:info@OCRRA.org); include your name and address in the body of the email and OCRRA will mail you a battery bag, while supplies last.

Do you have other types of batteries to get rid of? OCRRA offers year-round collection of **button batteries**, used in cameras, calculators and hearing aids; **rechargeable batteries**, often used in cell and cordless phones; and **alkaline batteries**. They may be delivered to OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site in Jamesville or to one of our collection bins at any Onondaga County Wegmans or Green Hills Market in Syracuse. Note: These batteries do not go in yellow battery bags. There are special battery preparation

instructions on the grocery store collection bins.

Both the July and year-round program are for Onondaga County residents only; businesses looking to be responsible with their batteries may find solutions at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org).

Rechargeable batteries from items such as cell and cordless phones, laptop computers, power tools, digital cameras, and two-way radios are also collected on an ongoing basis by local retailers throughout Onondaga County. Find the location nearest to you by visiting [www.call2recycle.org/locator/](http://www.call2recycle.org/locator/).

Properly managing batteries keeps toxic elements including mercury, silver, zinc, nickel and cadmium out of the environment, which protects humans and animals as well as our precious water sources.

Ann Fordock can be reached at [afordock@ocrra.org](mailto:afordock@ocrra.org).



Photo Credit: Kristen Lawton, Syracuse, 2017

Chloe Coughlin, of Liverpool, demonstrates how to put batteries out for collection on trash day in the month of July. By placing her full alkaline battery bag on top of her trash (NOT in her blue bin), it makes it easy for her trash hauler to see and separate the batteries, so they can deliver them to OCRRA.

## Electronics Recycling



Need to get rid of an old TV or other electronic device? **The Salvation Army on Erie Blvd. in Syracuse** will accept working and non-working TVs and monitors of any size. TVs and monitors cannot be physically broken. They will also accept other electronics\*. **Call (315) 445-0520 before dropping items off.**

Best Buy locations and Battery World will accept TVs for a fee, pending size. They will accept other electronics for free. **Call ahead for details:**

- Best Buy, Destiny USA, (315) 426-1588;
- Best Buy, DeWitt, (315) 449-1784;
- Best Buy, Liverpool, (315) 622-1395;
- Battery World, East Molloy Road, Syracuse, (315) 437-1404.

Staples locations will accept electronics, excluding TVs. **Call ahead for details:**

- Staples, Camillus, (315)488-4071;
- Staples, Clay, (315) 715-0112;
- Staples, East Syracuse, (315) 463-8040.

\*Electronics include computers, monitors, keyboards, mice or similar pointing devices, fax machines, scanners, printers, and small electronic equipment (tablets, VCRs, DVRs, portable digital music players, DVD players, digital converter boxes, cable or satellite receivers, video game consoles, etc.).

## Go Green ~ Become Blue...



Photo Credit: Dale Cocca, Syracuse, 2017

Arcadis settled into their new offices downtown, and went above and beyond the critical efforts of recycling all office paper and cardboard. Their unassigned-desk floorplan promotes use of digital files over paper. Their break room offers reusable dishes and silverware. And, they even collect food scraps for composting in their break room. Great job, Arcadis.

*Become a Blue Ribbon Recycler next quarter!*

Join the elite crew of local businesses that can boast this accomplishment.

Apply for certification at [www.tinyurl.com/blueribbonrecycler2017](http://www.tinyurl.com/blueribbonrecycler2017)



## The Garden GURU

Terry Ettinger  
Instructional Support Specialist, SUNY - ESF

### Is compost a good replacement for fertilizer? (Yes!)

A common recommendation for vegetable garden fertilizer application is two to three pounds of 10-10-10 (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium) fertilizer per one hundred square feet of garden per year. Two-thirds of this fertilizer should be dug into the garden at planting and the remaining third spread between the rows and lightly raked into the soil four to six weeks after planting.

Did you know you can apply the same total amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium to your garden by spreading compost, instead of fertilizer? Unlike most manufactured garden fertilizers, compost is a natural source of plant nutrients.

The nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in compost is held within complex

organic molecules, so it takes time for the nutrients to be released and then taken up by plants. This reduces the need to reapply compost, unlike synthetic fertilizers, as the **nutrients are released slowly** throughout the growing season instead of all at once.

In addition, because the nutrients in compost are bound into the organic molecules, they are less water soluble. This means they **don't wash away as readily** as the nutrients in fertilizer. Loss of nitrogen and phosphorus is not only a problem for your plants, but when they make their way into our water supply, they contribute to algae blooms, or an overgrowth of toxic algae, which can harm humans, animals and the environment as a whole.

Ready to make the switch

from chemical fertilizers to locally-made compost? If your soil is heavy clay, try 35 pounds of compost per one hundred square feet of garden. If your soil is sandy, use 70 pounds of compost, as sandy soils are naturally lower in fertility.

If you are wondering how much 35 pounds of compost is, it is conveniently equivalent to one bag of OCRRA Premium Compost, which can be found at more than 30 retail locations in Central New York, and either of OCRRA's Compost Sites. (See page 5 for a list of retailers).

To further expand this calculation, one full-sized wheelbarrow will hold about 250 pounds of compost (6-7 bags of OCRRA Premium Compost) – enough for a 700 square foot garden if the soil is heavy clay and a 350 square foot garden if the soil is sandy.

Another benefit of adding compost to your garden is it increases organic matter.



Compost provides benefits over using fertilizer, so why not try a natural soil amendment in your garden this year? Get OCRRA Compost by the bag at 30+ retailers in the community or by the cubic yard at our Amboy or Jamesville Compost Site. Visit [www.OCRRA.org](http://www.OCRRA.org) for details.

Compost helps bind microscopic clay particles into larger aggregates, which **improves water drainage and increases soil aeration**. In sandy soils, compost acts as a sponge, holding extra water in a form that's readily available to plant roots. So, no matter what type of soil you have, compost can help improve it and the plants you grow in it.

Keep in mind that the above compost application rates are a rough guideline. To assure that you're applying the right amount of nutrients to your garden, I highly recommend that you have your soil tested by a reputable laboratory, such as Agro-One in Ithaca, every five years.

Terry Ettinger can be reached at [tlettinger@esf.edu](mailto:tlettinger@esf.edu).



## Recycling Rhoda

Talks Trash – and Recycling!

Dear Rhoda,

I've got an empty propane tank left over from the last season. How do I get rid of a 20 lb. tank, the kind that screws into a big barbecue grill?

Cooking Out in Cicero

Dear Cooking Out,

Here's the grill drill: First, reuse them by having them refilled. You can exchange empty outdoor grill tanks (the 20 pound variety only) for full tanks at any location that sells them, and they can be refilled and reused repeatedly.

If you have reused beyond a tank's useful life, no pressure (pun intended), just don't ever throw them in the trash (nor the blue bin). Take a gander at the list to the right for local businesses that will accept propane tanks for recycling.

Don't need this list today, but maybe down the road? (After all, I don't expect you to hang on to this newsletter indefinitely, you'd best recycle it!). When the times comes around, visit [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org) and search the nifty "How do I get rid of..." database for "propane

tanks" – or any item you are looking to find recycling or disposal information for in the future!

So let me repeat: Propane tanks, no matter the size, do not go in your blue bin, nor in the trash. As with most rules in life, there is one small exception (and I do mean small...) – one-pound camping propane tanks can go in the trash, **but ONLY if they are EMPTY**. Be sure to use up ALL the contents before tossing one of those puppies in the trash. You know, so you don't set your pants, or anybody

### Propane Tank Disposal



else's on fire. Your trash hauler will thank you; they tend not to like trash that ignites their trucks... Oh, and did you know these little metal tanks will be collected at the Waste-to-Energy Facility and will ultimately be recycled? Pretty neat, right?

OCRRA's Rock Cut Road and Ley Creek Drop-Off Sites will also accept empty one-pound propane tanks for recycling.

And, as I like to say, now you're cookin' with gas!

Recycling Rhoda

## Propane Tanks

Propane tanks that are 20 pounds or larger should **NEVER** be tossed into the trash or blue bin.

Contact the businesses below for recycling details and pricing.

- Ben Weitsman & Son, Solvay, 488-3171;
- BJ's Wholesale Club, Clay, 622-2600;
- BJ's Wholesale Club, East Syracuse, 434-9100;
- Bodow Recycling, Syracuse, 422-2552;
- Country Propane, Central Square, Clay and Dewitt;
- Energy Gases, East Syracuse, 446-8400;
- Farmers Co-op, Baldwinsville, 635-5221;
- Metalico, Syracuse, 463-9292.

# Grow a Thriving Garden & Beautify Your Landscape

Find out where to get OCRRA's Pride of New York Compost and Mulch this season in CNY

Kristen Lawton, Public Information Officer

**Compost** helps grow amazing plants by adding nutrients to your soil; whether flowers, trees or veggies are your thing, OCRRA has you covered. OCRRA produces two types of compost: General Purpose Compost (½" screened) and Premium Compost (¼" screened).

- **General Purpose Compost** is available with one of OCRRA's Compost Site Passes or it can be purchased in bulk at either the Amboy or Jamesville Compost Site, for \$20 / cubic yard (OCRRA loads your truck or trailer for you).
- **Premium Compost** may be purchased by the cubic yard at the Amboy

Compost Site only. It is available by the bag at either Compost Site. It is not eligible for pick up through the Compost Site Pass system.

Premium Compost costs \$25 / cubic yard at the Amboy Compost Site. (OCRRA loads your truck or trailer for you.)

Bags of Premium Compost cost \$5 each, or you can get 5 bags for \$20 at the Amboy or Jamesville Compost Site. In addition, OCRRA Premium Compost is available in bags at 30+ local retailers. Each retailer sets their own price point. See the list on page 5 and contact them for pricing.

**Mulch** beautifies your landscaping and helps prevent pesky weeds. OCRRA produces two types of mulch: Double and Triple Ground Mulch.

- **Double Ground Mulch** is available with one of OCRRA's Compost Site Passes or it can be purchased in bulk at either the Amboy or Jamesville Compost Site for \$15 / cubic yard.
- **Triple Ground Mulch** is available for purchase at the Jamesville Compost Site only, for \$17.50 / cubic yard. It is not available at the Amboy Compost Site.

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



OCRRA Compost and Mulch is available at the Amboy and Jamesville Compost Sites. You can buy a Site Pass (which allows for removal of 3 cy. of ½" Compost or 6 cy. of Double Ground Mulch), or you can purchase material by the cubic yard; you can even contract to have materials delivered to you. OCRRA ¼" Premium Compost is also available by the bag at more than 30 retail locations in CNY. Visit [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org) to purchase a pass online or to find the retailer closest to you.

<p><b>AMBOY COMPOST SITE</b> 6296 Airport Road, Camillus</p>	<p><b>JAMESVILLE COMPOST SITE</b> 4370 Route 91, Jamesville</p>
<p><b>Hours at both sites:</b> April 1 – November 30: Monday through Saturday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm. December 1 – March 31: Monday through Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm.</p> <p><i>Holiday Closings: New Year's Day, Memorial Day Weekend, Independence Weekend, Labor Day Weekend, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day.</i></p>	

## Earth Day

Cheri Zajac,  
Earth Day Coordinator

Another year and another successful Earth Day Litter Cleanup is in the books. While April 21 and 22 brought mixed weather, that did not stop the 2017 Earth Day volunteers. More than 6,850 volunteers from 290 groups scoured our roadsides, streams and public spaces and removed 73,000+ pounds (or 16.9 metric tons) of unsightly trash. That is equivalent to the weight of more than 10 Hummer H3s!

In the two decades since OCRRA began the

Photo Credit: Klineberg Photography, Syracuse, 2017

Advocates' M&M Group shows off the litter they collected while cleaning up in the Clay Town Park on Wetzel Road during the 2017 Earth Day Litter Cleanup.

cleanup, more than 2 million pounds of litter have been removed from our County's streets and green spaces.

This amazing community effort is what makes this event – one of the largest in the nation – the

great achievement that it is each year. Thank you to all the volunteers, municipal crews and OCRRA staff that made this successful event possible.

Cheri Zajac can be reached at [czajac@ocrra.org](mailto:czajac@ocrra.org).

## BUY A COMPOST SITE PASS

**BASIC PASS (\$20)**  
Yard waste and food scrap drop off only.

**PLUS PASS (\$35)**  
Yard waste and food scrap drop off, plus self-removal of 3 cubic yards of ½" compost or 6 cubic yards of double ground mulch.

**PREMIUM PASS (\$50)**  
Yard waste and food scrap drop off, plus OCRRA loads 3 cubic yards of ½" compost or 6 cubic yards of double ground mulch to your truck or trailer.

**Purchase a pass online at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org)  
or at either Compost Site.**

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This quarterly publication is brought to you by  
**OCRRA**  
100 Elwood Davis Road,  
North Syracuse, NY 13212-4312

*OCRRA's waste reduction, reuse and recycling program efforts (including this newsletter) are partially financed by a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.*

**FACT:** Oil-based paint is accepted at OCRRA's year-round Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off. Latex paint is not.

# Get OCRRA Compost or Mulch Delivered to Your Door



Photo Credit: Andrew Radin, Syracuse, 2017.

Do you need many yards of compost or mulch, but do not have a truck or trailer to transport your materials? Check out the list of private vendors below for pricing on delivery of OCRRA Compost and Mulch. Delivery can only be arranged for materials purchased in bulk. Materials purchased through the Compost Site Pass System are not eligible for delivery.

Business Name	Phone	Max Single Trip Hauling Capacity
Alan Seabrook	(315) 481-9677	7 cy.
Bill Guptill	(315) 345-5451	6 cy.
Green Scapes	(315) 469-0007	70 cy.
J.M. Landscape and Snowplowing	(315) 430-5549	4 cy.
Jeff's Cutting Edge Landscaping and Lawncare	(315) 488-2924	10 cy.
John Majowsky	(315) 247-8111	6 cy.
Mickey Daughton	(315) 350-6652	3 cy.
Northern Firewood	(315) 668-9663	15 cy.
The Outside Guys	(315) 863-9114	2 cy.
Van Slyke Trucking, Inc	(315) 492-8174	22 cy.
Yardsmith	(315) 424-7121	8 cy.

*The above is a list of vendors who expressed interest in providing hauling services to the community at their determined rate of transportation; it is not an endorsement by OCRRA. This list is also available at [OCRRA.org](http://OCRRA.org); if you are a vendor interested in being added to this list, please contact Dale Cocca at (315) 453-2866, ext. 208.*

# Buy OCRRA's Bagged Compost at the Following Local Retailers\*



### North Side:

- Ballantyne Gardens, Liverpool
- CountryMax, Baldwinsville
- CountryMax, Cicero
- Deaton's Agway, Pulaski
- Green Acres Lawn & Garden Center, Liverpool
- Lan's Flower Farm, Clay
- Oliver B. Paine Greenhouses, Fulton
- T.J.'s Lawn Plus, Phoenix
- Village Ace Hardware, Baldwinsville

### South Side:

- Carol Watson Greenhouse, LaFayette
- CountryMax, Cortland
- CountryMax, Norwich
- Green Hills Farms, Nedrow
- Lee's Feed Store, Syracuse
- Neil Casey's Farm Market, Tully
- Valley View Gardens, Cortland
- Watson Farms Landscaping & Garden Center, LaFayette

### East Side:

- Aspinall's, Chittenango
- Buyea's True Value Hardware, Cazenovia
- CountryMax, DeWitt
- EverGreen Landscaping & Garden Center, Syracuse
- Green Scapes, Jamesville
- Manlius True Value Hardware, Manlius
- Syracuse Real Food Co-op, Syracuse
- Village Ace Hardware, Fayetteville
- Vollmer Farms, East Syracuse
- Wagner Farms, Rome
- Zerrillo Gardens, Kirkville

### West Side:

- Lake Effect Nursery & Garden Center, Camillus
- Maldonado Gardens, Elbridge
- Silver Springs Farm Market, Onondaga Hill
- Skaneateles Town Square Ace Hardware, Skaneateles
- Westvale Gardens, Syracuse

\*Each retailer sets their own price. Call ahead for details.

## OCRRA Spotlight

### John Blum

**Title:** Motor Equipment Operator II at the Jamesville Compost Site.

**Start Date:** August 27, 2004.

**Fun Fact:**

Enjoys the outdoor and hunting.

**What makes OCRRA great?:**

"The customers. They are the best part!"

At Right: John Blum displays a turkey he shot while hunting in a field near his home in LaFayette during the 2015 turkey season.

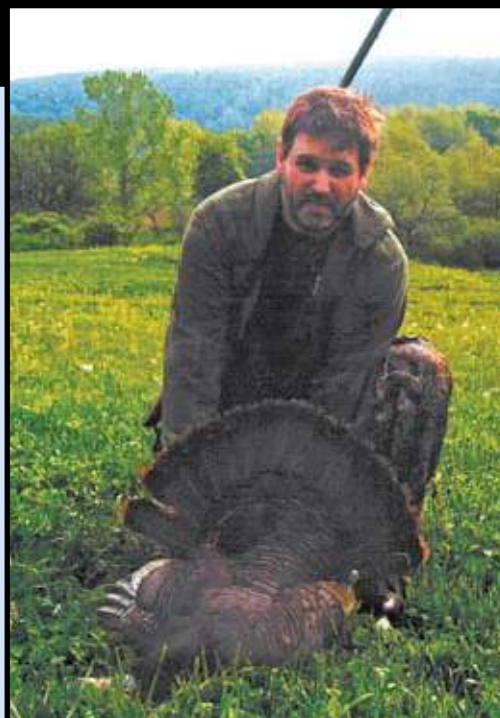


Photo Credit: Hannah Blum, LaFayette, 2015

**FACT:** Dry latex paint out with kitty litter or paint drying crystals. Once dry, put the paint can in the trash with the lid off.

# State Works to Reduce Landfill Emissions

*Local management of trash at Waste-to-Energy Facility puts Onondaga County ahead of the curve*

*Amy Miller, Agency Engineer*

Methane is a potent greenhouse gas with 86 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide over a 20-year period, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

New York State is working to cut down on the amount of methane entering the environment from landfills. The State's recently released Methane Reduction Plan ([www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/mrp\\_final.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/mrp_final.pdf)) highlights the fact that landfill emissions make up about 58% of total methane emissions in NYS (or 5% of total NYS greenhouse gas emissions).

In landfills, as waste decomposes anaerobically, without oxygen, it creates methane gas. Most landfills have systems in place to collect the methane and either flare it, which converts it to carbon dioxide, or convert it to energy. However, collection sys-

tems are not 100% effective and there are always fugitive emissions, or emissions that escape into the environment.

Fortunately, trash generated in Onondaga County does not end up in a landfill. Instead, OCRRA recovers energy from the trash by burning it at 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit at the Onondaga County Waste-to-Energy Facility. High temperature combustion destroys contaminants and ultimately converts trash into carbon dioxide and water vapor. Any contaminants that make it through the high temperature combustion process are managed with state-of-the-art air pollution control technologies (ammonia injection in the boiler controls nitrogen oxide emissions; carbon and lime injection in the scrubber manage acid gases and mercury emissions; and the fabric filter in the baghouse captures particulate matter).



Landfills produce methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas. In Onondaga County, trash is managed at a Waste-to-Energy Facility instead of a landfill, where it is turned into electricity. Waste-to-energy facilities do not produce methane gas, which sets our community apart and helps NYS reduce methane emissions.

Not only do waste-to-energy facilities generate more than six times the amount of energy as landfills (and in the case of our local facility, enough electricity for 30,000 homes), they do not generate methane gases. Our local Waste-to-

Energy Facility also recovers 9,000 tons of metal for recycling that would have been otherwise buried in a landfill.

The end product of the combustion process, ash, is sent to landfills for use as alternative daily landfill cover, however it is inert

and does not decompose to generate methane.

So there you have it, sometimes there is just a smarter way to manage our waste streams locally, responsibly and with less environmental impact.

*Amy Miller can be reached at [amiller@ocrra.org](mailto:amiller@ocrra.org).*

## Document Shredding Event Encounters Snag

On Saturday, May 6, OCRRA held its 19th community shredding event, serving over 2,500 residents at NBT Bank Stadium. More than 60,000 pounds of confidential documents for shredding and recycling were collected in 3.5 hours.

Since 2004, over 600 tons of paper have been collected at these events from over 28,000 residents, most waiting 20 minutes or less for this free community shredding service.

The surging popularity of the event made the spring 2017 Shred-o-Rama a victim of its own success. Unfortunately, demand outpaced the ability to

serve residents as quickly as in the past. Many people had to wait over an hour or were turned away when the event ended earlier than planned due to safety considerations.

“We truly regret that many people faced such long wait times, and that the event was closed before numerous residents were able to shred the documents they had collected,” said Andrew Radin, OCRRA’s director of recycling and waste reduction. “We assure residents that this frustrating situation is not acceptable to us either; OCRRA is reviewing all aspects of the event to determine causes and how to best proceed

in the future. We hope the community will accept our sincere apologies.”

Several factors contributed to the problems encountered at the May 6 event, including:

- 1) the weather, which hindered the shredding process as paper became wet,
- 2) non-weather related equipment problems, and
- 3) the unprecedented public turnout; the OCRRA Team simply could not keep up with the overwhelming flow of incoming traffic in spite of having two shredding companies on hand, five lanes of

incoming traffic, and numerous trucks to shred the materials at NBT Bank Stadium.

Ultimately, in consultation with the Syracuse Police Department, OCRRA closed the event 45 minutes early for public safety purposes, namely to ensure that emergency vehicles would not be impeded as traffic began to back up on the highway.

OCRRA, which is not a department of county government and therefore receives no direct tax support of any kind, has provided this as a community service for 13 years, with shredding companies Confidata and Shred Solvers kindly donating their

services and personnel for the events. OCRRA covers all other costs to conduct the event.

There are several year-round shredding options for residents to take advantage of at their convenience. For more information, please visit [www.tinyurl.com/ShredAllYear](http://www.tinyurl.com/ShredAllYear) or call OCRRA at (315) 453-2866.

OCRRA thanks the Syracuse Police Department, Shred Solvers, Confidata and the Syracuse Chiefs for their support and assistance, and sincerely apologizes to residents for the inconvenience they encountered at the May 6 event.



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

# The Greatest Good: Recovering Resources Locally

DERETH GLANCE, Executive Director, OCRRA

Our community excels at recovering resources locally and capturing their highest value.

Recently, OCRRA partnered with WestRock, an international company that recycles cardboard at their plant in Solvay to keep 46,000 tons of material a year from being buried forever in a landfill. OCRRA invested in \$1 million worth of equipment, including a shredder and material handler to be able to recover WestRock's "ragger tail," a long, thick mass of bailing wire and adhesives.

By shredding this cardboard recycling byproduct, OCRRA is able to recover and recycle an additional 3,000 tons of metal a year. Non-metal is sent to the Waste-to-Energy Facility to produce an additional 25 million kilowatt hours of electricity a year, enough to power an additional 3,800 homes.

So, instead of traveling over 75 miles to an out-of-county landfill, this byproduct is now handled where it is produced, which provides significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Managing the community's food waste for a higher use is another OCRRA priority. Typically thought of as trash in many communities and destined for landfills, Onondaga County

instead recovers much of this organic waste. More than 30 restaurants, including Empire Brewing, Pastabilities and those located at Destiny USA, send their food scraps to OCRRA's Amboy Compost Facility in Camillus, NY. Working with multiple school districts in Onondaga County, more than 7,000 students are now separating their food scraps, recyclables and garbage and sending the food waste to be turned into compost at the Amboy Compost Facility.

OCRRA's Amboy Facility is the flagship municipal food waste composting facility in New York State. There, food waste is combined with yard waste, including ground up branches, leaves and grass clippings, in a 1:3 ratio. This mix is placed in piles which are injected with air to maintain an aerobic environment. This allows microorganisms to break the material down into nutrient-rich compost. The compost is cured and screened and available for sale at both OCRRA Compost Sites by the cubic yard and at more than 30 retailers by the bag (see pages 4 and 5 for details).

Locally processing food and yard waste reduces climate change causing emissions associated with trans-

portation. Additionally, compost acts as carbon sink by absorbing additional carbon into the soil, which also mitigates climate change.

Creating compost is an art and a science. Food and yard waste coupled with Mother Nature can produce odors at times. With little rain last year and heavy rains this year, there are a plethora of variables that impact the biochemical process of crafting compost. OCRRA's talented and dedicated staff track materials delivered, manage the quality of the mix, monitor temperatures, optimize the aeration system and provide quality control for a certified product.

OCRRA takes its responsibility to control odors very seriously. The Agency continues to work to address any concern raised, while operating a locally loved and well-used facility that saw over 18,440 residential visitors last year alone. A third party analysis of OCRRA Compost Site Users found overwhelming satisfaction in service and value of our compost and mulch products. 96% of respondents had a good or excellent impression of OCRRA Compost Sites; their compost and mulch satisfaction rating clocked in at 4.35 out of 5.00.

I recently returned from



Photo Credit: Klineberg Photography, Syracuse, 2017

Whether converting trash into electricity at the Waste-to-Energy Facility or turning yardwaste and food scraps into compost at our Compost Sites, OCRRA leads the pack in local resource recovery.

visiting solid waste facilities in other communities and I am reminded of how dedicated, innovative and just plain good the Onondaga County community is when it comes to sustainably managing our waste stream. I look forward to making even greater strides toward maximizing

resource recovery locally with the partners and people that make OCRRA a world class system.

Thank you for all you do to the save the world a little each day. Together we make a difference.

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

Facebook  
Question  
of the  
Quarter



## TARP YOUR LOAD

**Q:** Do I need to tarp my load when I bring items to an OCRRA Transfer Station?

**A:** Yes, all open vehicles (pickup trucks, trailers, stake rack trucks, etc.) entering the OCRRA Transfer Stations MUST have a tarp covering their materials. Tarping prevents trash or recyclables from becoming litter on our roadways. It also prevents customers from being fined up to \$1,000 by the DEC. Untarped vehicles will be charged \$25 per visit.



Follow OCRRA on Facebook and ask us all your recycling and disposal questions!

# Turn In Your Old Medication and Mercury Therms

Join OCRRA and Covanta on Monday, August 7 to protect the environment and human health

Ann Fordock, Recycling Operations Manager

Both mercury and medications, if not properly disposed, can harm humans and the environment, which is why OCRRA is partnering with Covanta on Monday, August 7 for a Mercury and Medication Drop-Off Event.

The most prevalent form of **mercury** is the kind found in thermometers and thermostats. When exposed to air it escapes into the environment, making humans vulnerable to nervous system damage.

**Old medications** can harm our water supply and foster addiction problems. A common gateway to illegal drug use for kids is trying unused prescriptions found languishing in medicine cabinets. The best thing to do with unneeded or expired medication, prescription or over-the-counter, is to dispose of it properly.

Do **NOT** dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications down the drain (sink or toilet) as they can upset waste water treatment plant operation. Most treatment plants do not have the capacity to filter out or treat certain items (hormone medications, chemotherapy drugs, antibiotics, etc.) Ultimately, this can negatively impact wildlife populations (e.g., fish infertility).

Bring your old prescription and over-the-counter medications and mercury thermometers / thermostats to the Monday, August 7 event. It takes place from

7:30 am to 10:30 am at OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site (5808 Rock Cut Road, Jamesville). This free event is for household items generated in Onondaga County only.

Please complete a drop-off form before arriving and bring it to the event. The form can be accessed at **OCRRA.org** or cut out below. This is only necessary if you are bringing in mercury items; no form is needed for medication drop off.

Do you have a mercury item? **Thermometers** that contain mercury have a silver, metallic grey or black filling in their tubes. If the filling is any other color, it is not a mercury thermometer and is not eligible for drop off. It should go in the trash.

**Thermostats** that contain mercury have levers or dials that you must physically move to change the tem-

perature. If you remove the faceplate of your thermostat and see one or more glass vials containing a silver substance, it is a mercury thermostat. Do not dismantle the vials. If your thermostat is digital / programmable, it is not eligible for drop off and should go in the trash.

Broken leaking thermometers and thermostats will **NOT** be accepted. Follow household hazardous waste procedures and make an online appointment at **OCRRA.org**. See article on page 1 for details.

As an added bonus for keeping mercury items out of the waste stream, attendees will receive a \$10 gift card to Lowe's\* provided by Covanta. Residents bringing in mercury thermometers will also receive a replacement thermometer (mercury-free and digital) provided by Covanta. No gift card will

be issued for non-mercury items or medications.

If you are bringing in prescription medication, it is important to black out your name and address on the label. However, please leave the medication name and dosage information. Needles will not be accepted at this event. If you have needles to dispose of, visit [www.tinyurl.com/needledropoff](http://www.tinyurl.com/needledropoff) for a list of disposal locations.

No trash or recyclables will be accepted at the Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site, which is closed for normal business on Monday, August 7.

Can't make the drop-off event? You can bring mercury thermostats and thermometers to OCRRA's Rock Cut Road Drop-Off Site, year-round and a \$5 Lowe's gift card will be mailed to you as a reward. Rock Cut Road is open Tuesday-Saturday from 7:00 am to 2:30 pm.

You can dispose of your old medicines year-round by placing them in your trash. OCRRA recommends disguising your medication to prevent someone from pilfering it from your trash and consuming it. Just mix your pills or liquid medication in with coffee grounds or rotting food. All household trash in Onondaga County is burned at high temperatures at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, which is the same end that medication meets when dropped off at collection events. In addition, you may bring old medications to designated drop off locations in Onondaga County. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/medication2017](http://www.tinyurl.com/medication2017) for details.

\* One gift card per resident drop off, regardless of the number of mercury items turned in. Gift cards are only issued for mercury item drop off, not medication drop off.

Ann Fordock can be reached at [afordock@ocrra.org](mailto:afordock@ocrra.org).

## Mercury Therm Drop-Off Form

Complete this form in advance. Place it on your vehicle's dash on the day of the event.

**Number of THERMOMETERS Dropped Off:**

**Name:**

**Street:**

**Town:**  **Zip Code:**

**Phone:**

**Email\*:**

\*By providing your email address you are confirming that you want to be on OCRRA's email list (which keeps you up-to-date on OCRRA's services and upcoming events). You may unsubscribe at any time.

**Number of THERMOSTATS Dropped Off:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Mark Your Calendar

<p><b>ALKALINE BATTERY COLLECTION</b> <b>MONTH OF JULY</b> Place yellow battery bag on top of your trash. See page 2 for details.</p>	<p><b>COMPOST SITES CLOSED</b> <b>TUESDAY, JULY 4</b> <b>MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4</b></p>	<p><b>TRANSFER STATIONS CLOSED</b> <b>TUESDAY, JULY 4</b> <b>MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4</b></p>	<p><b>ELECTRONICS RECYCLING</b> <b>YEAR-ROUND</b> At various local businesses. Visit <a href="http://OCRRA.org">OCRRA.org</a> for details.</p>	<p><b>HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DROP-OFF</b> <b>Year-Round by Appointment</b> <b>ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCTS &amp; SERVICES</b> 6:30 am – 6:00 pm Register at <a href="http://OCRRA.org">OCRRA.org</a>.</p>
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**FACT:** Liquid or solid medication can be mixed with coffee grounds and placed in the trash. Never flush or pour down the drain.