



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Onslow County Solid Waste Management Department Multi-Sector Collaboration for Alternative Revenue Stream Development and Long Term Waste Disposal Capacity

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Onslow County, NC

Jurisdiction population(s): 194,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2013

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Davic B. Cotton

Title: Deputy County Manager Jurisdiction: Onslow County

Name: _____

Title: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: David B. Cotton

Title: Deputy County
Manager Jurisdiction: _____

Street address: 234 NW Corridor Blvd.

City: Jacksonville State/Province: NC

Zip/Postal Code: 28540 Country: US

Telephone: 910-347-4717 Fax: 910-989-5808

E-mail: David Cotton <David_Cotton@onslowcountync.gov>

Onslow County Solid Waste Management Department Multi-Sector Collaboration for
Alternative Revenue Stream Development and Long Term Waste Disposal Capacity

Onslow County's flat, gently rolling terrain covers 767 square miles and is located in the southeastern coastal plain of North Carolina, approximately 120 miles east of Raleigh, and 50 miles north of Wilmington. The City of Jacksonville is the county seat, and the areas surrounding the city constitute the major diverse population centers and growth areas in the county. The county is home to nearly 194,000 people and includes the incorporated towns of Holly Ridge, Richlands, Swansboro, North Topsail Beach, and a portion of Surf City. Approximately 156,000 acres comprise the U.S. Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune and related bases of Camp Johnson, Camp Geiger, and New River Air Station where more than 42,000 marines and sailors are stationed.

Onslow County offers the ultimate in outdoor coastal recreation and sports with more than 30 miles of beautiful beaches, rivers and ocean teeming with an abundance of marine life, and forests filled with diverse wildlife. The scenic 40-mile-long New River is the only large river in the continental United States with headwaters and mouth in the same county. The White Oak River serves as the eastern county line from its headwaters to Bogue Sound in Swansboro. Onslow County remains an important agricultural force, its rich farmland still yielding bountiful crops. Today the abundance and beauty found in scenic terrain, shoreline, and seascape continue to define Onslow County, attracting industry, tourism, and families to our distinctive community. Of North Carolina's 100 counties, Onslow is the 12th largest land area and the 11th most populated county. From 2009 to 2013, Onslow County was number one in population growth and boasts the youngest median age in the state. The public school system is the state's 13th largest with over 25,000 students. More than 420 new students arrived in Onslow County schools this year. Historically identified with the U.S. Marine Corps, Onslow's growth and prosperity has placed it on the map as an ideal location for business development evidenced by a 29 percent increase in

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the total number of building permits in 2014 from the previous year. Visionary businesses are choosing one of North Carolina's eastern counties to expand and grow.

All thriving communities make every effort to sustain growth and plan for the inevitable eventualities of continued growth. Onslow County is no exception. With people comes waste, and Onslow County was not caught off guard due to measured introspection and visionary planning to ensure waste disposal could be managed. Onslow County exceeded the goal of simply managing waste; instead leaders developed multi-sector collaboration for alternative revenue stream development and long-term waste disposal capacity.

The Onslow County Solid Waste Department developed and operated in accordance with a challenging mission--to be an innovative and responsive organization, to aggressively provide environmentally sound and fiscally responsible waste management incorporating state-of-the-art methods and technology while educating the public on responsible, long-term waste management and environmental stewardship in an effort to sustain landfill operations. Building a sustainable community resource was of paramount importance.

The 800-acre site is comprised of two closed landfills and one lined 30-acre working landfill surrounded by conservation easements in the southwest portion of the county. Ten years ago Onslow County was on par with the rest of the state, averaging nearly 7.5 pounds of solid waste generated per person per day. County officials implemented public education efforts to make citizens more cognizant of waste stream infrastructure impacts and how recycling can enhance quality of life and improve the natural environment. A "Keep Onslow Beautiful" community outreach campaign was established and implemented office recycling and green office programs, and offered service learning/SAT credit programs for the community along environmental education outreach programs. Exceptional achievement was recognized with

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community and personal environmental awards and a school recycling program established for Onslow County schools. What began in three schools in 2006 has grown to 36 schools with robust recycling programs, resulting in a recycle rate of 3.7 lbs. per student per month. Landfill recycling center tours and the introduction of recycling in local curriculum has enhanced public awareness of recycling in Onslow County.

These efforts contributed to Onslow County's waste generation rate plummeting to 4.7 pounds per person per day by 2010, more in line with the national average. Decreasing waste was only one way Onslow County worked to preserve landfill capacity, professionally known as air space.

In addition to the adaption of modern landfill management techniques, capacity was drastically preserved when the county switched from using soil as a landfill cover to a commercial environmental coating that takes up less space and is more effectively prevents erosion, siltation and infiltration. Success was evidenced by compaction rates since 2000. Onslow County improved its compaction rate from 1,086 pounds per cubic yard in 2000 to 1,500 lbs/cy in 2013 and continues to improve. At the current disposal rate the county will have adequate capacity through 2045.

Improved efficiency and innovation contributed mightily to long-term waste disposal capacity; however development revenue streams brought sustainability full-circle for Onslow County.

The county owns two closed landfills that sat dormant near the operating landfill. Enterprising, experienced solid waste officials recognized the potential for revenue generation underfoot.

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Staffers studied worldwide power generation success to explore the possibility of applying proven technology in Onslow County. They examined the quality and amount of methane produced by the landfill and were pleased to discover Onslow's methane was sufficient in quality and quantity. They rightfully concluded that the county possessed a lucrative source of revenue from an untapped and plentiful resource. For more than 18 months a 20-cylinder gas turbine engine has been burning methane pulled from the landfill and scrubbed. Generated electricity, enough to power 2,400 homes, is sold to the local utility and creates revenue for the county. All was accomplished at no cost to the county. The effort has been so lucrative that a second gas turbine will be installed within the year.

The second closed landfill alongside the methane producer offered 14 acres of high, unobstructed flat land perfect for solar panels. Again, at no cost to Onslow County, five to six thousand panels will be installed to generate energy to be sold to the same utility. The methane-to-energy and solar initiatives will yield a total of \$60,000 to \$100,000 of revenue for the county per year. The planned solar project will be the first of its kind at a landfill in North Carolina. Coupled with the sale of energy as a revenue source, the Onslow County Solid Waste Department analyzed the efficiency of the dynamic recycling program and the revenue generated to determine if improvements would further enhance sustainability.

The staff decided to collaborate with new partners to improve processes and profits. They discovered that the county recycling facility could be improved, and they made changes. In 2010 the facility managed 800 tons of recycled material per month. Today the facility processes 4,000 tons per month. The result is increased revenue and less material placed in the landfill... preserving air space.

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Onslow County has also tripled revenue generated from the sale of scrap metal, waste liquids, lubricants, and electronics in four years.

Now an enterprise operation, Onslow County's Solid Waste Department has transformed from a county expense to a revenue producer in less than ten years. The department has exhibited excellence in its efforts to collaborate with municipalities, commercial entities and industry experts by integrating operations with recycling, energy programs, community education and modern methodology. Without a doubt Onslow County Waste Management has helped to ensure the continued growth and success of one of North Carolina's most prized counties for families, business and the United States military for years to come. This Onslow County team of engaged and dedicated public servants is worthy to be recognized with the ICMA Program Excellence Award for Community Sustainability.