



Local waste haulers Welsh and Toucan both offer single-stream recycling, in which all recyclables can be thrown into the same bin. COURTESY PHOTO

SINGLE-STREAM RECYCLING

available locally

Items sorted in waste plant

By Allison Chatrchyan and Robert Cohen

The Dutchess County Environmental Management Council recently completed a State of the Environment report for Dutchess County. This is the tenth in a series of articles from the report. The entire report can be found online at <http://dutchess-emc.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/dcsoereport2012.pdf>.



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There is approximately 280,000 tons of municipal solid waste generated in Dutchess County each year, based on a population of 297,488 and a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation statewide average generation rate of 5.15 pounds per person per day. The estimated rate of recycling in the county is approximately 23 percent, which is greater than the New York state average rate of 20 percent, but lower than the nation-

WHAT CAN BE RECYCLED IN SINGLE-STREAM BINS?

Glass bottles: All colors.

Metal: Cans, coat hangers and aluminum food trays.

Plastic containers: All numbers, beverage, cleaning and food containers.

Mixed paper: newspapers, regular and glossy paper, paperback books.

Cardboard: Egg cartons, boxes and cereal boxes

Unacceptable in bins: Photos, paper towels, plastic bags, aerosol cans, flower pots, broken glass, foam plastics, dishes, diapers, electronics, scrap metal, household hazardous waste (paint cans, light bulbs, etc.) Some of these items can be recycled elsewhere.

al average of 34 percent.

Licensed haulers transport more than 60 percent of the municipal solid waste to a waste-to-energy facility located on Sand Dock Road in the Town of Poughkeepsie. The facility incinerates the waste and the steam generated is used to operate a turbine that generates electricity that is sold to Central Hudson Gas & Electric. It is one of only 10 active municipal waste combustion facilities operating in New York, and is owned by the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency and operated by Covanta Energy.

In terms of recycling, the Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency Material Recovery Facility in the Town of Poughkeepsie, operated by the ReCommunity Recycling Inc., sorts, bales and sells re-

covered recyclable materials. In 2012, ReCommunity opened a state-of-the-art, 52,000-square-foot automated recycling facility in Beacon. The "single-stream" recycling facility processes all sorts of recyclable materials.

The licensed haulers that bring materials to the Beacon facility, including Royal Carting, Toucan and Waste Management, now support single-stream recycling. This should make it easier for residents to recycle, since items can be placed into one container without being sorted.

The vast majority of solid waste and recycled materials are collected from residents via curbside pickup, either through individual homeowner contracts with licensed haulers, by municipal-run collection, such as in the City of

Poughkeepsie, or by haulers contracted by municipalities, such as in the City of Beacon. How each municipality handles household waste and recycling varies greatly. Many municipalities operate transfer stations for residents to bring in their materials for disposal or recycling for a fee. Residents should contact their town, village, or city or waste hauler for more information. The Dutchess County Resource Recovery Agency website and the county website have information regarding where materials can be taken and what is accepted.

Dutchess County's recycling rate can be improved through better outreach and resident education. The county recently appointed Lindsay Carille from the Department of Planning and Development as the new solid waste coordinator and is finalizing a new Solid Waste Management Plan. Residents may want to provide input to the plan when it is made public later this year, as it will guide important waste and recycling management decisions in the future.

Allison Chatrchyan is the environment and energy program leader at Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County, and an ex-officio member of the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council. Robert Cohen is an at-large appointed member of the and a retired IBM employee.