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EARTH DAY

Recovery facility will be built to recycle county's dry waste

A new, \$3.5 million materials recovery facility will be built in Glenwood this year to recycle Lane County dry commercial waste, which is currently being land filled.

EcoSort, a joint venture between Liberty Financial Group and Willamette Resources, Inc., plans to recover and recycle 11,000 tons of commercial wastes during its first year of operation in 1996.

Bob Fenstermacher, executive vice-president of Liberty Financial Group, said his firm discovered, through testing, that about half of each load of mixed commercial waste is recyclable.

Many commercial materials that are recyclable but are currently being land-filled include newspaper, appliances, concrete, wood, metal and cardboard.

Although 80 to 85 percent of Lane County households recycle materials, it is difficult for Lane County businesses to do the same.

Sandra Huffstutter, an account manager with Cawood Communications, said EcoSort will help businesses recycle efficiently, thereby obtaining new recyclable tonnage that hasn't been recycled in the past.

"It's hard for small businesses to source-separate, so they end up throwing it all into a dumpster," Huffstutter said. "EcoSort will solve this problem. Commercial haulers now have a place to take mixed dumpsters to."

Huffstutter said EcoSort will have a great effect on current landfill conditions. Short Mountain is the only landfill in Lane County and current conditions have limited its useful life to 20 years.

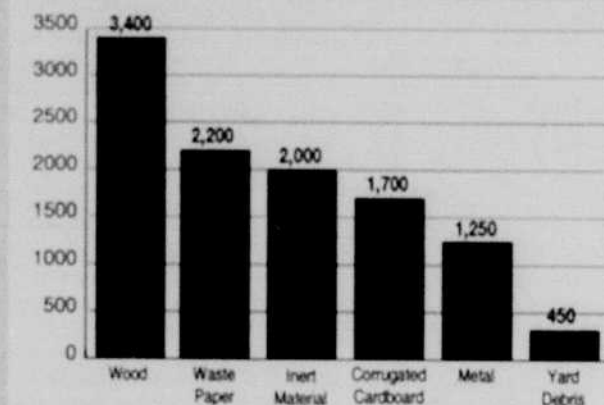
"EcoSort will extend the life of our only landfill," Huffstutter said. "Through its operation, 7 to 10 percent less per year will go into Short Mountain landfill."

All recyclable materials that EcoSort recovers will be sold to markets.

Sanipac, Inc., the area's largest waste hauler and a company that has contracted to haul commercial waste to EcoSort, has already established relationships with companies that purchase recyclable items. Lane County has also been very aggressive in finding buyers for

FIRST YEAR RECYCLING TONNAGE

Projected figures by Ecosort Inc. for 1996 recycling tonnage.



MATT GARTON/Emerald

waste items.

Huffstutter wants the public to understand that individual and business recycling programs do have value.

"Recycled items aren't just stacked in a building somewhere," Huffstutter said. "These items go back to markets and get reused. The materials will go into your next car or appliance. The loop's getting closed."

The facility will encompass both automotive and manual labor, making the recycling process more flexible for employees to recover different recyclable items as markets change.

Merle Irvine, vicepresident of Willamette Resources, Inc., said the market value of recyclable commodities changes constantly. EcoSort can respond to the markets by changing the assignments of manual sorters to pull materials that have current market value.

EcoSort's system for removing recyclable goods from commercial waste is simple, yet efficient. As loads come into the plant, they will be dumped on the building's concrete floor. Large items such as wood, appliances and concrete will be removed.

Remaining items will be pushed on a conveyor belt and dropped on a shaker screen. Whatever does not fall through the small holes of the screen will fall onto a sorting conveyor.

Employees will remove marketable items from the conveyor and drop them down shoots. From there, they are taken to var-

ious markets. Whatever remains after this process will be land filled.

Irvine said this will be the first time a major supplier (Sanipac), processor (EcoSort) and market (Weyerhaeuser) will all be under one roof. All three will be jointly using the system, which will reduce redundancies.

Half the facility will be leased to Weyerhaeuser Recycling, which will relocate its Cross Street operations for processing recyclable paper to the new facility. At the new site, Weyerhaeuser will continue to process paper fiber from its own sources, as well as recyclable paper from EcoSort.

Irvine agrees that EcoSort will have a great impact on the current landfill conditions.

"In 1994, Lane County recycled 116,000 tons of material," Irvine said. "Ecosort will add 11,000 tons to that. That's a 10 percent increase out of one facility. That's a very strong number especially considering the general public is not being charged for the service the plant provides."

Huffstutter said Lane County has a June 1995 recycling goal of 30 percent. The year 2000's recycling goal is 50 percent. Pulling the next 20 percent will be difficult, Huffstutter said, but EcoSort will help.

A July ground breaking is planned, with completion set for January 1996. In the interim, a temporary facility will be operational within the next 60 days.

— Jennifer Carr

Program may help timber employees

OLYMPIA (AP) — Gov. Mike Lowry and U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks have urged support for a state program that puts dislocated timber-industry employees back to work restoring the environment.

The Jobs and Environment Watershed Restoration Program "makes sense from every standpoint," Lowry said Tuesday at a rally on the Capitol steps that drew nearly 200 dislocated timber workers and environmentalists.

"It puts the experience of good, hard-working people who lost their jobs right back into the woods."

Dicks, D-Wash., encouraged the crowd to go one-on-one with legislators to see that the program gets funded.

"The money is not in either the House or Senate budgets — it will have to be added in conference committee," he said. "Let's see that this gets done."

Some members of the crowd carried signs bearing slogans such as "Wildlife Needs Help" and "Create Jobs Not Dislocation."

Rep. Lynn Kessler, D-Hoquiam, said she was outraged that the House budget contained no money for the program.

"It boggles the mind that we're not willing to put one

damn dime into a program that gives people dignity," Kessler told those attending the rally.

"We found a program that works and makes sense, and now we're going to get rid of it," she said. "It makes no sense."

Sen. Jim Hargrove, D-Hoquiam, urged the crowd to pressure members of the Republican-controlled House to back up the state's timber workers.

"The House budget is \$17.3 billion and they say they are not budging off of that number," Hargrove said.

Timber workers lost their jobs through no fault of their own, he said.

"Federal laws caused them to lose their jobs," Hargrove said, referring to recent court rulings that have curbed logging in the region, citing violations of laws designed to protect the environment and endangered species.

The restoration program "brought together the need for habitat restoration with the need for jobs," said a news release from the Watershed Restoration Alliance, which helped organize the rally.

"Timber workers skilled in logging techniques have the skills it takes to mend fish and wildlife habitat."