

MEDIA RELEASE

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Recyclers Go Even Greener with Stimulus Grant

Emmet County Recycling (ECR) has been an environmental leader for over 20 years. Now they have won federal stimulus dollars to take their green commitment even deeper. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant of \$153,672 will be used to improve the energy efficiency of ECR's processing facility, to increase the quantity and variety of plastics recycled, and to educate about the energy saved by recycling. The money comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was awarded through the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth.

According to ECR Director Elisa Seltzer, this grant award comes at an ideal time as a facility expansion is underway to recycle more materials. "Being able to make the connection between recycling and saving energy is really important and the grant money will be put to good use in our expanded facility. We're really excited to be able to develop sorting for plastics no one else in the state is currently able to recover," said Seltzer.

A variety of energy related projects are being covered by the grant. To improve the energy efficiency of the new Recycling Facility expansion currently underway, three projects will be undertaken. Air from a blower that is part of the new sorting system will be filtered and returned to the building to conserve heat in the winter. A device to optimize motor speed on the exhaust fan will be installed. And ongoing energy use will be monitored by a grant-funded specialist to identify more energy conservation opportunities once the facility is up and operating.

A second area to be supported by the grant is expansion of the types of plastics Emmet County Recycling accepts. Recycling plastics instead of producing plastic items from natural gas or petroleum conserves substantial energy resources. ECR plans to reconfigure its old processing facility to allow marketing of less common plastics.

Education makes up the third area of activities to be funded by the grant. ECR will develop three short videos or slideshows about how recycling conserves energy and reduces emissions of greenhouse gases. The videos or slideshows will be shared with Drop-off Center customers and tour participants at an indoor-outdoor kiosk and will also be made available on the internet and to other recycling educators. ECR staff will also make presentations to others in the recycling industry about their energy saving projects.

In awarding the grants, Governor Granholm stated, “These Recovery Act funds will assist our ongoing efforts in moving to a clean energy economy. Investing in energy-saving projects throughout Michigan will boost the state’s energy efficiency and renewable energy industries, reduce energy costs for communities, and create jobs.”

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Photo attached: Currently under construction, the new Emmet County Recycling (ECR) processing facility will be equipped to reuse heated air from its operations for space heating. Money for this and several other energy-saving projects at ECR is coming from a federal stimulus grant.