

Michael F. Easley, Governor



William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

## N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Contact: Diana Kees, (919) 715-6515  
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### **NORTH CAROLINA BUSINESSES FIND CASH IN TRASH**

RALEIGH – Back in November of 2002, Travis Hames, owner of Hames Recycling in Forest City had a problem. With 10,000 pounds of polyester fabric to dispose of at his facility, he faced \$185 in landfill disposal fees, plus additional hauling costs to get rid of what seemed like a perfectly usable material.

Then he discovered NC WasteTrader, North Carolina's premier free waste exchange service. As Hames says, "After listing the polyester on NC WasteTrader, we received several calls asking about it. One call was from Blue Ridge Recycling, which wanted to buy it. Not only did we avoid the landfill tipping fee and hauling charges, but we were actually able to sell the material for \$660."

The experience of Hames Recycling is exactly the reason NC Waste Trader was started. Businesses and industries are finding it a great ally in their waste reduction efforts. Companies across North Carolina, as well as throughout the Southeast, have utilized the free service to find markets for items they had previously been sending to the landfill. Users of the service have found that they can save significant landfill fees and oftentimes realize an income from a number of so-called waste products. And as Travis Hames says, "NC WasteTrader is a great service and it's very simple to use."

Gary Hunt, director of the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental (DPPEA) Assistance, says he's convinced that NC WasteTrader creates a win-win situation for businesses and for the environment. "We're trying hard to expand the use of the service; the more listings we get, the more likely all participants will be able to find a home for their wastes, or cheap sources of usable materials. In turn, successful trades equate to fewer materials being disposed, lengthening the lives of area landfills."

Unlike many other waste exchanges, NC WasteTrader is an active marketplace. Listings don't just sit there – DPPEA, a non-regulatory state agency, manages each commodity listing, improving its chance for successful trade. As companies list their waste materials on WasteTrader, each commodity is assigned to a team member. The team member then attempts to match the commodity with a company that can use it. In addition to finding users for commodities, the team also locates materials for companies that are looking for them. Either way, companies looking for materials or companies seeking users for waste products can save money and protect the environment at the same time.

A Raleigh business has found similar success with WasteTrader. "We kept a ton of material out of the landfill by finding a home for our used office cubicles through NC WasteTrader," said Michael Harris, environmental manager at Elster Electricity. "The cubicles were donated to a nonprofit Hispanic service organization. That saved us \$33.50 in landfill fees in addition to hauling fees. The WasteTrader Web site is excellent."

After listing their 28,771 pounds of baled, plastic strapping on NC WasteTrader, Interface Fabrics was able to find a market for it. "We sold the material to a strapping manufacturer and now we're saving more than \$1,000 every two months

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Office of Public Affairs  
Phone (919) 715-4112  
1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

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Don Reuter, Director  
FAX (919) 715-5181  
[don.reuter@ncmail.net](mailto:don.reuter@ncmail.net)

because they give us credit toward purchasing new strapping. That's in addition to saved waste handling costs," said Interface Fabrics Manager Allen Drew. "We started chopping the strapping instead of baling it, and now everybody seems to want it! WasteTrader worked well for us."

As a growing number of companies area discovering, the intersection between profitability and environmental protection can be found at NC WasteTrader. Companies wishing to list waste commodities can visit the Web at <http://www.ncwastetrader.org>.

*Reporters: For more information about this project, please contact Tom Rhodes, DPPEA waste management analyst, at (919) 715-6516 or [tom.rhodes@ncmail.net](mailto:tom.rhodes@ncmail.net). Information about NC WasteTrader users from your area is available upon request.*

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