

# **FINAL REPORT**

## **2000 Buy Recycled Grant Gaston County Solid Waste and Recycling June 1, 2000-November 30, 2001**

### **Description of project accomplishments.**

The Gaston County Board of Commissioners approved by a unanimous vote the resolution submitted to encourage buying recycled content office products. The resolution encourages the development and implementation of practices and policies that further the aims of waste reduction and recycling within County Government operations. Government agencies should seek to purchase products for County use which contain recycled materials, giving preference to those products with higher levels of post-consumer recycled content whenever such products meet minimum standards for their particular function; so long as the cost of the products made from recycled materials does not exceed the cost of similar products made from virgin materials.

### **Assessment of adherence to contract scope of work.**

Gaston County Solid Waste and Recycling followed the contracted Scope of Work to meet all requirements. A resolution was developed and presented to Board of Commissioners for approval. A buy recycled web page highlighting products available in the area has been posted on the web to allow public access to educational resources. A newsletter highlighting the Gaston County Buy Recycled program was produced and distributed to county department heads and area businesses and included an invitation to the upcoming buy recycled workshop. A workshop was developed and presented to county employees and area business representatives responsible for procurement of office supplies and included presentations by an area paper distributor, representatives from a local office supply, a representative from the McDonalds Corporation, and the Recycling Coordinators from the City of Gastonia and Gaston County Division of Solid Waste and Recycling. At the workshop, each participant received a resource guide that included EPA publications specific to waste reduction, supply checklists, along with other educational materials. Each participant also received a Gaston County Green Team t-shirt and magnets as recognition for participation. A traveling display was purchased and used at the workshop to promote buy recycled content office products. The display will continue to play an important role in recycling education in Gaston County.

### **Evaluation of the success of the project.**

The Buy Recycled project was successful in reaching County Government representative responsible for the procurement of office materials. Most governmental departments had a representative present at the workshop. Due to the lack of participation from area businesses, the Buy Recycled workshop will be presented again after program modification have been made to address local business needs. Additional Resource Guides were created to educate area businesses and government

departments not represented at the Buy Recycled Workshop. Workshop participants became members of the Gaston County "Green Team" and have agreed to participate in waste reduction and recycling programs at their respective offices.

**Description of unanticipated events (negative and positive) in conducting the project.**

Due to the vacancy in the position of County Recycling Coordinator, the Division of Solid Waste and Recycling requested an extension on grant funding. The buy recycled program became a primary focus of the new recycling coordinator upon start of employment. The lack of participation by area businesses was unexpected due to the fact that area businesses were individually contacted by newsletter. Currently, program delivery is being evaluated and will be refocused to increase the participation from area businesses.

**Description of what you would do differently if you could do the project over again.**

When repeating the Buy Recycled workshop in Gaston County, program delivery will need to be modified in order to attract participants from area businesses. Support from local government and participating area vendors resulted in a workshop packed with educational information. Future workshops may be expanded to include other area vendors and state educators to deliver more business specific waste reduction management plans to participants.

**Description of program results.**

Initial support from the Gaston County Board of Commissioners was key to the overall success of the Buy Recycled Program. With a unanimous vote, the Division of Solid Waste and Recycling proceeded to develop a program focused on waste reduction and recycling. A web site was designed to provide workshop participants or other interested parties a reference guide when searching for products made from recycled content material. Area businesses were contacted through a newsletter and invited to attend a half-day workshop focused on buying office material made from recycled content products. The workshop provided educational information presented by an area paper supplier, McDonalds representative, representative from a local office supply dealer, and city and county recycling coordinators. Resource guides were provided to each participant.

**Description of any materials developed as a result of the project.**

A newsletter, "Green in Gaston," was developed and distributed to all county government department heads and to businesses with a minimum of 75 employees. A resource guide was developed and presented to each participant at the Buy Recycled workshop. The resource guide included a listing of web sites that provide information on waste reduction and recycling, a recycled content checklist of office supplies that are available made from recycled content, Environmental Protection Agency recycling specific educational leaflets and brochures from local suppliers of recycled content office supplies. Also developed for the buy recycled program were Buy Recycled "Green Team" t-shirts and magnets used as an extended educational and promotional tool.