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GOT LEAVES?

DUNNING SAND & GRAVEL EXPANDING RECYCLING BY ACCEPTING LEAVES FOR COMPOSTING

FARMINGTON, Oct. 27, 2011 – Dunning Sand & Gravel is expanding its recycling business by accepting tree leaves, which will then be composted and turned into organic topsoil available for gardens and farms.

“We have a policy that nothing should go to waste; just about everything should be recycled,” said Ben Dunning, company president. “So we have invested in the construction of a special pad where we have begun the composting process, creating a new use for leaves that would ordinarily be dumped in landfills.”

Currently, Dunning S&G is accepting leaves collected by the Town of Farmington, by the Farmington Woods condominium development, and from area landscapers. The charge is \$5 per load. Any landscaper or homeowner who wants to deposit their fall leaf collection at Dunning S&G can just visit the site, 105 Brickyard Road, Farmington.

The special pad consists of 2.5 acres of recycled asphalt, with special drainage that collects any water runoff. The recycled asphalt comes from the material that was removed during the reconstruction of New Britain Avenue in Farmington. The old asphalt was fed through a special grinding machine, then laid and leveled as reclaimed pavement for the composting pad.

“We want to continue expanding the project by accepting leaves from other towns and even more landscapers,” said Dunning. “Eventually, the pad will be 5 acres large.”

The process of composting the leaves involves using a large machine to grind them, and then lay them in windrows on the paved pad. The key to composting, Dunning said, is temperature.

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“Every week or so we use a large industrial thermometer to check the temperature at the center of each windrow. After three or four weeks the temperature should reach 135 degrees Fahrenheit, even during the coldest day of winter,” Dunning explained. “When that happens we flip the leaves, moving each windrow further along the pad. By the time the windrow reaches the edge of the pad, the leaves have been converted to highly rich, organic topsoil.”

The composting process takes six months to a year, he said.

“The end result is that area landfills are saved and home gardeners, farmers and landscapers have a new source of organically enriched topsoil to help their plants, shrubs and vegetables grow,” said Dunning.

Dunning Sand & Gravel is a fourth generation company that increasingly relies on recycling to develop new products. In addition to a wide array of sands and gravels, the company also has different topsoil, colored mulches and hundreds of hardscape products like paver stones used to build walkways, driveways and walls.

-30-

PHOTO CAPTION:

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Ben Dunning, president of Dunning Sand & Gravel, examines the first load of leaves deposited at his company’s new composting site, 105 Brickyard Road, Farmington. The company is now accepting leaves and will compost them in windrows on the 2.5 acre special pad shown here behind Dunning.