

# Oregon's recycling habits result in "significant energy savings"

In the midst of a sluggish economy, Oregonians' persistence in following their recycling ethic is translating to significant energy savings and greenhouse gas reductions, according to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) 2008 Oregon Material Recovery and Waste Generation Rates Report. The material recovery rate includes recycling, composting and material burned for energy recovery.

"When people recycle materials, industry is able to make new products with significantly less energy and lower greenhouse gas emissions," said Mary Lou Perry, DEQ solid waste specialist and report coordinator. "People who recycle really make a difference. They should be heartened by the positive effect that recycling

has on the environment."

The DEQ report estimated an energy savings in 2008 from recycling equivalent to 243 million gallons of gasoline – roughly 2.7 percent of total energy used by all sectors of the state's economy. Greenhouse gas reductions in 2008 from recycling, composting and energy recovery amounted to the equivalent of eliminating tailpipe emissions from 660,000 passenger cars, or roughly 4.6 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the state during 2008.

Other significant findings from the report, which is available on the DEQ website at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/recovery/materialrecovery.htm>:

- The state's overall rate for recovering municipal solid

waste in 2008 stood at 48.2 percent – an increase over 2007's rate of 46.5 percent.

- Oregonians' per-capita waste generation (the sum of all discards, both recovered and disposed) in 2008 was 2,761 pounds, down significantly from the 3,045 pounds per person in 2007.

- Twenty-seven of Oregon's 35 individual wastesheds – comprised of individual counties, the tri-county Portland metropolitan area and the city of Milton-Freewater – showed increases in their recovery rates from 2008 over 2007. A full listing of material recovery rates statewide is available online at: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/recovery/materialrecovery.htm>. Scroll down to "Rates (Wastesheds)."

- Each wasteshed has a re-

covery goal for 2009. Those rates will be known a year from now when the next report comes out, but in 2008, 20 of the wastesheds were already meeting their goal.

This is the state's 17th annual material recovery report, compiled via statistical surveys filled out by garbage haulers, private recycling and composting companies, material recovery facilities, mills, transfer centers, landfills and other facilities. DEQ uses a complex model to analyze the recovered tonnage of different materials and estimate the resulting greenhouse gas and energy savings.

DEQ calculates the state's material recovery rate by taking the total amount of material recovered and dividing it by the

total post-consumer material generated – the sum of all discards that are either disposed of or recovered. In 2008, the state recovered 2,330,509 tons, or 48.2 percent of the total municipal waste stream for the year. The state disposed of 2,903,138 tons, and that amount added with total material recovered equals 5.23 million tons generated in 2008. This is an 8.2 percent decrease in waste generation from 2007.

Among the materials recovered in 2008, paper represented one third (33 percent), followed by yard debris (21 percent), metals (17 percent), wood waste (16 percent), glass (4 percent), plastic (2 percent), electronics (1 percent) and "other" (6 percent).

## EPA settles with Columbia County firm for \$89,000

The Environmental Protection Agency reached a settlement with Dyno Nobel, Inc., for its alleged failure to report the release of about 448 pounds of ammonia from Dyno Nobel's Deer Island facility in a timely manner. EPA announced September 8 that the settlement includes \$17,000 in penalties and \$72,000 to provide emergency response equipment for local firefighters and a new ammonia monitoring system.

The settlement is related to a release at Dyno Nobel's ammonia and nitric acid manufacturing facility located at 63149 Columbia River Highway, Deer Island, on September 29, 2008.

In the agreement, EPA alleges that Dyno Nobel failed to notify the appropriate emergency response entities until

approximately 11 hours after the release occurred. The federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act require that releases of hazardous substances such as ammonia that are above a reportable quantity be immediately reported to federal, state and local emergency response entities.

"The health and safety of our communities depends on prompt release reporting," said Edward Kowalski, Director of EPA's Office of Compliance & Enforcement in Seattle. "Effective emergency response begins with timely notification, which allows local, state and federal responders to take ac-

tion and reduce risks to public safety and the environment. Ammonia can be extremely dangerous, which is why immediately notifying the appropriate agencies is so important."

In addition to the penalty payment, Dyno Nobel will perform a Supplemental Environmental Project, with \$56,000 for an ammonia monitoring system for improved leak detection. They will also provide over \$16,000 to purchase emergency response equipment for Columbia River Fire & Rescue to improve the Department's ability to respond to hazardous materials emergencies.

Ammonia is a colorless gas that can cause severe burns to skin, eyes, throat and lungs, and, with high enough exposure, death.

## WOEC: Members ask about alternative power, more

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building a new Vernonia substation above the flood plain.

The new rate will take effect October 1, 2009.

Most of the increase was necessitated by a seven percent increase in the wholesale power rate from Bonneville Power Administration, which supplies most of the energy used in WOEC's system. Farmer also said that one-third of WOEC payments go to fish survival.

About 50 members attended the rate hearing, asking about

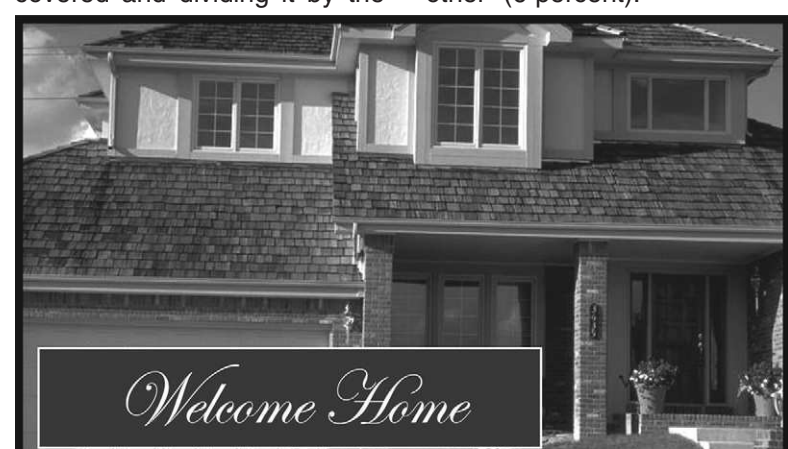
alternative power sources, particularly wind power, and why WOEC's rates are higher than other co-ops in the state.

At this time, wind power costs \$50 to \$80 per megawatt, and hydropower costs about \$30 per mw, explained financial consultant Royce Hagelstein, who was formerly Chief Financial Officer for WOEC and is now Director of Accounting & Finance for Cowlitz PUD.

Farmer explained that a lack of large commercial or industrial accounts, which pay higher

rates, forces costs onto residential users.

Other questions included the possibility of splitting WOEC's 1224 square mile territory into other utilities. Because all members must be treated equally, this would require that the entire co-op be absorbed by other utilities at the same time, additionally, each of the other utilities would have to convince the state Public Utilities Commission that such a move would benefit their existing rate payers.



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