

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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Contact: Diane Garcia (541) 485-9988

[wwp@teleport.com](mailto:wwp@teleport.com)

or Bob Doppelt (541) 744-7072

[cwch@pdx.edu](mailto:cwch@pdx.edu)

### **PSU WASTE TO WORK PARTNERSHIP FINDS THOUSANDS OF NEW JOBS CAN BE CREATED IN OREGON AND WASHINGTON BY "UPSIZING" WASTE MATERIALS**

The Waste to Work Partnership, a program of the Center for Watershed and Community Health at Portland State University, today released a report that concludes that thousands of new jobs could be created in the Northwest by expanding and starting businesses that add economic value to waste materials through reuse, remanufacture and recycling. Entitled *Making Waste Work*, the report is based on a survey of Northwest businesses that reuse or manufacture products using waste materials. The report says that a more intensive approach to waste management, called Waste-based Economic Development, would change our concept of waste entirely. Waste-based economic development focuses on adding economic value to materials once considered "waste," thereby creating new businesses, products and jobs. Two-thirds of the waste generated in Oregon and Washington is currently being incinerated or sent to landfills. If all this waste material were collected and manufactured into new products and services, 22,000 new jobs could be created. The report also found that waste-based businesses could help revitalize distressed communities and neighborhoods by providing family wage jobs and job opportunities.

"We found that significant economic, social, and environmental benefits already exist in waste-based economic development," said Diane Garcia, Director of the Waste to Work Partnership. "We also found that these benefits could be dramatically increased if more waste materials were converted into products and services here in the Northwest."

Gaylene Glidewell, Vocational Services Director at the St. Vincent de Paul in Eugene, Oregon, which runs a number of waste-based businesses, said that waste-based manufacturing jobs are very well suited to the needs of struggling individuals and communities.

"It turns out that waste materials are actually extremely valuable resources," concluded Garcia. "If we can create the right policies and an infrastructure to turn all of the waste we generate into products or processes, we can provide significant economic, social and environmental benefits, and the Northwest can emerge as a leader in this field."