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CSWD Begins Paying Haulers for Recyclables

The new year brings good news for trash haulers-and recyclers: Chittenden Solid Waste District began paying licensed haulers and customers with CSWD accounts \$7 per ton for All-In-One recyclables brought to the CSWD Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) as of January 1, 2008. The payment applies to recyclables collected from Chittenden County businesses and residents. Out-of-District recyclables will net haulers \$2 per ton. There is a monthly 2-ton minimum to qualify for the payment.

The steady increase in the value of recyclable paper has played a huge role in making it more profitable for manufacturers to use recyclables rather than virgin materials to make their products. Soaring oil prices have sent the value of plastics to new highs. Manufacturers are hungry for more and more recyclables and are paying higher prices to acquire them.

"We are being paid more per ton for recyclables than we anticipated," says Tom Moreau, Chittenden Solid Waste General Manager. "We're looking at a possible \$600,000 surplus by the time our fiscal year ends in June. Right now we're recovering only about 65 percent of recyclable materials in Chittenden County. Now that we're recycling plastics #1 through #7, we're going to need to use some of the surplus to expand the tip floor and bale storage area at the MRF." After materials are separated at the MRF, they are compacted into giant bales before being shipped to their various markets.

The District anticipates that about 41,000 tons will be handled in the MRF by the end of this fiscal year, which ends June 30. Market value in the past has been about \$81.50 per ton of sorted, baled recyclables. Now, markets are paying an average of more than \$100 per ton.

Of the anticipated \$600,000 surplus, about \$250,000 will go towards improvement at the MRF. An anticipated \$175,000 will go be paid to haulers who bring materials to the MRF. Some of the surplus will be used to fund grants to help haulers explore the benefits of using larger, wheeled carts rather than recycling bins. The larger carts will hold more recyclables and have been shown to be a successful tool for increasing recycling rates.

While customers may not necessarily see a reduction in their trash bill, this program could enable haulers to maintain current prices in the face of rising oil prices and other costs of doing business.

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