

Number 28
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Pollution Prevention

**Governor's Pollution Prevention Award Recipient -
YardWaste Recycles! Program, Hamilton County
Department of Environmental Services -
Solid Waste Management District**

We all have a role to play in reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills. The Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services' excellent YardWaste Recycles! Program is an outstanding example to other communities of how their residents can work toward total reduction and recycling of yard related waste.

The Governor's Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Pollution Prevention have been presented since 1986. *YardWaste Recycles!* Program, Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services, Solid Waste Management District, received one of five awards given in 1995. Governor George V. Voinovich presented the eighth annual awards on February 7, 1995.

These awards recognize outstanding commitment to improve Ohio's environment through pollution prevention. Evaluation criteria for the awards included: the overall effort to reduce waste at the source, recycle or recover materials, or conserve energy; soundness of approach; cost effectiveness; ability of the program to serve as a model for others; and effectiveness in promoting prevention as the preferred long-term approach.

What is Pollution Prevention?

Pollution prevention is the use of source reduction techniques to reduce risk to public health, safety, welfare and the environment and, as a second preference, the use of environmentally sound recycling to achieve these same goals. Pollution prevention avoids cross-media transfers of wastes and/or pollutants and is multi-media in scope, addressing all waste and environmental releases to the air, water and land.

**YardWaste Recycles!
Program,
Hamilton County
Department of
Environmental
Services**

The Hamilton County Department of Environ-

mental Services - Solid Waste Management District's (SWMD) yard waste recycling program set an ambitious goal of 100 percent recycling of yard waste in Hamilton County. The program uses both educational components and a memorandum of understanding to make Hamilton County's grass trimmings and leaves a resource, not a waste destined for the landfill.

Pollution Prevention Activities

In 1992, the SWMD began development of its yard waste recycling program in preparation for an upcoming statewide ban on yard waste in Ohio landfills. At that time, yard waste accounted for approximately 19 percent of residential landfilled waste in Hamilton County. The first phase of the yard waste recy-

cling program, *Just Mow It*, encouraged residents not to bag their yard waste, educating them about the benefits and techniques of mulching grass clippings, and informing them about the upcoming ban. *Just Mow It* included public workshops, brochures, posters, handbooks, youth programs, and other activities.

At community workshops, representatives from local governments throughout the county were provided the tools needed to develop yard waste programs in their own communities. Individuals in the county were targeted through activities such as: the *Just Mow It* Kick Off, a one-day event featuring education booths, mulching exhibits and composting demonstrations; numerous public workshops; and billboards. The department's mascot, Spencer the Environmen-



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tal Basset Hound, was placed on most published materials to bring recognition to the program, and was used as an educational tool with children.

The SWMD established a voluntary agreement among the industrial and governmental entities involved with yard waste management in Hamilton County. The result, a memorandum of understanding (MOU), is a pledge of good faith among BFI Waste Systems, Rumpke Waste, ELDA Recycling & Disposal Facility, and the SWMD. The MOU states that waste haulers will not accept source-separated yard waste, and landfill owners will not accept yard waste at their facilities. In exchange, the SWMD agreed to continue and expand the *Just Mow It* education campaign.

The MOU has served as an effective ban on yard waste since December 1993. Based on their area of residence, county residents have a variety of options available, such as free drop-off centers. In response to the MOU, the SWMD expanded the *Just Mow It* campaign into the *YardWaste Recycles!* campaign.

YardWaste Recycles! encompasses the *Just Mow It* campaign along with a composting program and extensive information on all yard waste disposal options.

Looking Ahead

The Department of Environmental Services already has begun its 1995 *YardWaste Recycles!* campaign with a multi-channel communications effort. Television, radio, newspaper and billboards have been used to disseminate information about the various yard waste recycling opportunities available to Hamilton County residents. Along with paid advertising, the campaign has attracted significant media attention in the *Cincinnati Enquirer* and local television news broadcasts. The department's YardWaste Hotline has received many calls and has served as an important tool for literature distribution. The campaign will continue in the fall with an intensive home composting education campaign.

The department also is establishing a Business Assistance Program to assist small businesses, institutions and other organizations with waste

reduction and recycling. A newly-hired business specialist is creating a Business Waste Reduction and Recycling Handbook and is currently conducting waste assessments for a select group of companies in the county.

Other efforts include an ozone education program, expanded in-school programs, and a household hazardous waste collection program for the spring and fall.

For More Information

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This is the twenty-eighth in a series of fact sheets Ohio EPA has prepared on pollution prevention. For more information, call the Office of Pollution Prevention at (614) 644-3469.

The Office of Pollution Prevention was created to encourage multi-media pollution prevention activities within the state of Ohio, including source reduction and environmentally sound recycling practices. The office analyzes, develops and publicizes information and data related to pollution prevention. Additionally, the office increases awareness of pollution prevention opportunities through education, outreach and technical assistance programs directed toward business, government and the public.
