



Paul Frey/MVP Staff

Pat Sliworsky, CAO of the MVRWMC, Tony Stolz, business manager of research and learning enterprises and Gerard Kulcsar of Stoney Soil Products hold up bags of products the three organizations helped create from compost collected from within Mountain View County municipalities. The partnership between the three organizations was formed earlier this year.

Coming together for compost availability

BY PAUL FREY
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What started out as a way to increase the amount of local compostable material in the communities of Mountain View County has turned into a thriving partnership.

The Mountain View Regional Waste Management Commission (MVRWMC), Olds College and Stoney Soil Products teamed up in January to increase the amount of compostable material available locally.

With the commission supplying some of the composted material, it then goes to the college to be processed, where it is collected by Stoney Soil Products, screened and bagged, and then distributed to several local stores within municipalities in Mountain View County.

It's sold in 30-litre bags. Fifty thousand bags of the product have been sold at the various stores that carry the product, from Olds to Water Valley, with much more expected to be sold during the upcoming growing season.

"We were looking for a way to move more compost material and Gerard (Kulcsar of Stoney Soil Products) provided that," said Pat Sliworsky, chief administrative officer of the Mountain View Regional Waste Management Commission.

From Olds College's perspective, it needed a way to move the product that it was already producing. The compost it produces is used as a learning opportunity for students at the college.

"We were finding that it was (previously) piling up on us," said Tony Stolz, business manager of research and learning enterprises at Olds College. "So we've found a way to market (the product). We can use that to train the students, but we were missing that marketing piece."

Stoney Soil Products started working with the college in 2011, selling a garden mix that is a blend of soil and college composted material. Kulcsar said the company sold 21,600 kilograms worth of compost in 2011. Last year, the company sold 108,000 kilograms worth of product.

With the MVRWMC now on board, Kulcsar hopes the company can sell much more.

"Now with introducing the smaller (30-litre) retail line we're trying to increase that amount," he said. "The general mindset is (fertilizer) is being used everywhere. What we want to do is change that and get away from the chemical."

It's believed the expanded partnership will be able to serve more customers while benefiting the communities within Mountain View County that get their compost processed at Olds College.

Since the compost is green waste instead of manure, there is less weed involved in this product, without the fears of E. coli or salmonella that could be present in a manure-based product.

Many people, Stolz said, prefer this type of product because it eliminates concerns about salmonella and E. coli.