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# Denver International launches pilot composting program

By **Tanya Filippelli** on April, 4 2014 | Airline & Terminal News



Denver International Airport is partnering with one of its newest restaurants, Root Down, to pilot the airport's first commercial composting program in the concourse area.

In partnership with Denver Airport's Environmental Services section, Root Down will begin composting its food waste this month. The restaurant will collect all of its organic and compostable materials, including food scraps and back-of-the-house food preparation waste, in 65-gallon (295-litre) bins that will be collected daily.

The compost material from the pilot program will be taken to an off-site facility by Waste Management, a provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America.

Restaurateur Justin Cucci partnered with Denver Airport concessionaire Rod Tafoya, owner of Mission Yogurt, to open Root Down in September 2013 in Concourse C. Root Down uses local growers and sustainable meats and fish, and operates with a "field-to-fork" mentality. The restaurant's downtown location also places a heavy emphasis on composting its food waste.

"Denver International Airport has made sustainability a high priority, and we are delighted that Root Down will partner with us to reduce the amount of solid waste being sent to landfills," said Kim Day, Denver's manager of aviation. "We hope we can get additional tenants to embrace this and other programs that reduce our environmental impact."

Denver International Airport began composting food waste from restaurants and paper towels from public restrooms inside the Jeppesen Terminal last year. So far, that programme has resulted in approximately 72 tons of solid waste being diverted from local landfills. Because of the additional complexity of collecting, storing and transporting compostable materials from the concourses, the Root Down program will help the airport determine the feasibility of expanding composting to additional concourse restaurants.

Waste Management works with Colorado-based A-1 Organics to recycle all of the airport's composting material and prepare it for reuse. The material will eventually be used for compost and mulches used in landscaping applications.

"As Colorado's largest recycler, Waste Management is excited to support Denver International Airport's first concourse pilot composting program," said Jack Cella, Waste Management's area director of sales. "Food makes up over 15% of the overall waste thrown away daily in American households. Providing pilot programs such as this are a good way to divert waste from landfills and conserve natural resources."