

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Donna Barlow Casey, Executive Director

ZERO WASTE INNOVATION AT WORK

The Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District's Zero Waste ideas took a big leap toward implementation in FY 2009. The organization was awarded two pivotal grants to help explore the feasibility of funneling specific "waste" materials to projects that would reuse these materials for local and regional benefit.

Food Scraps to Energy Project

The CVSWMD was very fortunate to receive a U.S. Department of Energy grant as part of a four-organization team to study the feasibility of capturing extremely clean food scraps from commercial enterprises in order to deliver them to a biodigester where they would be mixed with manure to generate heat and electricity. This project is the result of Zero Waste thinking by District staff members seeking to identify sustainable programming for resources that would otherwise go to waste. Special thanks go to Senator Leahy for assisting the District and our partners in acquiring this funding, and especially for recognizing that this innovative idea might become an important opportunity for Vermont.

Researching Additional Uses for Local "Waste"

The CVSWMD also received a grant from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources in FY09 that has allowed us to hire a researcher to study and analyze additional opportunities for diverting materials from waste to beneficial reuse. For example, just one of the ideas that may be explored is the potential to develop small scale mushroom "farms" using corrugated as the growing medium!

Combined, these two grants total approximately \$280,000 – funds that are being invested in our ability to think creatively and innovate to help the region move toward Zero Waste. If these ideas prove feasible, the results will be far greater than simply redirecting materials from the landfill to a new use. They will create "green jobs," improve local economies, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Such projects may also create new sources of revenue for the District, which would enable us to explore more ways to help move the region toward Zero Waste.

Doing Zero Waste work is more than just attempting to diminish waste. It is the work of re-purposing materials and products to benefit both people and the environment.

The achievements and challenges noted in this Annual Report explore different aspects of our Zero Waste work, and are just the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of what is possible as we move further from the emphasis on simply recycling. Doing Zero Waste work is more than just attempting to diminish waste. It is the work of re-purposing materials and products to benefit both people and the environment. ◇