



## Public Information Office

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### PRESS RELEASE

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Henderson County Food Waste Collection Pilot Program Exceeding Expectations



**January 30, 2018- Henderson County, NC:** Since the food waste collection pilot program at the Henderson County Convenience Center began in September 2017, almost 3 tons of leftovers, greasy pizza boxes, pumpkins, and other food scraps have been collected. In November, 2,398 pounds of hundreds of pumpkins from Halloween and Thanksgiving increased the weight significantly. The County is partnering with Atlas Organics for a 10-month pilot program to offer expanded recycling and education about the importance of diverting food waste from household trash.

The program has grown more than expected in a short timeframe, due in part to the backyard compost workshops hosted by Henderson County Environmental Programs, Asheville Greenworks, and the Recycling Education Vehicle (REV) this past fall at Cooperative Extension and the Hendersonville Community Co-op. The workshops promoted simple DIY backyard composting and vermicomposting options for residents, while encouraging citizens without yard space to use the Convenience Center drop-off site. Another series of workshops are being planned for spring and summer 2018.

As food waste collection becomes more widespread as a significant method of waste diversion, communities across the US are discovering creative ways to offer collection for residents. In North Carolina, Henderson, Orange, and Wake Counties are currently the only 3 local governments that offer food waste drop-off sites for citizens, with New Hanover establishing a site this year, according to the NC Division of Environmental Services and Customer Assistance.

Henderson County Environmental Programs will propose continuation of the Convenience Center program in the 2018-2019 budget, as well as adding collection of food waste from other county facilities.

“I’m very enthusiastic about the level of participation our organics diversion pilot has experienced so far, and I’m confident it will grow through outreach and more backyard composting workshops in 2018,” stated Rachel Kipar, Henderson County Environmental Programs Coordinator. Kipar attended the regional Food Waste Summit in October at Warren Wilson College with dozens of other local governments, non-profits, businesses, and local activists from WNC and now sits on the

summit steering committee. “The energy around food waste prevention, food recovery, and composting throughout WNC is especially vibrant right now. The Food Waste Summit connected us so our resources can be more effectively leveraged.”

Kipar also recently attended the US Composting Council’s National Conference, where local governments and organizations from across the nation showcased their unique approaches to curbside food waste collection, event composting, and community-scale gardens and compost projects. “It’s an exciting time to be in this space and realize how local, on-the-ground programs can make a huge difference in actualizing long-term sustainability efforts.” According to the US EPA, between 20-30% of all household trash in the United States is food waste, resulting in major losses of resources, energy, and dollars. Food waste in municipal solid waste is heavy to transport, produces odors, can attract vermin, and is not the best end for an organic resource that could otherwise be turned into a valuable soil component.

Users of the county’s drop-off program are reminded that the best way to store food waste at home is in a freezer-safe container to minimize pests and odors, such as a non-coated paper bag. No plastic containers or bags are acceptable.

The following items are acceptable in this program:

- breads and pastas
- coffee/tea grounds, paper filters/tea bags
- cooked meat, fish, poultry, bones (cooked only)
- herbs and greens
- eggshells and dairy
- grains and cereals
- fruits and vegetables
- leftovers and scraps
- rice and beans
- compostable containers
- cut flowers and stems
- paper towels and napkins
- soiled pizza boxes and paper bags
- uncoated paper cups, plates, and wax paper

Unacceptable items include:

- aluminum foil, cans
- ash or coal
- bathroom products & baby wipes
- chewing gum
- glass
- household trash
- liquid cooking oil
- pet waste, fur, hair
- plastic containers, bags, film
- raw meat
- recyclables
- steel cans
- straws
- plastic silverware, plates
- textiles
- tobacco products
- yard waste and leaves

Questions can be directed to (828) 694-6524.

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