



**FY 2010**

# USDA Headquarters Waste Minimization and Recycling Program



USDA  
Office of Operations  
USDA Headquarters Green Team  
12/1/2009

## Background

The **objective** of the Headquarters (HQ's) Waste Minimization and Recycling program is to provide continuous improvement in the reduction of waste generated by the HQ's facilities. As the largest office complex within USDA and on the National Mall, USDA HQ's strives to become a model facility for others wishing to implement waste reduction and waste minimization programs.



USDA HQ's in the District of Columbia (D.C.) consists of two structures -- the South Building and the Jamie L. Whitten Building. The South Building contains more than two million gross square feet with more than seven miles of corridors; across the street facing the National Mall is the older, but smaller Whitten Building. Considering the HQ's facilities provide working offices for approximately 7,000 employees, and serve 2000 to 3000 meals per day (the cafeteria serves tourists, visitors, and employees), managing environmental impacts provide unique challenges and opportunities; considering in 2008 these two facilities alone generated 700 tons of waste.

USDA HQ also manages the George Washington Carver Center (GWCC) located in Beltsville, Maryland. The Carver Center consists of four interconnected buildings, which occupy about 45 acres of Federal land. Since this facility is not adjacent to the other two HQ facilities the logistics of managing all three in a waste reduction program is somewhat hampered. However, many of the practices utilized at the D.C. HQ facilities can, and will, be applied to the GWCC.

Waste minimization, as mandated by the Congress, requires the elimination or reduction of the generation of waste at its source, that is, before it can become waste. E.O. 13423 "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy and Transportation Management" reiterates the requirements of E.O. 13101 "Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition" that agencies increase the diversion of solid waste as appropriate and maintain cost-effective waste prevention and recycling programs in the facilities.

## Environmental Footprint

The environmental impacts related to solid waste management in the USDA Headquarters Complex are significant. There are numerous opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint and our operational costs by reducing waste. Some of our biggest contributors to our waste stream can be found in the table below.

Operation/Activity	Waste Stream	Environmental Impact
Administrative Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Paper</li> <li>➤ Office supplies</li> <li>➤ Electronics</li> <li>➤ Junk Mail</li> <li>➤ Food &amp; beverage containers</li> </ul>	<p>Landfills not only utilize real estate but also have the potential to contaminate groundwater, surface water and contribute to air pollution, through the production of leachate and methane gas.</p> <p>Incinerating trash produces gases such as nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide (both cause smog and the latter causes acid rain), as well as trace amounts of toxics such as mercury compounds and dioxins.</p> <p>Transporting waste to disposal areas also contributes to Green house gas emissions.</p>
Cafeteria & Food Service Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Food &amp; beverage containers</li> <li>➤ Food Waste</li> <li>➤ Cooking Oil</li> </ul>	
Janitorial Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Restroom supplies</li> <li>➤ Cleaning supplies</li> </ul>	
Renovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Construction Debris</li> </ul>	
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Paint</li> <li>➤ Solvents</li> <li>➤ Lubricants</li> <li>➤ Light Bulbs</li> <li>➤ Scrap Metal</li> </ul>	
Office Relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Surplus Furniture</li> <li>➤ Surplus supplies</li> <li>➤ Moving waste</li> </ul>	
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Yard Waste</li> </ul>	

## Goals

- *Pollution Prevention:* Increase Waste Diversion Rate to over 75% through increase the number of commodities recycled and increased employee awareness.
- *Electronics Management:* Continue to contact the Centralized Excess Property Operations for used electronics pickup (CEPO redistributes, sells, or recycles the electronics).
- *Building Performance:* Recycle 50% of construction and demolition debris.
- *Awareness & Training:* Use the Internet, signage, and public events to foster building occupant awareness; conduct classroom and on-site training for contract service personnel.

Note: USDA has an overall goal of diverting 40% of its waste for the agency by December 31, 2010. Headquarters as a model facility is helping lead the way with a waste diversion rate of over 70%.

## Status of our Waste Management Program

DM made significant progress in FY2009 in improving the waste diversion rate at the Headquarters Complex. DM took following actions to fulfill the waste management objectives of Executive Order 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management:

- Conducted a Trash Sort in February 2009
- Provided training for the Janitorial Staff in March 2009.
- Installed New Recycle Containers
- Installed New Signage on Existing Recycle Containers (Bottles & Cans labels)
- Implemented Unwanted Mail Initiative
- Held Waste Minimization/Recycle Green Team Meetings
- Prepared EMS document on Recycling and Waste Minimization, including brochure
- Implemented use of Reusable Cold Drink containers (partnership with Sodexo)
- Incorporated Beltsville Service Center (OO warehouse) into recycle program
- Held an outreach event in November 2008 -- America Recycles Day
- Hosted an EPA Public Recycling Workgroup meeting in South Building
- Hosted a Trash Free Potomac Facility meeting (August 2009)
- Implemented Battery and Personal Electronic Recycling Program
- Implemented use of Clearstream exterior recycle containers during tourist season
- Designed Grinder/Dewatering system for cafeteria waste
- Reduced Trash Picks at facility from 5 pickups per week to 4. This reduced the amount of round trips by a diesel truck by 52 per year.
- Presentation on USDA Waste Minimization and Recycle Program at the Federal Environmental Symposium in Bethesda Maryland
- Piloted New Employee Orientation Session Information Session on Sustainability Program including Waste Minimization & Recycle Program.

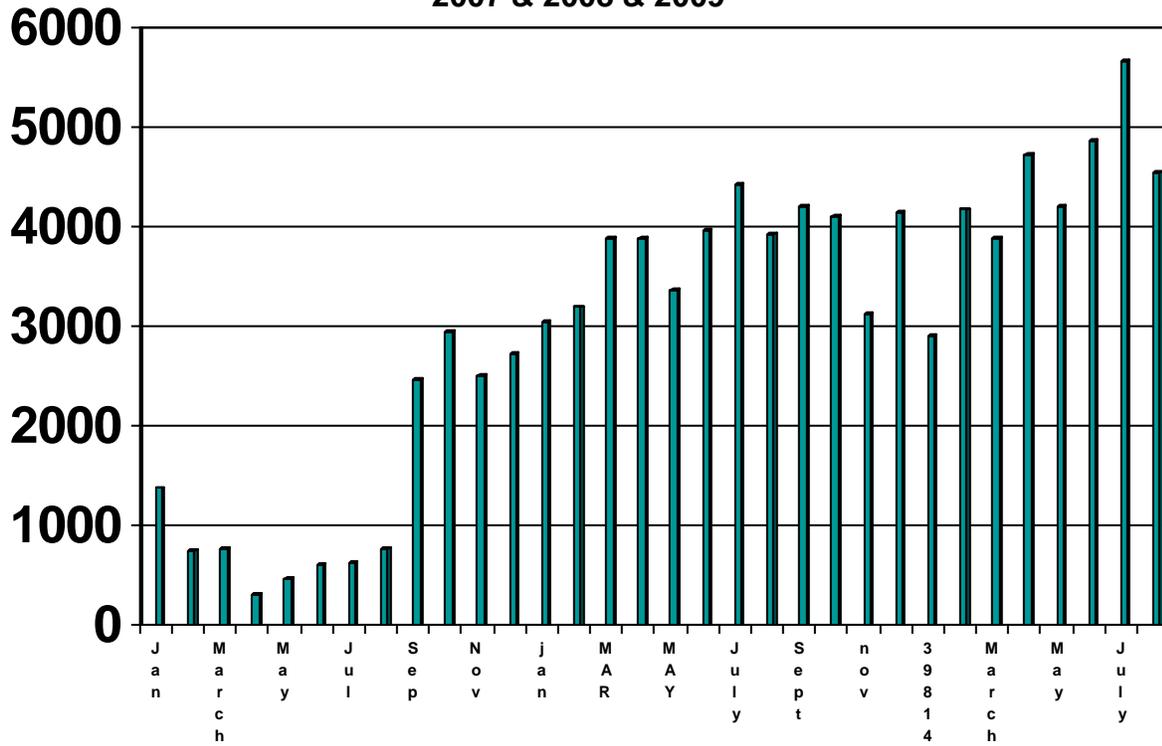
Because of an increase in recycling and reduction in waste, in FY 2009 DM avoided over \$30,000 in dumpster fees by eliminating 52 trash pickups.

The Figures below illustrate the Headquarters (Whitten and South Buildings) waste and recycle information for the past 18 months. As you can see, there has been a steady increase in bottles & cans collected and reduction in some of the paper collected as well as the amount of trash being hauled away.

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (OFEE) formally recognized the D.C. Headquarters' Waste Minimization Program with an Honorable Mention in the 2009 OFEE Closing the Circle Award for Recycling Program

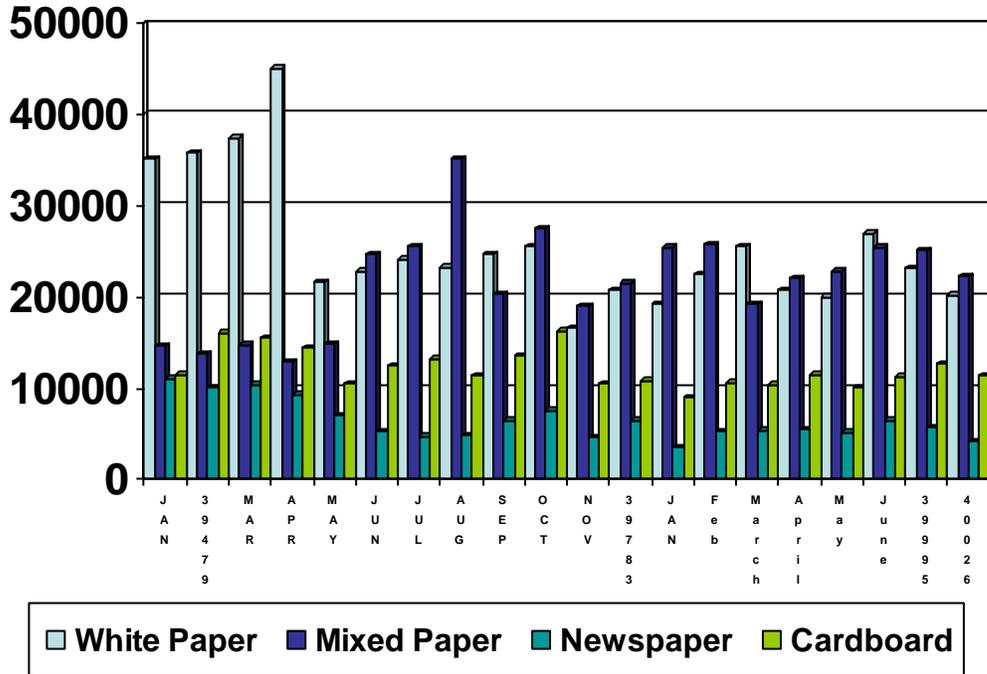
This Plan does not include Environmentally Preferable Purchasing. Refer to the green purchasing plan for additional information.

**Cans & Bottles Collected  
(pounds)  
Recycle Graph  
2007 & 2008 & 2009**



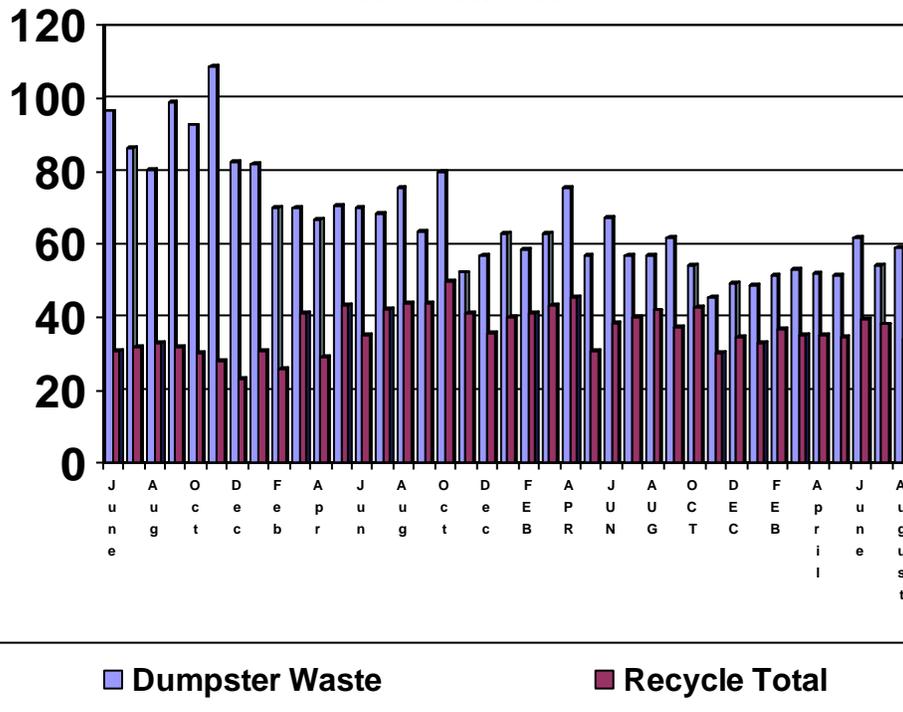
Increases in collection of comingled materials were due to the increased installation of exterior recycle containers around the complex (Clearstream units) and outreach/awareness activities.

**Paper & Cardboard  
(pounds)  
Recycle Graph  
2008/2009**



There has been a steady decline in the weight of newspapers collected over the past three years. This can be attributed in part to readers getting news from the internet, reading the Express rather than the full Washington Post, and the price increase for the Washington Post. The Trash Analysis conducted in February confirmed that this reduction in the amount collected was not due to newspapers being thrown away in the trash. There was not a significant amount of newspapers found in the trash during the February Trash Sort.

**Waste vs Recycle  
(tons)  
Graph  
2007/2008/2009**



A steady decline in dumpster weight has been occurring. In addition to our waste minimization, recycling program, the recession may also contributed to the reduction leaving the facility.

**Targets FY 2010**

Each year we develop FY targets and action plans to address those targets. FY 2010 targets are listed below.

1. Increase Waste Diversion Rate to over 75%.
2. Improve Operations at GWCC
3. Develop Orientation Materials for New Employees/New Occupants
4. Continue Engaging Office Occupants in the Waste Minimization & Recycle Program
5. Continue routine training and awareness as identified in the HQ EMS
6. Explore opportunities to improve Waste Management & Recycling practices at leased facilities.

**Action Plan for 2010**

Scheduled Actions	Contact Person
South Modernization Waste Deconstruction and Construction waste – coordination with operations staff, scrap metal; recycle containers, cardboard, etc.	Ed Murtagh
GWCC Trash Sort	Ed Murtagh
GWCC meet with janitorial staff	Ed Murtagh
GWCC Recycle event.	Ed Murtagh, Ed Hogberg
GWCC new containers	Ed Murtagh, Ed Hogberg
Develop Orientation Materials for new employees	Ed Murtagh
Pilot with DDOE on screen on storm drain.	Ed Murtagh
Trash Stream Analysis Headquarters	Ed Murtagh
Partner with BioPreferred on outreach corn oil coffee mugs	Ed Murtagh
Grinder/Dewater System Implementation	Ed Murtagh, Bahn Lam
Develop plan to support WMR efforts at our Leased Facilities.	Ed Murtagh
Training for janitorial Staff	Ed Murtagh, Brenda Styer-Gee
American Recycle Day Awareness Campaign	Ed Murtagh, Ed Hogberg, Green Team
Earth Day Awareness Campaign (Headquarters Complex)	Ed Murtagh, Ed Hogberg, Green Team
Maintain Wastewise partnership	Ed Murtagh
USDA greening website – newsletters	Ed Murtagh

**Performance Indicators**

In the effort to strive for continue improvement we have developed the following performance indicators to help track our progress

1. The results of our annual trash survey determine the amount of recyclable material that is going into the trash. Responsibility – OO sustainability staff.
2. Analysis of monthly collection weighs for both trash and recycling materials determines the generation rate. Generation rates are compared to the previous months/years to determine our progress. Responsibility – Janitorial Service and OO sustainability staff
3. The green team and EMS core team solicits comments from USDA employees and janitorial staff during training and employee outreach events. Outreach events occur at least twice a year and training occurs once a year. Responsibility – Green Team & OO sustainability Staff
4. Service Contract Monitoring is performed on a weekly basis. Responsibility – Washington Area Service Center
5. The Washington Area Service Center Hotline (WASC Hotline) receives comments or concerns dealing with the recycling program. Responsibility – Washington Area Service Center

6. OMB scorecard reporting on Environmental Stewardship reports our waste reduction progress. Responsibility – EMD & OO Sustainability Staff.
7. The office of OO sustainability staff provides input to the Green Purchasing annual report (previously called RCRA report). Responsibility – EMD

### **Operational Controls**

There are certain controls in place to maximize opportunities for waste minimization and waste avoidance. Operational controls come in the form of policy, guidance, contractor specifications, as well as employee awareness. Various operational controls for this environmental program are outlined in our HQ Environmental Management System.

### **Team Roles**

The HQ's EMS core team manages this program. This team relies heavily on volunteer participation from the USDA HQ Green Team. Team members provide a wealth of knowledge and experience in a broad range of areas, they volunteer their time based on their specific expertise and area of interest. Without their effort many of our achievements would be not obtainable.

### **Records**

The EMS core team members maintain records for this program.