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News Release

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DEQ Funding Opportunities in Solid Waste Management

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has resources that can help local governments fund solid waste system improvements. The Oklahoma Solid Waste Management Act created a system of state solid waste fees that fund DEQ's environmental protection program and can also help local governments develop better methods of handling garbage.

The law directs DEQ to invest in projects to implement county solid waste management plans. This funding program is administered directly by county governments through the Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma. County commissioners have used DEQ support to clean up illegal dumps, hire trash cops, develop facilities like convenience centers to manage bulky waste and to buy brush chippers to recycle the debris from Oklahoma's many storms.

The law also seeks to stimulate recycling by helping governmental agencies acquire recycling equipment. "We have helped communities such as Elk City purchase a baler to recycle cardboard and Oklahoma City buy recycling containers," said DEQ Director of Waste Systems Planning Fenton Rood. "We have also helped to create a new concept of recycling. Over the past few years we have suffered a number of disasters ranging from tornadoes to ice storms. We have helped many local governments in the disaster areas buy brush chippers that convert the downed tree limbs into useful soil conditioner."

Rood adds that Oklahoma is a national leader in another unique aspect of recycling. "The law directs DEQ to use materials recovered from solid waste to restore lands damaged by oil and gas production and mining. In partnership with local conservation districts and sub-state planning agencies, we have enjoyed encouraging successes. Through the application of organic materials we have been able to restore barren waste lands into productive pastures."

Anyone interested in taking advantage of these programs can contact Fenton Rood at P.O. Box 1677, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-1677. Interested individuals can also call 405-702-5159 or e-mail fenton.rood@deq.state.ok.us.

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