



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Recycling Programs Grow in North Carolina; Catawba County Leads State in Per Capita Recycling Rate

RALEIGH – Expanding recycling efforts in North Carolina contributed to last year’s historic drop in its per capita disposal rate, and state environmental officials today recognized Catawba County for its leadership in recycling, as shown in the state’s annual rankings of county per capita recycling rates.

Catawba County earned the top spot in the state recycling rankings, according to data compiled in the 2010-2011 North Carolina Solid Waste and Materials Management Report. Its recycling rate of more than 729 pounds per capita can in large part be attributed to the Catawba County Regional EcoComplex and Resource Recovery Facility, an innovative and interactive network of companies and operations that tries to match waste streams with the need for materials in the manufacturing of new products and energy sources. The on-site use of discarded materials in turn helps Catawba County achieve higher rates of recycling.

“Catawba County and its municipalities set a strong example for other North Carolina communities in the implementation of programs and policies that encourage waste reduction and recycling,” said Rob Taylor, Local Government Assistance team leader for the Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach. “They do an outstanding job of recovering both traditional recyclables in curbside and drop-off programs, but also other materials like wood and pallets at the County’s innovative EcoComplex.”

Municipal and county recycling programs across the state continue to play an important role in diverting materials from landfills and delivering them to North Carolina’s recycling economy. The 2010-2011 report and analysis of solid waste management indicates that North Carolinians threw away less per capita than at any time in nearly 20 years, largely due to continuing recycling efforts as well as economic conditions.

“One of Gov. Bev Perdue’s top priorities has been and continues to be investing in our economic future and creating jobs,” said Secretary Dee Freeman of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. “The growth we’re seeing in public recycling programs such as in Catawba County, brings the welcome news of more materials to North Carolina manufacturers who rely on recycled commodities as their raw materials.”

Features of note related to public recycling efforts during fiscal year 2010-11 include:

- Continued growth in the recovery of traditional recyclable materials. Local government programs collected a record tonnage of traditional recyclable materials like newspapers, magazines, cardboard, junk mail, aluminum and steel cans and plastic and glass bottles and jars. This occurred in spite of a weak consumer economy, a trend towards decreased weight of packaging, and the continued decrease in the circulation and size of newspapers.

Plastic bottle recovery in particular has experienced significant growth since the state’s disposal ban became effective on Oct. 1, 2009, increasing 22 percent in FY 2009-10 and 23.4 percent in FY 2010-11.

- Increases in the number of curbside recycling programs and the number of citizens with access to recycling collection. During FY 2010-11 the number of publically operated curbside recycling programs grew for the third year in a row, climbing to 283 total programs from 259 in 2010 and 214 programs in 2009.

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- Significant growth in local government electronics recycling programs. The number of local governments operating an electronics recycling program has more than doubled in the past five years and will continue to grow in response to the state’s electronics disposal ban and as the demand for the metals and plastics in discarded electronics continues to rise. In FY 2010-11 local governments recycled more than 7,400 tons of electronics including more than 3,000 tons of televisions, a threefold increase over the amount in the previous year.

One way the state measures the overall success of recycling in North Carolina is through its annual ranking of per capita annual recycling rates for each North Carolina county. The total recycling tonnage shown includes materials collected and managed by county programs plus the municipal programs within the county. Yard waste, tires and some special wastes are excluded from the tonnage totals to allow for consistent comparisons from year-to-year.

Access to recycling markets and the commitment of local leaders to waste reduction and recycling both remain important factors in recycling program performance, but the rankings demonstrate success is being achieved by a wide range of communities from mountains to coast and from large populations to small. For more information about public recycling programs in North Carolina, contact Rob Taylor with the Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach at 919-707-8139.

Rank	County Name	Total Tonnage	Population	Per Capita Recovery (lbs.)
1	CATAWBA COUNTY	56,396.63	154,654	729.33
2	PITT COUNTY	41,769.83	169,378	493.21
3	DARE COUNTY	6,135.43	33,886	362.12
4	ORANGE COUNTY	18,006.10	134,325	268.10
5	SWAIN COUNTY	1,862.13	14,020	265.64
6	MACON COUNTY	4,487.21	33,946	264.37
7	WATAUGA COUNTY	6,352.21	51,326	247.52
8	GUILFORD COUNTY	52,147.91	490,371	212.69
9	BUNCOMBE COUNTY	23,795.90	239,179	198.98
10	BRUNSWICK COUNTY	10,706.41	108,176	197.94
11	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	89,474.39	923,944	193.68
12	CURRITUCK COUNTY	2,186.15	23,559	185.59
13	NEW HANOVER COUNTY	18,530.63	203,439	182.17
14	HAYWOOD COUNTY	5,386.78	59,148	182.15
15	SAMPSON COUNTY	5,490.39	63,481	172.98
16	CAMDEN COUNTY	864.36	10,000	172.87
17	IREDELL COUNTY	13,821.25	160,107	172.65
18	ALEXANDER COUNTY	2,936.47	37,254	157.65
19	CRAVEN COUNTY	7,850.48	104,147	150.76
20	ALLEGHANY COUNTY	811.70	11,171	145.32
21	WAKE COUNTY	61,095.61	907,314	134.67
22	HENDERSON COUNTY	7,058.48	107,177	131.72
23	MADISON COUNTY	1,352.56	20,795	130.09
24	ASHE COUNTY	1,774.45	27,378	129.63
25	JACKSON COUNTY	2,615.89	40,480	129.24
26	MOORE COUNTY	5,582.80	88,594	126.03
27	TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY	2,041.31	33,189	123.01
28	DURHAM COUNTY	16,392.88	268,925	121.91
29	HYDE COUNTY	350.16	5,783	121.10
30	DUPLIN COUNTY	3,300.11	58,729	112.38
31	BEAUFORT COUNTY	2,605.41	47,929	108.72
32	ONSLow COUNTY	10,021.90	185,304	108.17
33	CABARRUS COUNTY	9,573.68	179,025	106.95
34	PASQUOTANK COUNTY	2,159.27	40,605	106.35
35	DAVIE COUNTY	2,198.78	41,378	106.28

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36	PENDER COUNTY	2,785.11	52,504	106.09
37	POLK COUNTY	1,087.46	20,588	105.64
38	MITCHELL COUNTY	820.68	15,588	105.30
39	CHATHAM COUNTY	3,304.35	63,870	103.47
40	PAMLICO COUNTY	659.64	13,136	100.43
41	CHOWAN COUNTY	733.65	14,762	99.40
42	FORSYTH COUNTY	17,260.86	351,798	98.13
43	CARTERET COUNTY	3,258.46	66,712	97.69
44	PERQUIMANS COUNTY	647.55	13,486	96.03
45	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	14,698.44	326,673	89.99
46	NASH COUNTY	4,290.12	96,215	89.18
47	GRANVILLE COUNTY	2,616.03	60,547	86.41
48	BURKE COUNTY	3,738.78	91,008	82.16
49	LINCOLN COUNTY	3,222.85	78,684	81.92
50	WAYNE COUNTY	4,946.62	122,893	80.50
51	SCOTLAND COUNTY	1,429.08	36,098	79.18
52	MCDOWELL COUNTY	1,779.40	45,031	79.03
53	ALAMANCE COUNTY	5,431.16	151,745	71.58
54	UNION COUNTY	7,223.99	202,592	71.32
55	PERSON COUNTY	1,405.95	39,585	71.03
56	HARNETT COUNTY	4,068.04	115,579	70.39
57	WILSON COUNTY	2,860.20	81,643	70.07
58	YANCEY COUNTY	620.96	17,802	69.76
59	LEE COUNTY	2,024.29	58,059	69.73
60	CLAY COUNTY	368.99	10,622	69.48
61	GATES COUNTY	416.40	12,214	68.18
62	ROCKINGHAM COUNTY	3,188.19	93,764	68.00
63	AVERY COUNTY	587.82	17,812	66.00
64	CLEVELAND COUNTY	3,230.24	98,249	65.76
65	LENOIR COUNTY	1,895.33	59,493	63.72
66	DAVIDSON COUNTY	4,982.87	163,488	60.96
67	YADKIN COUNTY	1,164.68	38,451	60.58
68	WASHINGTON COUNTY	399.50	13,224	60.42
69	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	823.79	27,992	58.86
70	GASTON COUNTY	6,063.25	206,384	58.76
71	BLADEN COUNTY	998.90	35,243	56.69
72	FRANKLIN COUNTY	1,697.16	60,978	55.66
73	MARTIN COUNTY	673.89	24,498	55.02
74	ROWAN COUNTY	3,684.80	138,651	53.15
75	SURRY COUNTY	1,945.86	73,791	52.74
76	RANDOLPH COUNTY	3,702.33	142,127	52.10
77	RUTHERFORD COUNTY	1,758.59	68,006	51.72
78	CALDWELL COUNTY	2,031.35	83,176	48.84
79	HERTFORD COUNTY	562.57	24,822	45.33
80	WILKES COUNTY	1,522.59	69,419	43.87
81	VANCE COUNTY	881.48	45,477	38.77
82	JOHNSTON COUNTY	3,269.19	170,151	38.43
83	HOKE COUNTY	861.88	47,376	36.38
84	STANLY COUNTY	1,098.25	60,714	36.18
85	TYRRELL COUNTY	79.15	4,390	36.06
86	WARREN COUNTY	373.77	21,031	35.54
87	STOKES COUNTY	818.53	47,478	34.48
88	RICHMOND COUNTY	781.30	46,600	33.53
89	GRAHAM COUNTY	148.77	8,888	33.48
90	EDGEcombe COUNTY	938.35	56,681	33.11

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91	CHEROKEE COUNTY	438.94	27,527	31.89
92	ANSON COUNTY	372.97	26,973	27.66
93	GREENE COUNTY	218.89	21,277	20.58
94	CASWELL COUNTY	199.94	23,676	16.89
95	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	131.74	22,111	11.92
96	BERTIE COUNTY	121.78	21,267	11.45
97	JONES COUNTY	55.19	10,159	10.87
98	COLUMBUS COUNTY	255.31	58,204	8.77
99	ROBESON COUNTY	458.04	134,502	6.81
100	HALIFAX COUNTY	139.50	54,627	5.11

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