

2009 Solid Waste and Environmental Programs Year in Review
Submitted by Alexis Baker, Environmental Programs Coordinator

The Solid Waste Division has seen many positive changes in 2009. The Stoney Mountain Recycling Center was upgraded, adding extra bins for recycling and placing them in more convenient areas. Recycling services were expanded to offer electronics, batteries, oil, oil filters, and cooking grease recycling. Efforts have also continued with our Recycling Bin Loan Program, which loans a limited number of bins for local events.

The Solid Waste Division also led the recycling efforts for the Apple Festival with the help of volunteers from Project Challenge (a community service organization encouraging teenagers to contribute to their community) the Environmental Conservation Organization (ECO) (a local environmental advocacy group), and the Hendersonville Public Works Department. For the 2009 festival, the Solid Waste Division also presented their recycling truck with new graphics with a recycling message. Dottie Bottle also made a special appearance to encourage everyone to recycle.

Recycling outreach efforts were also intensified by the October 2009 material ban issued by the State of North Carolina. This ban mandated that plastic bottles, oil filters, yard waste, and wooden pallets may not be disposed of in the landfill or transfer station. In other words, these materials should be recycled and facilities in the County exist at the Stoney Mountain Recycling Center to properly recycle these items. Continued efforts to encourage recycling included new partnerships with Blue Ridge Community College, Pardee Hospital, and Flat Rock Playhouse.

A Solid Waste Feasibility Study was conducted by a consultant for Henderson County. In this study, garbage and recycling issues were explored. The consultant identified that the best way to assist the Haulers in meeting the State mandates on equipment and recycling was to develop a recycling facility that makes recycling as easy and convenient as possible. This facility will sort the recycling into different materials for market so the Citizens and Haulers only have to have two bins: trash and recycling. Many haulers, in anticipation of the January 2011 deadline for all haulers to offer recycling, have already begun offering recycling to their customers. Additionally, the Henderson County Ten year Solid Waste Plan was updated with the goals of reducing waste by 20% by 2014 and 40% by 2019.

Design work for capital improvements began at the end of 2009 for the Henderson County Transfer Station at Stoney Mountain. These improvements will be paid for through an enterprise fund, generated solely from solid waste revenue and not property taxes. The entrance to the scales at the Stoney Mountain facility will be relocated and separated from the Citizen Convenience center. New entrance and exit scales will allow trucks to weigh upon entrance and exit rather than backing up traffic on Stoney Mountain Road. A new convenience center will be built to include a permanent electronics and household hazardous waste collection. A separate materials recovery facility will also be built. A materials recovery facility (MRF) will collect recyclables, sort them, and ready them for marketing. Haulers will be able to tip their recyclables onto the floor of the

MRF rather than wasting time tipping their loads into bins or sorting. The costs of transporting recyclables to South Carolina will be cut and a new source of revenue will be generated to increase solid waste services.

Henderson County also took a leadership role in energy management by drafting the Strategic Energy Plan. This Plan outlined strategies and goals to cut energy usage in the County. Three grants, worth over \$2 million, were submitted last year with specific measures to accomplish the goal of reducing energy usage.

Henderson County is looking forward to continuing our efforts to reduce energy usage, improve recycling services, and continue energy management and recycling outreach in our community. Have a great new year.

Alexis can be contacted at 694-6524 or by email at alexisbaker@hendersoncountync.org