



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

New manual guides municipalities through steps to implement user pay programs for waste

(**Toronto**, February 20, 2006)—A new manual that has just been published will help Ontario municipalities implement user pay programs for garbage that can lead to increased recycling rates of as much as 50%," says Damian Bassett, CEO of Stewardship Ontario.

Stewardship Ontario, in conjunction with the Association of Municipal Recycling Co-ordinators (AMRC) has released a 60-page manual for municipalities that operate or are considering implementing user pay systems for residential municipal waste programs. The manual was written by AMRC with input from many Ontario municipalities and the direct assistance of representatives from Oxford County, the Region of Waterloo, Bluewater Recycling Association and Haldimand County.

"A study carried out during the development of the manual shows that communities that have implemented user pay policies have achieved increases in recycling rates of between 9% and 50%," Bassett says. "Clearly, some of the higher end gains in recycling rate can go a long way to meeting the province's goal of 60% waste diversion."

The *User Pay Program Implementation Guide* was developed with the support of a \$31,200 grant under Stewardship Ontario's Effectiveness and Efficiency (E&E) Fund.

User pay or 'pay-as-you-throw' waste collection programs have been in place in Ontario for about 15 years. One hundred and twenty-three Ontario communities operate some form of user pay program, where residents are required to pay directly for all or a portion of the garbage they set out at the curb. User pay often comes in the form of a tag costing between \$1 and \$3 that residents are required to place on their garbage bags or cans.

"Paying a fee for a certain number of garbage bags or cans set out at the curb acts as an incentive for residents to put recyclable packaging and printed papers in the Blue Box system instead of routinely tossing them into garbage bags," Bassett says.

"We designed the manual as a resource for all Ontario communities – whether they operate user pay systems or are simply interested in them," said AMRC's Cynthia Hyland, AMRC's project leader. "The manual provides information on different types of user pay systems (full, partial, utility based and subscription), on legislation and bylaws, on deterrents to illegal dumping, on presenting the concept to councils and on financial considerations."

A second E&E Fund project that was recently approved by Stewardship Ontario's project committee for a grant of \$20,700 will determine the financial cost-benefits of implementing user pay systems.

The *User Pay Program Implementation Guide* is being posted on the AMRC website, www.amrc.ca, today.

As a next step, the guide will be published to the internet through Stewardship Ontario's "Knowledge Network." Created for recycling program operators, municipal councillors and all other interested parties, the Knowledge Network will help users work through several interactive modules that answer their questions about 'pay-as-you-throw' systems and facilitate the decision-making process. The module is expected to be available on the Knowledge Network this spring.

The Knowledge Network was launched in November 2005, as a 'first-of-its-kind' online information sharing network for municipal recycling operators and other interested stakeholders. It provides project specific information, an online learning and networking forum, online 'help desks' and discussions involving experts on key topics. The Knowledge Network is accessible through www.stewardshipontario.ca.

Stewardship Ontario is an industry organization that under the *Waste Diversion Act, 2002*, collects fees from companies that produce all types of packaging and printed paper that end up managed through the municipal residential waste system in Ontario. Stewardship Ontario then distributes the funds to Ontario municipalities to help pay for the cost of operating Blue Box recycling programs.

The E&E Fund comprises 10% of the funds collected from the obligated companies. The goals of the fund are to reduce the net cost of municipal recycling in Ontario, to increase overall waste diversion and build capacity for sustainable recycling. Since the fund was launched in July, 2004, 44 municipal projects have received support totaling about \$6.78 million.

Additional information is available at Stewardship Ontario's website (www.stewardshipontario.ca) for: E&E Fund: <http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/funding/e&e/thefund.htm> and the Knowledge Network: <http://www.vubiz.com/stewardship/Welcome.asp>

To view the User Pay Implementation Guide:
<http://www.amrc.ca/docs/AMRC%20User%20Pay%20Guide%202005.pdf>

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Backgrounder available at:
http://www.stewardshipontario.ca/pdf/News/2005/EE_Fund_Backgrounder.pdf

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