



Down to Brass Tacks

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BRASS TACKS INITIATIVE



From left, Rachel Houck of BTI, Nick Reishus of Scott County, and Kyra Chapman from the City of New Prague stand in front of the new organics site (photo courtesy of the City of New Prague).

New Prague Household Organics Drop-off Site Update

RESIDENTS CAN NOW SUSTAINABLY DISPOSE OF FOOD WASTE WITHOUT LEAVING TOWN.

A new household organics drop-off site was officially opened in New Prague on Saturday, October 28th, 2023. The facility provides residents with a sustainable way to dispose of their food waste and other household organics at no cost. This collaboration between the City of New Prague, the Brass Tacks Initiative, and Scott County, demonstrates a shared commitment to environmental stewardship.

The opening was commemorated by a ribbon-cutting ceremony, organized by the New Prague Chamber of Commerce. The ceremony was attended by representatives from the BTI board and staff, city officials, and enthusiastic residents. The celebration marked the culmination of a year-long effort that brought this much-needed facility to the community.

The two-hour event saw an impressive turnout, with over thirty people attending to register, pick up their welcome packets, and engage in insightful conversations about the site. New Prague mayor, Duane Jirik was one of those in attendance and was grateful to BTI for their efforts on the project. BTI provided the city with marketing support and (continued on page 3)

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Whatever your plans, we hope you'll have a memorable time surrounded by the people who matter most.

- from BTI

Letter from the Director:

We have had a wonderfully productive year at the Brass Tacks and I have enjoyed getting to work with some amazing people on sustainable projects in our community!

One of our proudest accomplishments was the part we played in getting a new Household Organics site opened in New Prague, MN (read more on page 1). Through the use of brochures, posters, social media, and more, we spread awareness about this facility and encouraged community engagement.

The take-home compost education kits were also a major highlight! We created kits, filled with fun activities for families, to help them learn about the importance of composting and reducing food waste. These were distributed by all libraries in Scott County and reached 1,200 households.

We also conducted presentations for various organizations, hosted booths at community events, and utilized social media to share practical tips on reducing food waste and minimizing its impact.

As we reflect on these achievements, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to our supporters and volunteers. Your



Volunteers clean up a section of highway 13 in Jordan. BTI adopted this section of road in 2022.

dedication and passion continue to drive us forward. We couldn't do it without you!

To ensure the success of these efforts and more, we kindly invite you to join us! Here are a few ways you can help.

1. **Donate:** your contribution of any size enables us to expand our programs.
2. **Volunteer:** We need your skills! Scan the QR code below for more information.
3. **Share our mission:** Help amplify our impact by sharing our mission with your friends, family, and colleagues.

Let's work together towards a greener, more sustainable future!

Sincerely,
Rachel Houck
BTI Executive Director



JOIN US

The Brass Tacks Initiative is seeking volunteers for the following committees to help us continue our mission to support sustainable practices in the food stream through research, education, and collaboration.



Marketing

Establishing, maintaining, and growing the visibility of the BTI. Helps promote our programs, products, and services.

Development

Helps BTI achieve its mission by developing new resources and funding opportunities for the organization.

Outreach/Education

Plans and implements educational events that inform and engage communities on sustainability in the food system.

For more information visit our website www.thebrasstacks.org/volunteer or email Rachel@thebrasstacks.org

New Prague Organics

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guidance throughout the project. “We look forward to continuing our work with the city to ensure the long-term success of this site,” said Rachel Houck, BTI executive director.

Residents who attended the event expressed their gratitude for having an organics site in town. This is the fifth site of its kind to open through the Scott County Household Organics program. However, it is the only site that is open to both Scott and Le Sueur County residents. “I have received nothing but positive feedback since we announced that the site was coming,” said Kyra Chapman a planner with the City of New Prague, and the lead on the project.

To help fund the new site, Chapman applied for a Scott County Local Recycling Development grant. “The grant paid for a new security system which we desperately needed for this, and the existing yard waste site, to keep people from illegally dumping,” said Chapman. “We would not have been able to do this without the grant.” In addition to the security system, the grant also provides funding for hauling over the next three years, as well as compostable bin liners for registered users.

To gain access to the organics drop-off site,

residents of Scott or Le Sueur County must fill out an online form and bring proof of residence to City Hall during regular business hours. There, they will receive an access key along with a welcome packet, filled with information about proper organic waste disposal and other useful resources.

For more information on the project’s background, see the April 2023 edition of *Down to Brass Tacks*, available on the BTI website www.thebrastacks.org/education



A local resident (left) picked up her welcome packet from Kyra Chapman (center). BTI board president, Todd Fischer (right), stands by to answer questions.



Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the New Prague organics site. Left to right: Rachel Houck, BTI executive director, Todd Fischer, BTI board president, Kyra Chapman, New Prague City Planner, residents Pam and Randy Steinhoff, Sharon Smith, and Mayor Duane Jirik.

About BTI

The Brass Tacks Initiative is a 501c3 nonprofit founded on a mission to support sustainability in the food stream through research, education, and collaboration.

Our name comes from the phrase "let's get down to brass tacks." The phrase means to address the most important facts of a project or problem. The fact is food waste is a problem with environmental, economic, and social impacts. We believe the only way to make an impact on food waste is to **research** best practices and new methods of recycling, **collaborate** with the companies who are generating waste to find alternatives to the landfill, and make sure that current and future leaders are equipped with the **education** needed to make sustainable impacts in their community.

For more information about BTI visit our website www.thebrasstacks.org or contact us via email at info@thebrasstacks.org.