



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

CATAWBA COUNTY UTILITIES AND ENGINEERING DIRECTOR WINS REGIONAL ENERGY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Barry B. Edwards, who has served as Catawba County's Utilities and Engineering Director since 1995, has been named one of the winners of the 2013 Energy Leadership Awards by the Business Journal of Charlotte.



The Business Journal says the award, "recognizes individuals who have played a key role in making the Carolinas a global player in the energy industry". Edwards is one of ten persons named as winners of the award this year.

Edwards was recognized for overall leadership in the energy industry, but primarily for his vision for the Catawba County EcoComplex, a growing system that recovers all useable products and by-products from a group of private and public partners, located in a close-knit defined area in and near the Blackburn Landfill off Highway 10 west of Newton. A set 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). In addition to these shared relationships, the EcoComplex is also focused on making and using "green" energy and on economic development in Catawba County.

The waste reduction brought about by the EcoComplex helped Catawba County to be ranked first in the State of North Carolina for the amount of materials recycled, per person, in 2012.

Edwards was formally presented with the award at a luncheon in Charlotte on January 25. Julie Pruett, Director of Business Recruitment for the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, nominated Edwards for the award.

"Barry Edwards is in a unique position to: 1) effect change in waste and energy in Catawba County; 2) put North Carolina in the national spotlight for waste-to-energy innovation," Pruett wrote in her nomination. "His multi-year effort to create an energy EcoComplex reached new heights in the past year. What could be called county liabilities have been repurposed to become assets."

"Using renewable energy to process biosolids into a product that can be used as fertilizer for various agricultural needs is an innovative and sustainable concept." said Dr. Richard Tsang, Vice-President of CDM Smith, an engineering firm that is a national leader in renewable energy, in the nomination. "What began as a study researching alternative means for processing biosolids from the local wastewater treatment plant -- run by a regional consortium that includes the cities of Hickory and Conover, and Catawba County -- has evolved into the Catawba County Regional EcoComplex and Resource Recovery Facility."

"I am honored to receive recognition from the Business Journal of Charlotte," Edwards said. "This award is really a recognition of our strong county leadership team and the support of the Board of Commissioners, and is made possible by progressive and innovative county government, a dynamic and productive workforce, and business partnerships and collaborations."

Edwards began his work as Catawba County Director of Utilities and Engineering in October 1995. He previously

served as Director of Public Works and City Engineer for the City of Newton. He is a Wake County native and graduate of North Carolina State University, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Prior to working with the City of Newton, Edwards was Assistant Public Works Director for Union County, NC, worked as a Project Engineer for NCDC Corporation in Hickory, as Assistant Public Works Director for the City of Lenoir, and as an Engineering Technician for Martin Marietta Aggregates.

With an operating budget of \$3.1 million in the current fiscal year, the EcoComplex has helped Catawba County cut its waste stream to 475 tons a day from 650 tons during the last fourteen years. Over the last thirteen years, the County has earned \$6.5 million from Duke Energy Corporation by selling electricity created by the methane produced naturally by the decay of waste at the landfill.

The County operates three landfill gas (methane) burning engine/generator sets that can generate three megawatts of electricity per hour, enough electricity to power 1,400 average sized homes annually. Electricity production to date has reached 159,374 megawatts. The EcoComplex has a 1,000-gallon-a-week biodiesel research and production facility; and a planned 2.5 megawatt and steam-heat wood gasification plant.

“As Catawba County’s Utilities and Engineering Director, Edwards has been the catalyst for influence and innovation to create and run the EcoComplex -- he has been the thread that links the disparate elements of government, engineering, energy economics and community,” Pruett wrote in her nomination. “His job permits him to play a lead role in driving concept-to-production in this energy and environmental outreach.

“The success of this EcoComplex can point the way for new energy and environmental policy. The project takes away any speculation that the economic, civic and scientific concepts work in unison in the real world,” Pruett added.

“Barry’s vision and commitment to recycling and reusable energy has led to the development of the EcoComplex and the County’s number one ranking in North Carolina in recycling, per capita,” said Tom Lundy, Catawba County Manager. “His leadership has made the County a better steward of our environment. By diverting waste that used to end up in our landfill, the EcoComplex and our recycling efforts are extending the life of the landfill, while the sale of electricity generated from methane has helped the County keep very stable landfill fees over the last 15 years. We’re very proud of this award and congratulate Barry on this honor!”