

# ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY

## ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT PUBLIC AUTHORITIES LAW - SECTION 2800

2009

### Operations and Accomplishments

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (“UCRRA”) continues its commitment to work with the County, the Towns and the City of Kingston to find ways to decrease expenses; increase revenues and to make operations more efficient while striving to provide quality solid waste management and recycling services.

#### Solid Waste Management

The Agency and its operations are largely driven by volumes, which had previously decreased by 11% over the past two years. During 2009, the Agency’s new agreement with the area’s largest commercial/residential hauler, greatly impacted volume. When compared to the first six months of the year, the average monthly tonnage for the first three months of the agreement (July – September) rose by 65%. This impact is expected to continue through 2010.

#### Recycling Services

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency projects measurable results through our recycling education and recycling enforcement programs. The Agency’s goal of a 40% recycling rate was reached this year with a 41% recycling rate for Ulster County. Greater improvements can be made in the future with increased funding opportunities for waste reduction and recycling programs (i.e. food waste composting system and C & D recycling). The 2008 recycling rate for Ulster County is up 5% from 2007, from 34% to 39% while the 2009 rate is just shy of the New York State goal of 42%. Great progress in reduction, reuse and recycling education efforts have been made, and through these efforts, progress in broader goals will be obtained despite economic conditions. Distributing updated recycling information to the commercial and institutional sectors helped to increase the collection of recyclable materials. The Ulster County Green Schools program has had positive results yielding more recycling and less waste generated at both public and private schools. The Agency’s Recycling Coordinator, Michelle Leggett, has implemented recycling outreach programs to every school in Ulster County by conducting school-wide recycling assemblies and/or classroom presentations, waste audits, creating or amending recycling and composting programs, providing tours of the Materials Recovery Facility and providing waste reduction, recycling and composting materials and information. The recycling compliance and education program for the schools has been expanded to include businesses in Ulster County. The Agency began an aggressive business recycling enforcement campaign to ensure that all

businesses in Ulster County are recycling, and those with ten or more employees have a Ulster County Business and Commercial Property Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan on file with the Agency. Our plan: Keep Recycling Compliance Positive. The business recycling program follows the Ulster County Green Schools program and utilizes the 'We Recycle' window decal advocating their recycling efforts. The Agency rewards businesses by advertising (using the window decal) that they are recycling efficiently and each business becomes an *Ulster County Partner in Recycling*. These businesses are also listed on our website. The Agency has the supportive documentation in the business recycling plan on file by using a new on-line system which provides a means to track the business for future inspections. Ulster County businesses will benefit from this program by showing their customers they are environmentally responsible.

The Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event, which is partially funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, was created to bring hazardous waste disposal services into the community and to provide a drop off location for Ulster County residents. By offering alternatives for the safe disposal of household hazardous waste, Ulster County is taking a proactive role in protecting the environment by preventing these items from ending up in landfills or contaminating water sources and wastewater treatment plants. The Agency provides opportunities for residents of Ulster County to participate in these events at a minimum of two times per year.

The hazardous material collected at the events last year included over 86,000 lbs. of electronics for recycling. 100 billion plastic shopping bags are discarded in the United States every year. An estimated 12 million barrels of oil is required to make that many bags, according to the EPA. In an effort to raise awareness and reduce these statistics, event participants received reusable shopping bags as part of our commitment to reducing waste and improving the environment. Made from recycled material, the reusable bags benefit the Earth by helping prevent plastic and paper bags from ending up in landfills or consuming energy during recycling. The Agency received generous donations of the reusable shopping bags for distribution from the following stores: Adams Fairacre Farms, HomeGoods, Mother Earth's Storehouse and Shop-Rite.

### Real Property

The following property is owned by UCRRA as of the end date of this report:

<u>Property</u>	<u>Fair Market Value</u>
999 Flatbush Road	\$11,131,940
1951 Frank Sottile Blvd	\$ 1,061,304

### Internal Control Assessment

UCRRA management has a good understanding of the need for internal controls and the existing control structure at the Agency. Opportunities to strengthen controls are taken into consideration on a daily basis. In the previous years, a full review of the accounting system and daily operations was completed. The most important change was an

increased level of review between the Executive Director, the Controller and the staff. This increased level of review coincided with past recommendations by the agency's independent auditors. During 2008, our review led to a restructured accounts receivable and collections system. The most important function was to ensure that our new system would be followed consistently, thoroughly and on a monthly basis. During 2009, our review led to the implementation of a complete disaster recovery plan. This plan was tested subsequent to year end, when all three hard drives crashed on the Agency's server. Almost all files were recovered, but we determined improvements were needed in this area, and have since been addressed. In the future, agency management intends to document the current internal control structure and develop a formal process for evaluating the effectiveness of the controls that are in place, and presenting the results of this evaluation to the board and/or audit committee.