N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Release: Immediate
Date: Feb. 11, 2010

Contact: Chris Frazier
Phone: (919) 715-6515

NORTH CAROLINA RECYCLING DATA SHOWS POSITIVE TRENDS

RALEIGH – As detailed in the North Carolina Solid Waste Annual Report, the total amount of material recycled last year by North Carolina municipalities and counties increased by 40,000 tons from the previous fiscal year.

The tonnage increase represents a 3.2 percent rise during a year in which total landfill disposal fell by 12.2 percent.

"It is remarkable to see this kind of increase during a recession, and it bodes well for North Carolina's ability to create jobs and grow the economy around the recovery of materials," said Scott Mouw, chief of Community and Business Assistance in the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance.

The opposite trajectory of recycling and waste disposal tonnages produced the first rise in the ratio of recycling to disposal in many years from 0.11 to 0.13. This result may indicate that, in addition to a poor economy, increased recycling is part of the reason why disposal declined.

Factors that helped account for improved recycling performance include a nine percent jump in paper and a 22 percent leap in glass recovery, driven mostly by local government collection of bar and restaurant containers under the ABC recycling program. An 11 percent increase in plastic recycling and a doubling of oil filter collection programs helped local governments get ahead of the disposal bans that took effect on those materials in October 2009. Local governments also boosted electronics recycling efforts by 64 percent, with total recovery approaching 4,000 tons. The number of households receiving curbside recycling service also grew slightly.

Last year's figures are still down from the high water mark of 1.35 million tons collected the previous year. A partial explanation for last year's numbers falling short of the previous year is the effect of the recession, which dampened consumption and the generation of recyclable materials. Yard waste totals were also down last year from the previous year, likely due to the lingering effects of the drought that resulted in the generation of less grass, leaves and other yard wastes.

As a supplement to the recycling data in the state Solid Waste Management Annual Report, the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, or DENR, today released the rankings of counties and their recycling performances for last year. The totals include tonnage recycled by both county and municipal programs within the county.

The rankings show the wide range of performance across the state and once again challenge some conventional thinking about why some counties do better than others. For example, although poorer, rural counties might be expected to struggle with recycling, the top 10 counties include some remote jurisdictions that have consistently performed well in the state rankings.

"As DENR has done these rankings over the years, it has become clear that a number of other factors besides location and economic conditions really help determine any given county's performance," said Paul Crissman, chief of the Solid Waste Section of the N.C. Division of Waste Management. "It often has as much to do with the commitment and leadership of local decision-makers with respect to offering excellent recycling services as it does with a local government's geographical spot on the state map."

- MORE –

Examples of small rural counties performing consistently well in the recycling rankings include Swain, Macon, Pamlico, Polk,

Dare and Watauga counties. The performance of Haywood County, another rural western county, showed the effects of a new level of effort and range of recycling programs implemented in the past two years, almost doubling its per capita recovery from two years ago to last year. Medium-sized counties such as Pitt, Catawba and Orange continued their ranking in the top 10, consistently out-performing their larger, urban counterparts.

A list detailing per capita annual recycling rates for each North Carolina county is provided below. Yard waste, tires and some special wastes are excluded from the totals to allow consistent comparisons from year-to-year. For more information, contact Mouw, with the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance, at (919) 715-6512.

Rank	County Name	Total Tonnage	Population	Per Capita Recovery (lbs)
1	PITT COUNTY	47,467	155,570	610.24
2	CATAWBA COUNTY	43,653	154,941	563.49
3	DARE COUNTY	8,326	33,955	490.41
4	BUNCOMBE COUNTY	50,515	227,875	443.36
5	ORANGE COUNTY	18,577	129,296	287.36
6	SWAIN COUNTY	1,888	13,982	270.00
7	MACON COUNTY	4,326	34,227	252.78
8	WATAUGA COUNTY	5,419	45,319	239.16
9	GUILFORD COUNTY	50,601	468,344	216.09
10	PAMLICO COUNTY	1,372	12,892	212.88
11	HAYWOOD COUNTY	6,078	57,108	212.87
12	NEW HANOVER COUNTY	18,642	192,235	193.95
13	CRAVEN COUNTY	9,069	97,757	185.55
14	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	78,375	877,007	178.73
15	TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY	2,271	30,991	146.58
16	CURRITUCK COUNTY	1,725	23,773	145.16
17	JACKSON COUNTY	2,597	36,990	140.44
18	POLK COUNTY	1,325	18,992	139.57
19	YANCEY COUNTY	1,288	18,592	138.52
20	BRUNSWICK COUNTY	7,119	102,857	138.43
21	ALLEGHANY COUNTY	762	11,125	137.02
22	GASTON COUNTY	13,760	204,971	134.27
23	IREDELL COUNTY	10,238	154,135	132.84
24	MADISON COUNTY	1,360	20,810	130.66
25	BURKE COUNTY	5,805	89,259	130.07
26	ALEXANDER COUNTY	2,387	36,953	129.19
27	CARTERET COUNTY	4,042	63,520	127.26
28	CHOWAN COUNTY	933	14,687	127.09
29	MCDOWELL COUNTY	2,746	44,562	123.26
30	WAKE COUNTY	52,078	864,429	120.49
31	PASQUOTANK COUNTY	2,390	41,330	115.64
32	ASHE COUNTY	1,487	26,319	112.96
33	DURHAM COUNTY	14,599	260,420	112.12
	-MORE-			
34	HYDE COUNTY	308	5,516	111.52
35	PERQUIMANS COUNTY	721	12,962	111.17

Office of Public Affairs
Phone: (919) 715-4112
1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

Diana Kees, Director
FAX (919) 715-3060
diana.kees@ncmail.net

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer

36	CAMDEN COUNTY	525	9,730	107.87
37	UNION COUNTY	9,880	191,108	103.40
38	MITCHELL COUNTY	791	16,034	98.66
39	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	15,513	316,914	97.90
40	CABARRUS COUNTY	8,184	170,406	96.05
41	FORSYTH COUNTY	16,301	343,704	94.85
42	AVERY COUNTY	828	18,428	89.91
43	HENDERSON COUNTY	4,572	103,836	88.06
44	CHATHAM COUNTY	2,579	60,881	84.71
45	MOORE COUNTY	3,559	85,280	83.46
46	ALAMANCE COUNTY	6,039	145,995	82.73
47	DAVIE COUNTY	1,673	40,970	81.67
48	MARTIN COUNTY	973	23,870	81.50
49	LINCOLN COUNTY	3,018	74,538	80.97
50	SCOTLAND COUNTY	1,396	37,064	75.36
51	WAYNE COUNTY	4,299	115,696	74.32
52	SURRY COUNTY	2,722	73,388	74.19
53	GATES COUNTY	437	11,836	73.81
54	ROCKINGHAM COUNTY	3,370	91,691	73.50
55	GRAHAM COUNTY	294	8,087	72.68
56	BEAUFORT COUNTY	1,644	46,590	70.57
57	PENDER COUNTY	1,798	51,853	69.37
58	HOKE COUNTY	1,502	44,432	67.62
59	NASH COUNTY	3,160	93,981	67.24
60	YADKIN COUNTY	1,248	38,162	65.41
61	LEE COUNTY	1,796	57,500	62.46
62	JONES COUNTY	321	10,292	62.29
63	WILSON COUNTY	2,428	78,917	61.55
64	RUTHERFORD COUNTY	1,927	63,555	60.65
65	GRANVILLE COUNTY	1,701	56,250	60.46
66	DUPLIN COUNTY	1,576	53,431	58.99
67	DAVIDSON COUNTY	4,528	158,866	57.00
68	CALDWELL COUNTY	2,051	80,020	51.26
69	FRANKLIN COUNTY	1,415	57,923	48.86
70	ROWAN COUNTY	3,374	138,512	48.72
71	CLEVELAND COUNTY	2,343	97,936	47.84
72	LENOIR COUNTY	1,254	57,521	43.60
73	BLADEN COUNTY	688	32,153	42.81
74	WILKES COUNTY	1,440	67,297	42.80
75	EDGECOMBE COUNTY	1,030	51,800	39.78
76	RANDOLPH COUNTY	2,804	140,980	39.78
77	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	537	27,651	38.83

- MORE -

78	HERTFORD COUNTY	456	23,764	38.40
79	WASHINGTON COUNTY	251	13,172	38.11
80	WARREN COUNTY	366	19,918	36.75

Office of Public Affairs
Phone: (919) 715-4112
1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

Diana Kees, Director
FAX (919) 715-3060
diana.kees@ncmail.net

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer

81	VANCE COUNTY	723	43,502	33.23
82	ONSLOW COUNTY	2,812	176,004	31.96
83	CLAY COUNTY	162	10,458	30.89
84	JOHNSTON COUNTY	2,493	162,746	30.63
85	CHEROKEE COUNTY	390	27,128	28.73
86	SAMPSON COUNTY	937	65,396	28.65
87	PERSON COUNTY	516	37,510	27.53
88	GREENE COUNTY	283	21,205	26.68
89	ANSON COUNTY	323	25,368	25.49
90	STOKES COUNTY	576	46,638	24.69
91	CASWELL COUNTY	244	23,422	20.84
92	RICHMOND COUNTY	485	46,842	20.72
93	STANLY COUNTY	583	59,714	19.53
94	HARNETT COUNTY	919	109,637	16.76
95	BERTIE COUNTY	123	20,074	12.28
96	HALIFAX COUNTY	332	55,217	12.03
97	COLUMBUS COUNTY	322	54,758	11.75
98	ROBESON COUNTY	686	130,316	10.53
99	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	100	21,168	9.49
100	TYRRELL COUNTY	14	4,280	6.45

###

Office of Public Affairs
Phone: (919) 715-4112
1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

Diana Kees, Director
FAX (919) 715-3060
diana.kees@ncmail.net

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer