

## Press Release

February 4, 2008



### Pickering Business Targets Zero Waste

Neil Samson has a mission. "We want to make our building the first eco-friendly business complex in Durham Region". Neil and his staff are now working with the neighboring businesses in the Cumbay Building at 1020 Brock Road in Pickering to take a bold step – the removal of the dumpsters that traditionally handle solid waste on its way to landfill.

Monarch Kitchen & Bath Centre was one of the first businesses to join the We Have The Power for Business energy conservation program when it was launched in November 2007. But Neil Samson and his staff quickly realized that they could do more, and their next target became the solid waste that they disposed in their dumpsters each week.

Neil talked to the City of Pickering and to Mayor Ryan, and got both guidance and encouragement. Some action steps followed. "We looked at what we were discarding, talked to the staff at Durham Sustain Ability (DSA) to see what options existed, and decided that we would take up a new challenge – eliminate our dumpsters entirely" says Neil Samson of Monarch. Since 1986 Neil and his wife Sharon have owned the company, first established in Pickering nearly 30 years ago.

The Zero Waste challenge was a bold step, especially considering the way waste services are structured in Ontario. The blue box and green bin programs that you see everywhere are in fact mainly available only for households, not for businesses. This is the case even though 60% of the solid waste in Pickering, Ajax, or Durham is from businesses. There are no easy options for local businesses who want to adopt new 3Rs practices, although Durham Region staff and groups like DSA are glad to provide guidance.

Neil had some encouraging discussions with Mayor Ryan and others at the City of Pickering, and then with regional staff, about the establishment of a pilot project for recycling and possibly composting services being extended to non-residential sources. But this kind of change cannot happen overnight, given the technical, operational, and financial challenges. So as this process moves ahead, Monarch has decided to help the cause by starting its own pilot project, in cooperation with its neighboring businesses and some key partners.

Monarch has now made arrangements with Miller Waste Systems to develop a 3Rs program not only for Monarch's facility but also for the other tenants in the complex near Brock Rd. and Bayly. The first step is a Waste Audit of all material discarded by businesses in the complex, which has been arranged with Target Recycling of Ajax, via Miller Waste.

Once the Audit is complete this week Target and Miller will determine what 3Rs services and containers will be needed in order for the dumpsters to be entirely removed from the property. The plan is then for this new system to be operated for a six-month trial period, providing valuable information to the participants, to DSA, and ultimately to the Regional officials who could expand this service throughout Durham.

Neil Samson is planning for success with this project. He has already gained the support and active involvement of another key partner – the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade. As a member of the Board's Environment Committee, Neil has been able to begin building the support that will be needed for expansion of this program. The key in getting started was the good cooperation between the private and public sector, Neil feels that this will also be the key in expansion of the program.

Durham Sustain Ability is challenging others to become "eco businesses" too. Contact us for more information: Ellen McRae [ellen@sustain-ability.ca](mailto:ellen@sustain-ability.ca) 905.427.0061

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### We Have The Power

Durham Sustain Ability launched its We Have The Power campaign in the fall of 2006, initially focused on residences in the City of Pickering, eventually expanding throughout Durham.

In October 2007 this program was expanded to businesses, in both Pickering and Ajax.

The primary sponsor of the program is the Ministry of Energy, through Community Conservation Initiatives (CCI). The operating partners are the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, the City of Pickering, the Town of Ajax, and Veridian.

We Have The Power for Business starts with a focus on energy conservation, but encourages businesses to look for other environmental opportunities, such as waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting.