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RDNO ReTHINK Waste Grant Recipients Named for 2025

The Board of Directors has approved funding through the RDNO *ReTHINK Waste Grant Program* for 2025, including projects from *Better Table Solutions* and *FoodMesh*.

The *ReTHINK Waste Grant Program* supports innovative projects that reduce waste in the region. Priority is given to waste reduction projects that focus on the first two Rs — reduce and reuse. Two applications have been selected to receive funding.

The *Better Table Solutions* project involves a comprehensive program designed to enhance food efficiency and minimize food waste for restaurants within the RDNO. It combines online training and informative food efficiency audits. The goal is to empower commercial kitchens with the knowledge and resources needed to reduce waste, optimize food handling practices, and accurately assess the environmental impact of their operations, particularly concerning food efficiency and carbon footprint. Funding has been approved in the amount of \$22,000.

Secondly, funding to *FoodMesh* will build on previous development work of the North Okanagan Food Recovery Network that brings together businesses, charities and farmers. Quality surplus food can support charitable organizations like food banks, and leftover food that is no longer suitable for consumption can go to farmers for animal feed. *FoodMesh* started the North Okanagan Food Recovery Network in April 2023. They have reported to date over 371,600 kilograms of food diverted from disposal, which is equivalent to providing over 462,700 meals and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by over 957 tonnes. Funding has been approved in the amount of \$20,500.

“Avoidable food waste (food that could be eaten by people) is one of the most frequently found materials ending up in landfills,” stated Darren Murray, RDNO Environmental Coordinator. “When food is wasted, all the resources that go into bringing that food to our plates, such as cleared land, fuel, electricity, fertilizer, and water, are wasted. These grant projects have great potential to help conserve landfill space and address other urgent issues related to food waste, including climate change and affordability”.

If you have an innovative project that would benefit our region or want to get tips on reducing waste, visit www.rdno.ca/rethink. The intake for 2026 projects will reopen in the fall.

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