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CATAWBA COUNTY TO OFFER COOKING OIL RECYCLING OPPORTUNITY BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1

Catawba County has been ranked second among North Carolina's 100 counties in the amount of materials recycled, per person, for several years. Now the County is expanding its extensive recycling program to accept used cooking oil for proper recycling, beginning on February 1, 2012.

The cooking oil will be accepted only at the Blackburn Solidwaste Convenience Center at 3864 Rocky Ford Road, Newton, NC 28658. The program is free of charge to Catawba County residents and is open to residents of Catawba County only. No business waste accepted. The Blackburn Solidwaste Convenience Center is open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"We encourage everyone to help further reduce the amount of used cooking oil that is being improperly disposed by recycling it at the Blackburn Solidwaste Convenience Center" said Amanda Kain, Catawba County's Waste Reduction Coordinator. "A special container is reserved at the Blackburn Convenience Center just for used cooking oil. We ask citizens to pour their used cooking oil in the specially marked container and then dispose of their empty container onsite or take it with them."

Proper recycling will not only contribute to a clean environment, it also helps prevent a serious problem for home owners.

The used cooking oil collected by the County will be sent to the Catawba County/Appalachian State University Biodiesel Research, Development and Production Facility located at the County's EcoComplex and will be used to produce biodiesel fuel.

"Used cooking oil is one of the major causes of costly sewer system maintenance," Kain said. "It is a potential threat to the environment and unnecessary costs from the budgets of local public works departments. Sewer overflows, due to clogs from used cooking oil, can also threaten the water system. Catawba County's Cooking Oil Recycling Program targets used cooking oil, fat and grease before they become issues."

When cooking oil is poured down the drain, it solidifies into thick layers inside drainpipes, constricting water flow similar to the blood flow in arteries. Over time, clogged sewers result in unsanitary conditions including overflows in the street, foul-smelling odors, and irreversible damage to sewer pipes.

Dry wiping pots and pans before they're washed can also make a significant difference in how much oil and grease collects in a home's sewer collection system.

If you have questions about the new cooking oil recycling program or other Catawba County recycling programs please call the County Waste Reduction Office at 828-465-8217 or the Blackburn Landfill at 704-462-1348.

