



P.O. Box 389  
100-A South West Boulevard  
Newton, North Carolina 28658-0389  
Telephone: 828-465-8201  
Fax: 828-465-8392  
www.catawbacountync.gov

## **REPORT ON SOUTHEAST REGIONAL GREEN BUILDING PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS CATAWBA COUNTY ECO-COMPLEX**

A report on “green” building programs in five southeastern states, supported by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, includes a section on the Catawba County EcoComplex.

“An Analysis of Selected Community Green Building Programs in Five Southeastern States” was conducted by the Southeast Watershed Forum and University of Georgia River Basin Center on behalf of the Southeast Smart Growth Network.

The network is a consortium of over twenty universities, organizations and agencies which, according to the executive summary of the Analysis, “was interested in identifying common features and practices of local and state government efforts that support green building programs. The objective was to gather a regional snapshot of existing green building programs, the kind of incentives used to encourage them and the cost savings being realized.”

Catawba County’s Eco-Complex is a system that recovers all useable products and by-products from a group of private and public partners located in a close-knit defined area. This group of partners works together to use each other’s waste products either as a source of energy (electricity, steam, or heat) or as a raw material for the production of their own product (pallets, lumber, compost, brick shapes/art). The EcoComplex is also focused on making and using “green” energy and on economic development.

“We are very pleased that our EcoComplex was among only sixteen case studies included in the Analysis of Selected Community Green Building Programs,” said Barry Edwards, Catawba County’s Utilities and Engineering Director. “The EcoComplex has previously been honored with national awards for being an innovative project, and we believe it being in the Analysis is another indication that our peers in green technology across the Southeast recognize its value. More importantly, we are always seeking to use the EcoComplex as a tool to help others recycle more of their waste streams and improve their green practices. The section on our EcoComplex in the Analysis will help us accomplish that goal.”

The four page section on the Catawba County EcoComplex in the Analysis, written by Amble Johnson, begins with a look at the history of the complex, including its beginning in the conversion of methane gas, produced naturally in landfills, into electricity. Catawba County sells that electricity, which brought in \$688,353 in revenue in 2010, helping the County to keep landfill tipping fees stable.



“ This energy recovery facility was the first phase in the development of a regional EcoComplex that would attract certain industries to a central location wherein they could make use of the waste streams of the associated industries as the raw materials for their own products,” the Analysis said.

The Analysis discusses the relationship between the first two businesses to locate in the EcoComplex, Gregory Wood Products and Pallet One, which takes the wood waste stream from Gregory Wood Products and turns it into pallets.

The Analysis also profiles the Biodiesel Research Facility opened in 2011 at the EcoComplex and future plans at the complex, including a Biosolids (municipal wastewater sludge) Processing Facility that would replace the county’s existing Regional Sludge Management Facility; a Wood Gasification Energy Facility project that would use sawdust and biomaterials to produce heat, electricity and steam energy; and an algae research site to explore the use of algae to create biofuels.

“Maximizing waste reuse aims to serve Catawba County in both ecological and economic arenas by providing businesses with facilities where they can have lower cost access to raw materials and can lower the cost associated with waste disposal,” Johnson wrote in the Analysis. “The EcoComplex will ultimately present an array of business and research opportunities from byproducts reuse to alternative energy production.”

Scott Millar, president of the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation is also quoted in the Analysis, regarding the role the EcoComplex plays and will play in economic development.

“The opportunity to sell 100% green power being generated out there has been key in our ability to talk with a number of [business] prospects,” Millar said. “We get to talk green-energy credits. We’re leading the nation in this category. So we can truly say if you’re green, you need to contact Catawba County.”

The Executive Summary of the Analysis summarizes by saying, “the focus is on green building, because there are widely acknowledged benefits from green building practices in three general areas. Green building creates healthier homes and workplaces by encouraging the use of safer materials. Green building saves on operating costs by reducing heat loss, reducing energy and water use and encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, like solar or geothermal. And green building protects the environment through low impact development practices and careful siting of buildings to better preserve trees, habitat, nearby water resources.”

For more information on the Catawba County EcoComplex, you may visit the Complex [website](#) or call 828-465-8261.

The entire Analysis of Selected Community Green Building Programs in Five Southeastern States may be seen at <http://www.southeastwaterforum.org/files/pdf/GreenBldgRpt2012.pdf>.

