



Catawba County EcoComplex

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The Catawba County EcoComplex is designed to recruit and promote economic development and create new jobs in the green energy, green business, agricultural and environmental sectors. It will accommodate research involving all aspects related to biologically-derived energy recovery and use, as well as the research of alternative fuels and minimization of greenhouse gases for environmental, agricultural and energy use. The EcoComplex is designed to use the operational relationships of public and private partners for the benefit of the environment and the local economy. Private companies have been recruited to co-locate their operations with those of the Blackburn Landfill. Waste products from those businesses will be converted into energy to operate the landfill, the partner businesses and a proposed sludge maintenance facility.

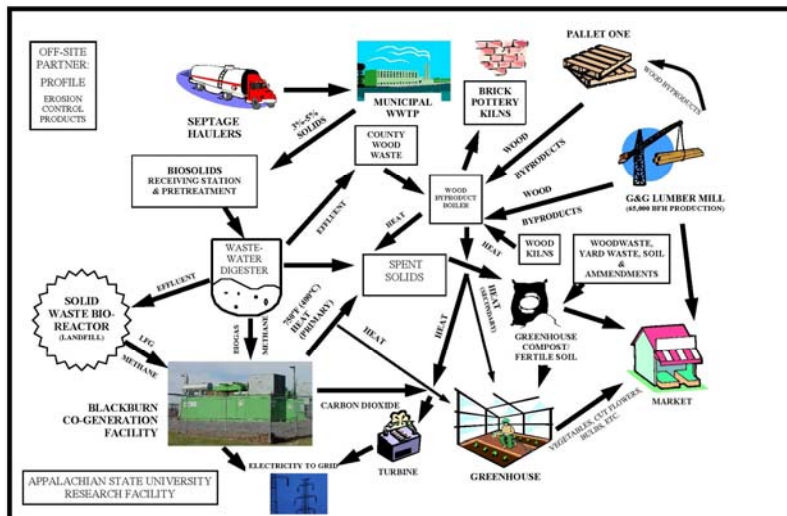


Some EcoComplex partners are already in place. **Gregory Wood Products**, a producer of dimensional lumber, has been in operation since August 2005. **Pallet One** is another business that has opened inside the EcoComplex. It will take the wood waste produced by Gregory Wood Products and turn it into wood pallets used by a host of industries. **Six more entities are in the development phase**, including a presence from Catawba Valley Community College's Turf Grass Management Education program. An additional six groups are in negotiation. In addition, the County and its eight municipalities have been partners for over ten years in the Regional Sludge Management Facility and in the Blackburn Landfill and these partnerships will continue through the development and implementation of the EcoComplex.

Catawba County is continuing negotiations with **greenhouse companies** interested in locating in the EcoComplex. **Appalachian State University** has received a grant for a **biodiesel research facility** that would be located in the EcoComplex and use the electricity and heat created by the County's existing co-generation units, which use methane naturally produced in the landfill to generate electricity. **The County and Appalachian State University are continuing to look for areas in which to broaden the research** that is being performed at the EcoComplex, with special emphasis being placed on biologically derived alternative fuel sources.

The County is also currently reviewing Requests for Proposals from companies interested in constructing a **bioenergy facility** that would be located in the EcoComplex. This facility will convert the waste products of Gregory Wood Products, Pallet One and the landfill, (sawdust and

other wood waste), to produce steam and heat that would then be used by Gregory Wood Products and Pallet One for drying kilns, by the County to produce more electricity and for the proposed sludge maintenance facility, and by the greenhouse and Appalachian State's biodiesel research facility once they are located within the complex.





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Forbes

Hickory, NC ranked

3rd in the US for Cost of Doing Business

20th in the US for Cost of Living

2006

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“The Catawba County Economic Development Corporation is committed to the recruitment of green industries. The Catawba County EcoComplex is a prime example that ‘One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.’”

“The innovative partnerships that sustain and strengthen the EcoComplex will pay off for many years to come. By linking companies that can make use of each other’s discarded waste products, we are helping ease the ecological burdens that will be placed on our environment in the years to come.”

“We feel it is important to provide solutions to the growing demands on the environment. The EcoComplex provides opportunities for investment, job development and research that will strengthen the area’s economy and at the same time set an example of how public and private partnerships can identify creative ways in which to reduce waste, provide cost-savings, and enable research.”

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Catawba County EcoComplex Wins National Award

Catawba County’s ongoing efforts to create an EcoComplex at and near the Blackburn Landfill have been recognized nationally by an organization dedicated to promoting innovative thinking in government.

The Alliance for Innovation, formerly known as the Innovation Groups, presented the 2007 Thomas H. Muehlenbeck Award for Excellence in Local Government to Catawba County at its conference on June 7 in Bellevue, Washington. Catawba County Director of Utilities and Engineering, Barry Edwards (at right in the photo) and Public Services Administrator, Jack Chandler, accepted the award.



The Muehlenbeck Award is given annually to one local government in the United States for outstanding achievements in innovation. It honors Thomas Muehlenbeck, who has served as the City Manager of Plano, TX since 1987 and was chair of The Innovation Groups Board of Directors’ for ten years. According to Jim Ingram, Director of Finance and Administration for the Alliance for Innovation, the award takes into consideration how successfully a program addressed an important dilemma of public service delivery; its positive impact and benefit to a community or jurisdiction; a “quantum leap of creativity”; a government’s commitment and support of bringing the innovation to life; service delivery improvements and efficiencies; organizational improvements because of the innovation; and tangible effectiveness and results.

“Catawba County sees tremendous potential, both environmentally and economically, from our EcoComplex and we are very excited as we continue with its development,” said Barry B. Edwards, Catawba County’s Director of Utilities and Engineering, who is overseeing the EcoComplex. “We are delighted that the Alliance For Innovation has recognized the special potential for our EcoComplex, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of its design and the work of our partners. We are very pleased to receive the 2007 Thomas H. Muehlenbeck Award.”