

April 2011 Bluewater Recycling Association Meeting Highlights

Old Tires Roll Into New Products In Communities Across Ontario

Ontario Tire Stewardship (OTS) recently celebrated its first anniversary and what a year it has been! In just 12 short months, more than 12,000 tonnes of tires have been recycled into new products across the province. Over 12 million tires – the equivalent of four tires from 3 million cars – have been diverted out of landfills and have helped to green Ontario.

Municipalities have played a significant role in collecting and diverting these tires from landfills. By accepting commercial passenger tires at recycling depots across the province, not only has illegal stockpiling and dumping decreased, but the availability of crumb rubber to make tire derived products (TDPs) has increased.

This guaranteed supply of raw materials has seen more and more manufacturers establish facilities in Ontario - driving both innovation and the economy. Municipalities are playing a key role in welcoming new businesses into their communities and in shaping the products that are used in towns and cities.

From speed humps to rubberized asphalt and rubber shingles to playground fill municipalities across Ontario are leading North American cities in incorporating TDPs into public spaces. These products are helping to green communities by ensuring that tires are diverted from landfills and recycled into useful, environmentally friendly and durable products. The opportunities for municipalities to use TDP's are only growing in the coming year.

In 2011, OTS is initiating two programs to help further drive the economy and innovation in Ontario.

First, the Community Grant Program will be offering monetary incentives to towns and cities across the province that incorporates Ontario-made TDPs into their communities. The program is currently being developed and more information will be available by summer 2011.

Additionally, OTS' Research and Development Program is helping to stimulate the production and manufacture of TDPs in the province. The program will support innovative research and development related to products, technologies or processes that are likely to facilitate the advancement of new products that use crumb rubber or help grow the market for TDPs. Municipal projects may be eligible to obtain funding under this program. For more information, visit ontarioTS.ca or email info@ontariots.ca.



Plastics Recycling Startup Snags Association Chief

The former head of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association has joined a startup company that has plastics recycling in its sights.

Mark Badger is the new CEO of Switchable Solutions Inc., a company formed to commercialize solvent-based technology developed at Queen's University of Kingston, Ontario. Badger left CPIA at the end of March to take on the new position.

Switchable Solutions relies on an environmentally friendly solvent system to dissolve scrap polystyrene and recover it. Unlike conventional solvents, the new system can be recovered without distillation and the recycling process doesn't need elevated temperatures and pressure.

Badger provided few details of the new solvent system but relevant information was presented in a session of CPIA's Innovation Forum in Toronto in October. The technology was described by Rui Resendes, executive director of GreenCentre Canada, a center of excellence based in Kingston, Ontario, and the parent company of Switchable Solutions.

Resendes said the new solvent system is non-polar and acts like hexane. It is used to dissolve PS at levels of up to 40 percent weight of resin in the solvent. Next water is added to create a two-phase system. Carbon dioxide is added next to precipitate the PS. Once the PS is recovered, bubbling dry air through the mixture regenerates the solvent. Besides plastics recovery, the technology is promising for oil seed extraction, oil sands processing and other industrial uses.

The new technology could divert 110 million pounds per year of PS resin from landfill in the province of Ontario alone, GreenCentre's Web site claims. Badger said polyethylene is the next resin that could be tackled in the new approach.

Switchable Solutions is backed by industry partners. GreenCentre is funded by the governments of Ontario and Canada and operates partly with assistance of industry members.



Paper Production Crumbles In Japan

More economic effects of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami are coming to light, with new reports on the status of the country's paper mills.

A total of seven paper mills are currently offline or operating at reduced output in Japan, including four Nippon Paper mills, Mitsubishi's Hachinohe mill, Oji Paper's Mikko mill and Hokuetsu Kishi Paper's Hitachinaka mill. Additionally, extensive damage to the Port of Sendai is preventing shipping traffic needed for the mills to operate. Woodchips and pulp from Australia are already being rerouted to other ports, and Australian wood products businesses are bracing themselves for a tough operating environment.

An estimated 3.08 million tons of coated and uncoated printing and writing paper annual capacity is currently idled in Japan. Furthermore, 608,475 tons of annual newsprint capacity, 441,000 tons of Kraft linerboard, 430,000 tons of carton board, 103,600 tons of packaging paper and 65,000 tons of SBS capacity are currently inactive.

Many North American mills are already rushing to fill the void left by the sudden loss of production. Nippon Paper, which encompasses 180 affiliates around the world, may increase production at its Port Angeles, Washington mill. Additionally, AbitibiBowater and Catalyst Paper, both based in Canada, are ready to increase production in the wake of the disaster.

In addition to paper, demand for wood products is also expected to spike in the coming weeks and months, with some believing new demand could completely offset the ongoing slump caused by the languishing U.S. construction industry. Approximately 35-40 percent of Japan's plywood production capacity has either been destroyed or suffered extensive damage. As demand for temporary shelters — and later, the rebuilding of Japanese homes and businesses — picks up in the next several weeks, wood products producers in the U.S. and Canada are anticipating a surge in demand.



Biogas Project Revived

A new energy-from-waste plant for London has risen -Phoenix-like from the ashes of StormFisher Biogas.

Harvest Power has snapped up the site on Green Valley Rd. that was to be StormFisher's home and is planning a \$20-million development to produce three megawatts of energy and 5,000 tonnes of fertilizer a year from food waste. Three megawatts is enough to power about 1,500 homes.

In Europe, organic waste has been diverted from landfills for decades in 6,000 generators.

Organic matter is loaded into a giant tank and the contents are stirred together for about 30 days. As the matter breaks down, the material generates methane and carbon dioxide gas that is captured and turned into electricity. Fertilizer pellets can be made from the leftover solid waste. The London plant will employ about 15 people and handle about 60,000 tonnes of food waste a year.

Harvest Power will break ground in May or June and be running by the spring of 2012, but there will be substantial changes from the StormFisher project. The new plant will have two pits where food waste will be blended with water into a slurry and pumped into tanks.

It will also have state-of-the-art air filters and vacuum seal spaces to reduce odours — a key concern for neighbours.

Harvest Power also operates a biogas facility in Richmond, B.C., as well as composting facilities in California and Pennsylvania. It is headquartered in Massachusetts.

StormFisher was founded by graduates from the Richard Ivey School of Business. In 2009, it was bought by Greenhouse Gas Services in Virginia, but it pulled the plug about one year later, citing financial issues.



SA Recycling Launches Scrap Pickup Service

Los Angeles-based SA Recycling has launched a new service connecting residential customers with pickup services for large metal scrap items, including autos, appliances and other goods.

The company has launched 1-800-Got-Scrap and www.gotscrap.com to serve residential customers. For a small fee, affiliated recycling centers will pick up junk cars, dishwashers, refrigerators and other appliances for scrap. Recycling centers are also listed if residents prefer to drop off their own scrap.

The database currently focuses on western states but could expand beyond the region.

MTO To Phase In New National Inspection Standard

Ontario will harmonize annual safety inspections with the rest of the provinces with a regulation that transitions current annual safety inspections to the National Safety Code Standard.

A two-year period of educational enforcement will begin in July.

According to the Ontario Trucking Association, three specific amendments were made -- safety inspections, motor vehicle inspection stations, and a small reference change to Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspections.

OTA took some credit for modernizing the program, saying it first called for harmonization back in 1997.

All stakeholders agreed that while there are some differences between the national standard and the current regulation, all concerns could be addressed through a migration protocol for a smooth transition as well as incentives for those exceeding the national standard and a commitment from MTO to hold everyone to the same standard.

Inspection times. The new inspections may take an additional five or 10 minutes to complete but would provide more valid vehicle information. In many cases there was no added time because the current inspections undertaken by businesses are already more rigorous than the current national requirements.

Dated technical issues related to transition. There were eight technical issues identified by the sub-committee that are a part of the national standard that are either irrelevant due to changing technology or nonsensical reflecting poor legislative language drafting. MTO has agreed not to reference these sections of the national standard.

Enforcement. The sub-committee identified the need for MTO to adopt a more visible enforcement system within the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station (MVIS) program. MTO has indicated that it will tighten up some of the loopholes in the regulation to ensure the distinction between fleet stations and public stations is not abused.

Incentives. Carriers with a solid safety performance should receive incentives, the sub-committee says, in the form of a reduction in administrative burden associated with the performance of annual inspections.

Standardizing Recycling Labels For Bins

A nonprofit organization is spearheading a simple solution to a common source of confusion that often leads to headaches for recycling processors and haulers.

Despite other advancements in recycling, the industry still lacks a consistent and coherent way to label recycling bins, leaving the guesswork with consumers who often put items in the wrong receptacle or in the trash, creating more work for processors down the line. But a new initiative being introduced to the industry and the general public seeks to solve this regularly occurring problem.

In 2009, at the Recycling Association of Minnesota Conference, Michelle "Mitch" Hedlund pitched the idea of creating standardized labels on recycling bins that would signal to consumers where to put their recyclables, doing away with the confusing array of signage used across the country, while producing cleaner and more consistent streams for processors. Recycling Across America (RAA), which Hedlund serves as executive director of, was formed to further spearhead the effort.

Hedlund stressed that developing easy-to-recognize labeling to be uniformly used on receptacles is long overdue. She said that the labels, which she hopes will be as commonly understood as traffic signals, could make a big difference in the quality of materials collected and the overall effectiveness of recycling.





