

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County

(219) 326-0014
(800) 483-7700

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Summer 2007



More than a bin full...

Summer recycling has begun. You know how much more you recycle during the months when snow isn't on your windowsills. We have been driving the highways and byways of LaPorte County on different recycling days to count bins. We were not only counting—we were checking to see if bins were at curbside on time. How surprised we have been in some areas.

Please remember, you cannot count on your recycling pickup at a certain time of the day, and we don't want you to be missed. Just be sure you follow the 6 a.m. rule and all should be well. Also, routes have been running late on some days due to the large volume. **Don't take your bin back inside if it's not picked up by 5 p.m. Some nights the drivers work very late.** If you should be missed, please call our office early the NEXT day so we can



ensure a timely pickup. If you wait too long to call, you will have to wait until the next collection.

District offers year-round E-Cycling site

Have you checked our website and read about the new E-Cycling site? We have placed a permanent trailer at Hitchcock Road in Michigan City for you, our residents (NOT businesses, schools, or industry). At the trailer, you may drop off all of your old electronics. The site is open five days a week, except holidays, from 7:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. At 3 p.m., the gates are locked. The site is monitored



to ensure proper disposal. **Do not leave materials outside the gate when the site is closed!**

The trailer, which is plain silver now, will be repainted soon. However, signs are posted outside and inside the fence for easy identification.

If you have questions about this program, just call the office at 1-800-483-7700 or 219-326-0014.

Recycling "know-how"

To be a good recycler, you need to have "know-how." You need to know where and how to recycle, as well as what materials are accepted. Without this knowledge, you will make mistakes. For instance, you might end up throwing away something that you could recycle. Or, you might put items that we don't accept into your bin, creating extra work for hauling and sorting crews. Worse, you might contaminate other people's recyclables, wasting their time and effort and everyone's recyclables.

Be sure that all of your recyclable containers and paper get recycled (and don't go into trash cans!). At the curb throughout LaPorte County, you can recycle glass food jars; juice, pop, soda, and water bottles; beer and wine bottles; "tin" (steel) food cans and aluminum beverage cans; newspapers, plus any inserts, tabloids, or small flyers that originally came with the paper; glossy catalogs; phone books; magazines; cardboard boxes torn into 2-foot strips; stationery and copy paper; cereal and snack boxes; and all plastics with the chasing-arrows recycling symbol and marked with a number code (#1-#7).

Loose, lightweight items should be bagged so they don't blow out of your bin. Place the bag inside the bin or next to it. Be sure the bag is clearly marked "Recycling."

Bottles, jars, and cans should be thoroughly emptied and rinsed. Flatten plastic and metal containers whenever possible.

Make sure that paper products are clean and dry. Flatten boxes. Don't recycle



dirty paper products—such as the newspaper onto which you spilled cereal or the greasy pizza box.

Don't make recycling mistakes. Make sure you have the "know-how" to recycle right!

Thank you, residents of
Trail Creek! Your recycling
participation is amazing.
Keep up the good work!

Turner Talks Trash

from the
Director's Desk



After being here for the past six months, I would like to thank the staff, as well as the public, for their support and warm welcome. I want to assure all that we are working hard to find good District funding.

I'd also like to offer a special thank you to Laurie Wink of the *News Dispatch* for her insightful article about our recycling program. Laurie took the Able tour and reported that what you put out at curbside **REALLY DOES GET RECYCLED**. I am personally grateful for her fine writing and good coverage.

Clay

10 Tips for summertime shopping

Ahhh...summertime. Family vacations, lounging by the pool, picnics with friends, and back-to-school shopping. Whether you're getting ready for school yourself, getting someone else ready for school, or just taking care of your own summer shopping, there are things that you can do before, during, and after your shopping trip to reduce your waste, improve our environment, and save money, too.

1. Clean out your closets and cabinets. If you are sending a student off to college, you may find that you have plenty of towels and sheets without buying new ones. If you're sending a student back to school, you might discover unused notebooks, pens, and pencils or remember that last year's backpack is in great shape. If you're shopping for housewares, garden supplies, or even food, you may learn that what you need is already sitting on your shelf!
2. Organize what you already own. We've all watched those organization shows on TV. How many times have you watched someone find more than one iced-tea maker or enough white T-shirts or tank tops to clothe everyone on the block? While most of us aren't quite that organization-challenged, we often have some area—a junk drawer, a pantry shelf, or a laundry room

closet—that could use some attention. When you organize what you have, you'll find things you can still use. This is also a great way to find the stuff you no longer want that you could sell or give away.



3. No matter where you are shopping, plan ahead and make a list. Going to the hardware store? Make a list. Going to a clothing store? Make a list. We all know that we make fewer impulse purchases at the grocery store when we shop from a list—the same is true at other kinds of stores, as well.
4. Shop for reused items first. Before you hit the mall, check the neighborhood garage sales or stop by thrift stores or secondhand shops. You can find clothes, shoes, appliances, books, toys, games, office supplies, household goods, and more.
5. Look for recycled-content products. Since it is back-to-school season, paper is a great place to start. The average American uses 660 pounds of paper each year. Recycled-content notebooks, loose-

leaf paper, and printer paper are readily available, high-quality, and cost-competitive. Making new paper from recycled paper creates 74 percent less air pollution and 35 percent less water pollution than making the same paper directly from trees. And don't forget recycled-content tissues and paper towels. These items are often on school supply lists. You'll be teaching a great lesson to the whole class by sending recycled-content tissues or paper towels to school.

6. Paper isn't the only recycled-content product, of course! Look for pens, pencils, scissors, rulers, file folders, binders, storage containers, jewelry, and outerwear, such as fleece pullovers and scarves, to name just a few. If you don't find recycled-content alternatives, tell the store manager that you want them. The store may be able to order them for you now or stock them in the future.
7. Select durable, reusable products that also reduce your waste or energy use at home. For example, if you have a drying rack, you won't need to use your dryer and you might be able to avoid the iron, as well. When you purchase electrical appliances or electronics, look for the Energy Star label, which guarantees you an energy-efficient product. Choose reusables, such as refillable mugs and insulated cold cups. Many stores will refill your mug or cup—sometimes at a slightly discounted price.
8. Shop for food and flowers at Farmers Markets. These markets provide fresh food without extra transportation or excess packaging. Wouldn't it be nice to enjoy fruits and vegetables without throwing away a lot of plastic bags and containers? National Farmers Market Week is August 5-11, so go out and show your support for our



9. Avoid non-recyclable packaging. Know what to recycle so that you can select products packaged in locally recyclable containers as you shop. Remember—the word “recyclable” on a package doesn't necessarily mean that we accept the item in our local recycling program.
10. Say “no thanks” to overly packaged items. Ask yourself, “If I buy this item, how many layers of packaging are going to go straight into my trash or recycling?” If your answer is more than two, see whether an alternative product is available that has less packaging.



Learn more! Do more!

Buy Wisely, a program of the Center for the New American Dream
www.NewDream.org/buy

Greener Choices: Products for a Better Planet, a project of Consumer Reports
www.greenerchoices.org

The Green Guide, a service of National Geographic
www.thegreenguide.com

Get Reel

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken.

James Dent

A gas-powered lawn mower, with its noise and noxious fumes, can certainly take the shine off a perfect summer day. However, there is a mower that will keep your lawn trimmed and still allow you to enjoy the birds and the breeze—a reel mower.

A reel mower is a manual lawn mower. Unlike the reel mowers of 50 years ago, today's reel mowers are lightweight and easy to push. Here are just a few of the great reasons to use a reel mower:

- Reel mowers leave behind healthier grass plants because they “snip” the

grass, cutting it in the same way that a pair of scissors would. (Powered rotary mowers actually tear the grass blades.)

- Reel mowers don't need gasoline, so an empty gas can will never change your plans.
- Reel mowers produce no harmful emissions and emit no exhaust into your face and your neighborhood's air.
- It goes without saying that reel mowers are whisper quiet, allowing you to hear your children playing and enjoy the birds chirping. You can still listen to your MP3 player, but you won't have to!
- Users get to enjoy a brisk walk and some resistance training.
- Reel mowers are virtually mainte-

nance-free. Occasionally, the bearings and cutting edges may need a little lubricant and a slight adjustment. The cutters will need to be sharpened every couple of years.

- You'll never struggle with the pull cord on a reel mower. Simply start walking and the mower starts, too.
- Reel mowers take less space in the garage or shed and take less of a bite out of your budget.

A reel mower isn't right for every yard. The mowers are best suited to smaller yards, such as those that are 10,000 square feet (about one-quarter acre) or less. Many of today's yards are no bigger than this.

As yards have gotten smaller, reel mowers have begun to make a comeback. An estimated 350,000 reel mowers were sold in the U.S. last year—up from about 100,000 five years ago. About two-thirds of the customers purchasing reel mowers are women.

If you'd like more information about reel mowers, ask at your hardware store, garden center, or home supply store. You can also learn more at www.cleanairgardening.com/reellawnmower.html, www.planetnatural.com, www.reelin.com, or www.reelmowerguide.com/.



NO IMPACT MAN

A New York man and his family are in the middle of a year-long experiment. Their goal is to find ways to create no net environmental impact. This means giving up most activities and habits that create negative impacts and offsetting the ones they can't give up with positive changes, such as cleaning out closets and giving away reusable clothes and books, volunteering for beach cleanups, and planting trees.

Having dubbed himself "No Impact Man," Colin Beavan, his wife, small daughter, and dog began their adventure last November in stages. Stage 1 was to eliminate garbage by avoiding disposable products and giving up everything that had packaging. Stage 2 added a twist, creating the least amount of environmental impact in selecting and preparing food for baby, dog, and parents. Stage 3 takes the next step, finding ways to reduce consumption to only what is absolutely necessary and then learning how to make or

acquire those things most sustainably. At each stage, the challenges increase.

Friends have questioned whether No Impact Man and his family have any hope of accomplishing their goal while living in New York City. They claim he'd be better off living in a rural area where gardening and composting are more convenient. However, Beavan responds, "The fact is that if city dwellers can't learn to live without reducing their ecological footprint, then we're in deep trouble because most of the world's population now lives in cities." In the United States, more than 68 percent of Americans live in cities with populations greater than 50,000.

No Impact Man records his trials and errors in a blog, inviting dialogue with people from around the world. In his blog, he muses on everything from plastics to finding a garden plot to composting toilets. Beavan is writing a book, which will be published in 2009, about his fam-



ily's year-long experiment. A documentary is also being produced. Read more about this family's adventures in no-impact living at www.noimpactman.com.

If you're interested in the experiments of other families trying to create a more positive impact, visit www.pathtofreedom.com. This website is devoted to the Dervaes family's "urban homestead" on a 1/5-acre urban lot in Pasadena, California.

QUOTES REQUOTED

My mind is conditioned to believe that if I can't have it right now—RIGHT NOW!—then I'm deprived. [But] is being able to have something at a moment's notice real progress?

Colin Beavan
Author and "No Impact Man"

Books for a better world

Take a couple of college friends, piles of textbooks, and a need for cash, and what do you get? In the case of roommates Xavier Helgesen and Christopher "Kreece" Fuchs, the answer was to sell the books online and to begin selling books for others. Within a year, they had organized a campus-wide book drive, collecting over 2,000 books for reuse and raising \$8,000 for an after-school reading program sponsored by the University of Notre Dame.

With help from a third former roommate, Jeff Kurtzman, Helgesen and Fuchs decided to take the good idea and turn it into a business, which is how Better World Books was born. The business, founded in 2003, assists colleges and universities, as well as libraries, in organizing book drives, selling reusable books, and donating a portion of the proceeds to literacy organizations.

To date, more than 900 colleges and universities and 500 libraries have taken part, collecting over 3 million books

weighing more than 8 million pounds. Many of the books would have otherwise ended up in landfills, but not with Better World Books in charge. Some of the books are sold through the company's

Room to Read, National Center for Family Literacy, and Worldfund. All of the books that cannot be sold or reused are recycled.

Describing itself as a "for-profit social venture," Better World Books earns money by the sale of reusable books. However, financial profit isn't the only motive; the company also strives to generate a "social profit" by contributing to improvements in literacy in the U.S. and around the world. Since its

inception, Better World Books has donated \$1.3 million to 70 non-profits that promote literacy and education. The non-profits are usually selected by the organizations running the local book drives. More than 450,000 books have been donated to Books for Africa and the National Center for Family Literacy. In addition, over \$475,000 has gone back to the college and university service clubs and library volunteer organizations that have run the book drives.

For more information about Better World Books, visit www.betterworldbooks.com or e-mail info@betterworldbooks.com.



website, www.betterworld.com, and others are sold through other online book-sellers, such as Amazon.com. Reusable books go directly to the partner literacy organizations, including Books for Africa,




BetterWorld
BOOKS

WHAT'S UP?

FREE recycling labels for extra containers are still available at our office.



Our Household Hazardous Waste Program has been nominated for an Award of Excellence from SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America). Tom Buford, our HHW Coordinator, certainly runs a fine program, so we are hoping to hear good news soon.



We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

We are also available to speak to your club or organization about solid waste, waste reduction, recycling and composting.

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**PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER
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We hope you joined us for the Tire and White Goods Collection on Saturday, May 12 at the Fairgrounds. If you missed this one, there will be another on Saturday, October 13 at the Fairgrounds. Once again, the hours will be 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., when the gates will close. There is a small charge. Visit our website for details.



Less can be more (healthy)

When you choose home improvement products, cleaning supplies, and lawn and garden chemicals, you aren't just making decisions about how to do one job, such as spraying weeds or painting furniture. You're also making some commitments. First, you're committing to follow label instructions carefully. Second, you're signing up to store a potentially hazardous product in your home or garage. And finally, you're agreeing to dispose of leftover chemicals properly and safely. That's a lot of responsibility for a bottle of spray or a bucket of paint! Are you sure you want to take all of that on?

By choosing less hazardous products, you'll have more space to store your stuff, and you'll ensure that your family and the environment are healthier, too!

Think less hazardous. Try these ideas:

- Whenever possible, use hard work instead of chemicals. If you put your arm muscles to work, a scrub brush or discarded toothbrush can do a lot of cleaning in the bathroom or kitchen. Use those arm muscles in the garden to pull weeds, too.
- Buy the least hazardous product for every job. For instance, if you need to paint a room, choose latex paint, which is non-toxic and water-based. You'll be able to clean your brushes and pans with water, so you won't need flammable paint thinners for cleanup. Latex paint also does not have to be disposed as hazardous



waste. Leftover latex paint can be dried out and thrown away with your household trash.

- Know what you already have on hand. Plan your project carefully, shop your family's shelves before you head to the store, and use up what you have.
- Purchase only the amount you need. For jobs like painting and lawn care, know how many square feet you need to cover so that you don't buy too much.
- Give away or trade stuff your family won't be able to use up.
- Properly dispose of what no one needs. Take advantage of our Mobile HHW collections!

What's in your closet?

Or maybe it's under your kitchen sink or on a garage shelf or hiding in the basement? Look around and, chances are, you'll find some "household hazardous waste" (HHW). HHW includes old chemicals that your family no longer wants or needs, as well as outdated products.

Even though HHW is a kind of waste, it should never go into your household trash! Not only can HHW contaminate the soil and water near landfills, but it can also harm the workers who pick up and handle your trash. When hazardous waste is mixed with household trash, toxic fumes and burning liquids can injure trash workers. And, flammable materials can even cause explosions inside the trash trucks.

HHW requires special disposal to be sure that workers and our environment are kept safe. To help your family get rid of HHW safely, drop off HHW at our Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Collections. Mobile collections will be

held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on these Saturdays:

- July 7 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. State Road 2, LaPorte
- August 4 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. State Road 2, LaPorte
- September 29 at Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall, Michigan City
- November 3 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. State Road 2, LaPorte

These are just some of the HHW items that you can drop off for safe disposal:

- Oil-based paint, paint stripper, and paint thinner
- Weed and bug killers
- Plant foods
- Used motor oil, antifreeze, fuels, and other automotive liquids

Frequently Asked (Yard Waste) Questions

Where do I drop off yard waste?

The Yard Waste Drop-Off Site is located at the north end of Zigler Road (which runs along the east side of the LaPorte County Fairgrounds), just past the grandstands on the west side.

When can I drop off yard waste?

You can drop off yard waste during daylight hours, 7 days a week.

What materials are accepted?

You can drop off leaves (whole or shredded), chipped wood, clean lumber (no nails), grass clippings, yard trimmings and brush, branches up to 6 feet long and 12 inches in diameter, pine needles and pine cones, corn stalks, bark, and sod with no more than 4 inches of dirt.

How do I prepare my materials?

You may place yard waste into special kraft paper leaf bags which may be purchased at local grocery and hardware stores. If material is transported to the site in plastic bags, **THE PLASTIC BAGS MUST BE EMPTIED, AND THE PLASTIC BAGS TAKEN HOME WITH YOU.** Plastic bags do NOT decompose.

Will someone help me unload?

No, you'll need to unload your own materials. This site is not staffed.

What materials are NOT allowed?

Construction debris, rubble, wooden skids, wire, nails, rope or twine, glass, metal objects, plastics (any type, including plastic trash bags and Styrofoam), treated or painted wood, plywood, particle board, and other non-organic materials may NOT be disposed of at the site nor mixed with acceptable materials.

What happens to the yard waste materials?

All yard waste is transported to our Compost Facility, located on the grounds of Westville Correctional Center, to be turned into compost.

- Cleaners with warning labels
- Acids and pool chemicals
- Hobby paints and glues
- Mercury thermometers and thermostats
- Fluorescent tubes and bulbs
- Household and automotive batteries
- Old medicines
- Sharps, such as needles, syringes, and lancets used for in-home medical care

There is no charge to drop off HHW that comes from your home.

For more information, contact our office at 1-800-483-7700 or 219-326-1425, or visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com.