



RELEASE DATE: Immediate
RELEASE NUMBER: 118-11
CONTACT: Nicole Sparks
TEL: 617 452-6214
E-MAIL: sparksnm@cdm.com

**AAEE HONORS CATAWBA COUNTY ECOCOMPLEX FOR EXCELLENCE IN
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

... program aims to achieve zero waste through unique public-private partnerships ...

NEWTON, North Carolina – The Catawba County Regional EcoComplex and Resource Recovery Facility program has received an American Academy of Environmental Engineers Honor Award in the environmental sustainability category.

Catawba County is setting a precedent in sustainable practices through its EcoComplex program. Developed in partnership with CDM, the program involves multiple components – including a landfill, a biosolids processing facility, a university research center and private businesses – that reuse each other’s waste products as energy sources or raw materials.

The foundation of the EcoComplex program is a biosolids processing facility that will dry biosolids from 10 local wastewater treatment plants with waste heat recovered from engines that convert Blackburn landfill gas into electricity. The product will become fertilizer for various agricultural needs, including biofuel crops grown on the property that will eventually fuel landfill vehicles. Liquid waste from the drying process will be injected back into the landfill to enhance waste decomposition and generate additional electricity to be sold to the local utility grid. It will also be used as nutrient for growing algae that will provide carbon dioxide mitigation for the county’s combined heat and power operations.

A wood gasification energy facility will be located at the EcoComplex, which will use wood waste from an adjacent lumber processing company and pallet manufacturer to generate electricity for EcoComplex partners, as well as harness heat and steam energy to dry lumber and wastewater biosolids. The facility will nearly double the amount of green electricity already generated onsite from landfill gas. Meanwhile, several universities are collaborating with the county for research. Appalachian State University is studying and creating biodiesel fuel at its LEED®-certified biodiesel research facility. University of North Carolina at Charlotte students and faculty are using the EcoComplex’s biodiesel crops and woody byproducts to test and create ethanol.

According to Barry Edwards, Catawba County director of utilities and engineering, "What we are doing here is employing industrial ecology to protect natural resources and our environment. In doing so, we are generating electricity and heat from renewable resources. And, we are able to control solid waste management costs, providing waste collection services at an economical rate. This is a good thing for the environment and community."

The EcoComplex and Resource Recovery Facility is visited regularly for educational tours, as well as by industries and municipalities interested in the concept. It has been featured on CNN and received several awards, including the Alliance for Innovation's Thomas H. Muehlenbeck Award for Excellence in Local Government.

CDM is a consulting, engineering, construction, and operations firm delivering exceptional service to public and private clients worldwide.

Visit our Web site at www.cdm.com