Brookhaven's 2011 Recycling Rate Increases by almost 10%

posted on 4/14/2011 11:08:03 AM

Town also launches new online recycling tracking tool

Farmingville, NY - On April 13, 2011, Supervisor Lesko announced that the Town of Brookhaven's recycling rate for the first quarter of 2011 increased by almost 10% compared to 2010. In the first quarter of 2011, the percent of the waste stream that was recycled was 12.5%, compared to 11.4% in 2010, which equals an almost 10% jump in household recycling.

The recycling rate increase comes on the heels of a recycling public service announcement campaign the Town led at the beginning of January, which was partially grant funded. The Supervisor also sent a letter to all Town residents with their 2011 recycling schedule, urging them to increase recycle rates.

"I thank all of the residents of Brookhaven for going green and increasing their household recycling efforts. This just shows that if everyone does their part, it can make a huge difference for the environment," said Supervisor Lesko.

Councilman Tim Mazzei, liaison to the Department of Waste Management, said, "It's great to see that Brookhaven residents are thinking green. A 10% jump in the recycling rate goes a long way in protecting the environment and saving the taxpayers money by reducing disposal costs. Thanks to everyone who made the effort to recycle more and let's keep it up."

There were several stand-out communities that dramatically increased their recycling:

- The Center Moriches-Moriches area increased recycling efforts by 38.8%.
- Farmingville area increased recycling by 35.6%.
- The Coram area's recycling rates jumped 23.4%.

The Town also launched a new webpage that enables residents to track their collection district's recycling rates, which will be updated quarterly. Residents can go to www.brookhaven.org/recycle and find out if their collection district is an above-average or below-average recycler compared to the rest of the Town by clicking on their school district and then their collection district. This online tracker also sets recycling goals for each collection district based upon their recycling history. For example, a collection district in the Rocky Point School District recycled 13.89% of its waste stream in the first quarter of 2011, which is higher than the Town-wide rate of 12.52%. Waste Management's goal for this area in Rocky Point is 16.46% of its waste stream for 2011.

Recycling has significant environmental benefits. Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees and 7,000 gallons of water. If a plastic bottle is thrown away instead of recycled, it takes 500 years for that bottle to break down. Recycling saves energy, conserves natural resources and water, reduces emissions of greenhouse gases, and limits the amount of garbage going into our landfill.

Recycling also has a positive impact on Town finances. If over the course of the entire year recycling rates increase 5%, the Town would save $1 million in disposal costs and realize $500,000 from the sale of recyclables. The Department of Waste Management is currently working on quantifying the savings associated with the increase in recycling rates in the first quarter of 2011.

All recyclables go to Brookhaven's Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), a complex and automated system that separates glass, paper, corrugated cardboard, plastics and metals from a mixed waste stream and bales each item for market. The MRF can process up to 300 tons of recyclable material per day. The Town provides curbside collection of recyclables to one, two, and three family households in 35 collection areas. Residents can also drop off recyclables at no charge to the Waste Management Facilities, the Department's Manorville Composting Facility, or the Holtsville Ecology Center.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor
One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258