

■ *Growing Green Together:* SKJOLD ■ BARTHEL AND ORGANIC TECHNOLOGIES

The Minneapolis business lawyers of Skjold-Barthel, P.A. represent numerous “green” businesses, including Minnesota-based Organic Technologies, Inc. (OTI). In contract with the City of Minneapolis to handle all of the city’s street leaves and yard waste, OTI is in the business of converting yard waste into nutrient rich compost – sold to customers, community gardens, and landscape companies to be used as a soil amendment or blended with topsoil.

“Despite the public’s demand for reduced waste in landfills, organic recycling businesses face a number of “NIMBY” challenges in arranging for locations to operate its business,” says OTI legal counsel Anthony Barthel of Skjold-Barthel, PA. “Rapidly changing technology requires careful negotiations with equipment vendors and service providers, and evolving laws and attitudes regarding green industry present a number of ongoing legal and financial hurdles.”

OTI depends on the foresight of its legal counsel to navigate the ever-evolving climate for green business. “Our operations are affected not only by laws and regulations such as Minnesota’s new mandate requiring the use compostable yard bags for much of the metro area by 2010, but also by nature itself,” says OTI President Greg Austin. “For example, the emergence of the Emerald Ash Borer in this area will definitely impact how we do business. We rely on the fact that Skjold-Barthel understands our many challenges and can stay in front of evolving issues,” he adds.

With clients on the cutting edge of green industry, the firm strives to be green in every aspect of its operations, from office space to the adoption of green

policies and programs. The firm offices in Campbell Mithun Tower, a LEED Gold Certification for Existing Buildings rated among the nation’s top 25 percent energy-efficient building. “We have always taken a hands-on approach to managing our resources efficiently and reducing our environmental impact,” says Barthel, whose environmental commitment includes his service on the Board of the Downtown chapter of Ducks Unlimited.



Nutrient-rich compost at an OTI facility

In addition to taking full advantage of recycling and energy-saving programs in the workplace, the firm’s sustainable office policies and adoption of “Green IT” has resulted in even less energy use and reduced operating costs. “Technologies enable us to do much of our work in electronic format rather than producing volumes of paper,” says Barthel. “It’s efficient and “green” to collaborate on files electronically, regardless of our physical locations.”

The firm currently is in the process of implementing a full cloud computing infrastructure, including application serving, as a means to further reduce complexity, cost, and of course, energy dependence. ■

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