

# From the Director

**Donna Barlow Casey**



As I look back at fiscal year 2007 (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007) and consider the many issues and events that shaped the year, I see a group of people working to restore the foundation of a large building. They are planning for the future—reinforcing those parts that haven’t received attention in recent years, identifying sturdy places as well as those that require additional work, and asking if and where expansion might be necessary. This work may have gone unrecognized by passersby; only interested friends and neighbors may know the full breadth, depth, and cost of the work. And yet, it was—and is—critical work to do.

This picture characterizes the past year at the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District. It wasn’t a glamorous year, but very important work was accomplished. CVSWMD Board Chairperson Janice Walrafen (Plainfield) captured the highlights of this foundational work in a recent communication with the full board. In that, she recounted the following:

- The District hired an experienced Zero Waste consultant to help District Board Supervisors and member communities assess our District’s unique characteristics and create a plan for successful materials diversion and waste reduction.
- The board worked to ensure that the District offers fair wages and benefits to its employees in order to maintain a qualified and dedicated staff. The District hired the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to study our compensation and benefits, and the board later adopted recommendations from this study. This process has helped us clarify our job descriptions and in some cases re-classify positions.

- At the same time, we restructured the organization to enable it to grow or diminish in size as needed as programs are developed, tested, and institutionalized. We eliminated some positions and modified others, created two new managerial positions—an Administrative Manager and an Operations Manager—and have contracted out other work. These changes have diminished the overall number of employees and resulted in cost savings for the District, while maintaining high levels of accomplishment.
- In seeking to improve financial management and fiscal responsibility, the board elected a new Treasurer to give us a committed and independent hand at overseeing our finances. And, with the hard work of staff, we managed to work within our budget in a tight year.

In addition, efforts to rekindle the committee structure of the board got underway. Active board committees are invaluable to the District’s work as these teams accomplish significant policy-related research and discussion each month—work that guides the full board and recharges organizational programs.

At the same time, staff maintained the innovative programming that has come to characterize the CVSWMD. Organics diversion, inter-district programming, partnerships with community groups and non-profits having similar goals and ethics, and education and advocacy for zero waste continue to prove beneficial in our region. Interest in zero waste is spreading, and we find our work being looked at as a model for others—in and outside the state.

The foundational work accomplished in fiscal year 2007 will prove invaluable as we design and construct our future!