

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre Reminds Residents to Recycle Right!

Laurentian Valley, ON (August 31st, 2018) – Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre is not immune to a trend that is occurring in recycling programs across the Province. This trend adds significant costs to a program that is partially funded by the tax payer and is currently feeling pressure from changing global recycling markets. That trend is called “wish-cycling” – when residents place items in their recycling bins, hoping they can be recycled when in fact they can’t be.

“We know people want to do the right thing. Recycling makes us feel good. But we want people to understand the problems wish-cycling causes in our recycling facility.” States Sue McCrae, General Manager of the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre.

Regular audits are conducted on incoming recycling to determine where mistakes are being made and to help guide local promotion and education programs. Audits show that 25% of the material being placed in the yellow bins (container recycling) doesn’t belong there. Everything from rope, children’s toys and cell phones to batteries and other hazardous waste is ending up in the recycling. Not to mention the endless non-recyclable plastic items – everything from dirty kitty litter boxes to gas jugs. These non-recyclable items can pose a health and safety risk to staff and can damage processing equipment. It also makes it harder for Centre employees, who hand sort recycling, to separate the material that is actually recyclable.

“It would be great if we could recycle everything. Packaging has changed and recycling looks different than it did 10 years ago.” Continues Sue McCrae. **“There are many contributing factors to our ability to recycle material. The biggest factor is access to markets. We sort and separate recycling and send it to end markets to be turned into new products. But it has to make environmental and economic sense for us to do that. The transportation costs to market some of our recycling overseas and the loss in revenue for some of our marketed material is having an impact on the Centre’s budget. The loss in revenues may have to be funded by our Municipal partners. So it is a direct benefit to the tax payer to recycle correctly. Higher operating costs affect all of us.”**

Global markets for recyclable material are increasingly scarce after China recently stopped the import of many types of recyclables from around the World. **“We need residents’ cooperation to ensure we can continue to produce quality material for our end markets or we risk losing access to those markets.”** Adds McCrae.

It was hoped that the introduction of the Waste-Free Ontario Act and Bill 151 would help alleviate the pressure on the Municipal tax base for providing recycling programs. Under the new legislation, manufactures of packaging would be responsible to ensure those items are recycled. Until the Act is fully in place, Municipalities wait.

Laurentian Valley Mayor Steve Bennett who is Chair of the Ottawa Valley Waste Management Board recalls past market fluctuations for recyclable material. **“I’ve served as Chair of the Waste Management Board for 15 years and we’ve seen market fluctuations before but this appears to be more long-term. I commend Centre staff for their ongoing commitment to producing quality products that are in demand. With increased education, hopefully people will become more aware of what actually belongs in the yellow bin and more importantly what doesn’t belong.”**

To help combat wish-cycling, the Centre has undertaken a social media campaign to help educate people on what is not recyclable in their program. Elizabeth Graham, Communications Officer at the Centre describes how the campaign came to be.

“I was recently on our recycling tipping floor and kept seeing all these items that are not recyclable in our program. So I started taking pictures. And then I thought people need to see this. We can talk about numbers and audits but people need to see the items. They need to understand why we can’t recycle these items. It’s a complex issue but the comments and conversations on social media, we hope, will help raise awareness.”

The Centre’s Fall Walk Lightly Report newsletter will also be distributed the first of September and the front page is dedicated to Recycling Right and showing items that don’t belong in the yellow bin. For more information on the local recycling program visit www.ovwrc.com.

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Contact: Sue McCrae, General Manager, 613-735-7537, ext. 214
Picture and caption included.



Old clothesline, a tackle box and plastic bags are just some of the non-recyclable items received at the Ottawa Valley Waste Recovery Centre’s recycling facility.