

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



**Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County**
(219) 326-0014
(800) 483-7700
www.alco.org/solidwaste
Summer 2003



Keep up the good recycling!

**Set out recyclables by
6 a.m.!!!**

Recycling is very convenient for residents of LaPorte County. All residents have scheduled curbside recycling. In addition, residents can take advantage of the convenient, drop-off recycling boxes.

Recyclables accepted at the curb in the Solid Waste District program include the following:

Glass

- **Items accepted:** food jars; juice, pop, soda, and water bottles; beer and wine bottles
- **Preparation:** remove lids; rinse to remove residue; do not break glass; set container and lid in bin.
- **Items NOT accepted:** light bulbs, window glass, mirrors, drinking glasses

Metal Cans

- **Items accepted:** "tin" (steel) food cans and aluminum beverage cans
- **Preparation:** empty and rinse; set in bin.
- **Items NOT accepted:** cans that held chemicals or paint; aerosol spray cans

Paper

- **Items accepted:** newspapers plus any inserts, tabloids, or small flyers that originally came with the paper; catalogs; phone books; magazines; cardboard boxes of no more than 2-feet square; stationery and copy paper; cereal and snack boxes
- **Preparation:** break down and flatten boxes; bundle in paper grocery bags; set on or beside bin.
- **Items NOT accepted:** frozen food boxes, wax-coated cardboard

Plastic

- **Items accepted:** all plastics with the chasing-arrows recycling symbol and marked with a number code (#1-#7)
- **Preparation:** rinse container; discard cap and ring; crush; set in bin.
- **Items NOT accepted:** plastic toys, rubber products, photographic film

Recyclables are collected every other week. If you aren't sure which week is your scheduled week, call our office or visit our website,

www.alco.org/solidwaste. The monthly collection calendar is available when you click on "Curbside Recycling." The weekly recycling calendar is also printed in the LaPorte *Herald-Argus* by township. Look on Page 2 of the newspaper under the heading "Did You Hear."

You must have your recyclables at the curb on your scheduled pickup day by 6 a.m. Don't try to



guess when your recyclables will be picked up—drivers change and routes may start at the opposite end! If you follow the 6 a.m. guideline, your recycling bin should not be missed. There are no return trips to pick up recycling that is not out on time!

Be sure that your red or blue recycling bin is clearly visible to the driver. Your bin is the driver's signal to stop and pick up recyclables. The driver will pick up recyclables set out next to the bin only if they are in a container that is clearly marked "Recycling."

At our drop-off boxes, we accept all of the materials accepted at the curb. Drop-off bins are located in Michigan City in the Moose parking lot on the south side of 11th Street across from Crabbs Auto Sales; in Hanna at the LaPorte County Highway Barns, 405 West Thompson Street; and in LaPorte behind the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County office, 2354 North U.S. Highway 35.

For more information about recycling, call our office, 219-326-0014 or 1-800-483-7700, or visit our website, www.alco.org/solidwaste.

Hazardous waste collections continue

Our mobile collections for household hazardous waste (HHW) are a great way to rid your house of toxic products that you no longer need. Our collections began in March and continue through October. If you have not yet dropped off HHW for recycling and safe disposal, please plan to do so at one of these events:

- July 19, Michigan City, Kabelin ACE Hardware, Marquette Mall
- August 2, LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. State Road 2
- September 20, Michigan City, Kabelin ACE Hardware, Marquette Mall
- October 4, LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. State Road 2

All collections begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at 2 p.m. Materials will only be accepted during these hours.

HHW materials accepted at our mobile collections include the following:

- Aerosols
- Automotive supplies: antifreeze, oils, and other fluids

- Batteries: automotive and household
- Corrosives
- Mercury-containing products: fluorescent tubes, thermometers with silver bulbs, thermostats, and other mercury-containing items
- Paint and related products: oil-based paint, thinners, and solvents
- Pesticides: fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, and other poisons
- Waste fuels: diesel, gasoline, kerosene, and other flammable liquids

Never mix hazardous materials. Leave all products in their original, labeled containers.

These mobile collections are provided for residents only. There is no charge to drop off materials.

Sorry, but at the mobile collections, we cannot accept latex paint, ammunition, explosives, commercial hazardous waste, medical waste, or radioactive materials.

For more information, call 1-800-946-4449 or 219-326-1425, or visit our website, www.alco.org/solidwaste.

Coming up

Plan to participate in these great recycling events later this year:

E-cycling: Recycle your obsolete computers, monitors, telephones, VCRs, DVD players, copiers, radios, pagers, printers, CD players, computer equipment, electronic games, FAX machines, TVs, modems, electronic typewriters, and microwave ovens at our Obsolete Electronics Collection, Thursday, October 2, through Saturday, October 4, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. Businesses may participate in this program. However, electronics from businesses must be dropped off on Thursday or Friday. Only residential materials will be accepted on Saturday.



Tire and White Goods Recycling Day: Drop off up to 10 tires of any size and large appliances, such as washers, dryers, stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, humidifiers, and water heaters. The day-long event will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 11 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds. This drop-off event is for residents ONLY. No businesses or industries may drop off items.



Computer makers get into recycling act

The International Association of Electronics Recyclers estimates that by 2010 about 1 billion personal computers will have become obsolete. Computer makers have worked rapidly over the past 20 years to create machines and software that do more and do it faster. However, these same manufacturers have often been criticized for failing to take responsibility for the growing volume of obsolete products at the end of their useful lives. Consumers and communities have been forced to step in and deal with these often hard-to-handle discards. But now, computer manufacturers are trying to take more responsibility for the older systems that their new equipment is replacing.

Several computer manufacturers are now offering recycling programs to customers. Generally, they allow consumers to recycle any brand of equipment. In some cases, they offer rebates or trade-in discounts toward the purchase of new products.

The Dell Computer Corporation has a new home computer pickup program. The company recently began accepting requests to pick up used computers at consumers' homes and kicked off a free printer recycling program. Dell Recycling allows customers to order home pickups of old computer equipment for \$15 per unit (up to 50 pounds). The service is available for all brands of computers and does not require the purchase of a Dell system. The company also has begun allowing customers who buy a new Dell printer to recycle their old printer at no cost. For customers looking to upgrade, check out the TradeUps@DellExchange program. Through this program, customers receive credit toward new equipment for old equipment to be recycled.

When customers plan to purchase a new Gateway PC or other products, they are able to recycle old equipment from any manufacturer with Gateway. Under the Gateway Trade-in program, customers are issued a rebate check after the old equipment is shipped and the new equipment is purchased.

Hewlett-Packard (HP) recycling centers have already processed more than 4 million pounds of computer-related equipment returned by customers or used in HP's business. HP's recycling program offers recycling for any brand of personal/office computer equipment and peripherals, including printers, scanners, fax machines, personal computers, desktop servers, monitors, and handheld devices, along with external components such as cables, mice, and keyboards. The cost of HP's computer hardware recycling service ranges from \$13 to \$34 per item, depending upon the type and quantity of hardware to be returned. HP also offers a trade-in program. When you upgrade your equipment under this program, HP gives you the value of your current equipment and lets you apply it toward the purchase of new HP products.

Through the IBM PC Recycling Service, consumers and small businesses can recycle any brand of PC, including system units, monitors, printers, and attachments for \$29.99. IBM PC Recycling Service will either recycle the equipment or refurbish the system and arrange for its donation to Gifts in Kind International. If the computer meets the donation criteria, the donor will receive a receipt and may be eligible for a federal tax deduction. When buying a new IBM PC system, customers may purchase this service for old equipment, or it can be ordered separately by calling 1-888-SHOP-IBM.

For more information, visit these websites:

Dell Computers

www.dell4me.com/recycling

www.dell.tradeups.com

www.dell.com/assetrecovery (Businesses only)

Gateway

www.gateway.tradeups.com

Hewlett-Packard

www.hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/environment/recycle/index.html

IBM

www.ibm.com/ibm/environment/products/pcrservice.shtml

Waste equals food

In *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, pioneering architect William McDonough and industrial chemist Michael Braungart challenge the concept of waste. Noting that there is no such thing as "waste" in nature, they write, "To eliminate the concept of waste means to design things—products, packaging, and systems—from the very beginning on the understanding that waste does not exist."

There is no waste in nature, because waste becomes food. Gardeners recognize this fact when they make and use compost, or decomposed plant matter, to feed new plant growth. We can learn even more when we study how ants succeed in building elaborate zero-waste communities. "They are a good example of a population whose density and productiveness are not a problem for the rest of the world, because everything they make and use returns to the cradle-to-cradle cycles of nature. All their materials, even their most deadly chemical weapons, are biodegradable, and when they return to the soil, they supply nutrients, restoring in the process some of those that were taken to support the colony."

McDonough and Braungart contrast this natural process with our current system of production that seeks to merely reduce the environmental impacts of thousands of industrial products, decrease the production of useless waste, and put smaller amounts of valuable materials into holes all over the planet, where they can never be retrieved.

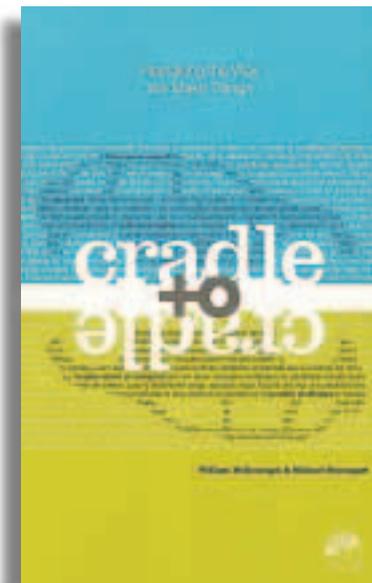
Rather than continuing to focus on a system that merely emphasizes the "less bad," they propose that manufacturers, chemists, and product designers rethink their products and processes. The goal—waste that becomes food.

"Products can be composed either of materials that biodegrade and become food for biological cycles, or of technical materials that stay in closed-loop technical cycles, in which they continually circulate as valuable nutrients for industry. In order for these two metabolisms to remain healthy, valuable, and successful, great care must be taken to avoid contaminating one with the other. Things that go into the organic metabolism must not contain mutagens, carcinogens, persistent toxins, or other substances that accumulate in natural systems to damaging effect."

Today, products that are no longer wanted can be a burden to the customer. McDonough and Braungart's design work and their book *Cradle to Cradle* add to a growing consensus that customers and the planet should not be burdened with these leftovers. Instead, products should be redesigned so that reuse and recycling are part of the plan. When reuse and recycling are part of the product or package design, the materials don't have to be downgraded with each reuse. Instead, we can have true closed-loop recycling systems, where products are turned back into the same item for another use, or upcycling, where the products go on to a higher and better use.

In the meantime, customers can begin to look at more items as "products of service." Rather than purchasing a computer or new carpet, a consumer might lease the use of that product during its expected life. At the end of that term of service, the manufacturer provides an upgrade or replacement and the original product returns to the biological or technical cycle for reuse and recycling.

While we are a long way from reaching McDonough and Braungart's goal, it is important to begin the process of looking at all "waste" materials to see if they can be designed as food for either a composting or a closed-loop industrial system.



Mannequin Madness

In the past, an old mannequin was often a trashed mannequin, but Judi Henderson's business, Mannequin Madness, is changing all that. In fact, during one six-month period, Mannequin Madness kept 100,000 pounds of mannequins from heading to disposal facilities.

The business, which is located in California, takes used mannequins, dress forms, and torsos and resells or rents them to retail stores, companies needing "models" for trade show displays, theater groups, and artists. Mannequin Madness, which operates out of its founder's basement, is now home to more than 500 mannequins, forms, and torsos. Each week as many as 50 are rented or sold. The purchase price for a used mannequin is about half the normal retail price for a new one. Henderson also sells mannequin floral sculptures that are used as window displays or enjoyed as artwork.

For more information, visit www.mannequinmadness.com or call 510-444-0650.



Sports recycling focuses on fans

Fans at big-time sporting events are getting more opportunities to recycle. And considering that fans generate as much as three to five pounds of trash during these events, that's a good thing!

NASCAR, with the help of Coca-Cola, Anheuser-Busch, and the National Association of PET Container Resources, launched "Rev It Up & Recycle" at the Texas Motor Speedway this spring. The recycling program targeted two types of beverage containers: plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Among the recycling collection containers were 30 NASCAR-themed kiosks. Recyclers were given the chance to win Dale Earnhardt, Jr. merchandise.

This followed a 2001 recycling event held at the Atlanta Motor Speedway. Sponsors hope that recycling will soon become commonplace at tracks across the country.

Four Major League Baseball teams provide fans with beverage container recycling. Last season, the Colorado Rockies, Milwaukee Brewers, Minnesota Twins, and Seattle Mariners recycled a total of 2,907,103 plastic beverage bottles. Many other teams recycle cardboard and other materials generated at concession stands, as well as some of the items picked up by stadium cleanup crews.



Habitat building greener homes

Habitat for Humanity's Environmental Initiative is working through a Green Team to train local affiliates in sustainable building practices. These practices include resource efficiency, construction materials conservation, energy efficiency, and environmental sensitivity.

In constructing Habitat homes, resource efficiency and construction materials conservation result from planning ahead so that the minimum possible amount of materials are ordered and purchased, cutting down on waste at the site and cost for the project. In addition, it may involve using secondhand or incorporating overstock materials into the project instead of "new" materials. Across the country, Habitat affiliates are helping expand materials conservation and reuse beyond Habitat-constructed homes through ReStores, which collect and

sell used and surplus building materials and fixtures.

Energy efficiencies built into the design, from passive solar heating to proper insulation to the use of whole-house fans, don't just help the environment. These improvements also make the homes more economical for the residents who purchase them. One Habitat affiliate in the northern U.S. found that they were able to keep heating bills down to around \$20 to \$30 per month—about one-tenth of what these new homeowners paid in the rental properties where they'd lived before.

Since it was founded in 1976, Habitat for Humanity has built 125,000 homes in 3,000 communities located in 87 countries. For more information about Habitat and its environmental programs, visit www.habitat.org/env/.

The power of cooking oil

On May 19th, after buying an old school bus and converting it to bio-fuel, 13 Middlebury College students left Vermont heading south on a cross-country trip that eventually took them to Washington state, their final destination. The source of their bio-fuel—vegetable-based cooking oil, most of it from restaurants.

The students, who dubbed their endeavor "Project Bio-Bus" and proudly painted "Powered by Veggie Oil" on its rear, set out with several goals in mind.

First, they hoped to raise awareness about alternatives to fossil fuels. By converting a diesel-fuel operated bus to a bio-fuel bus, a process that took the students only about three weeks, they were able to demonstrate that alternative fuels are already available and don't necessarily require a huge lifestyle change from their users.

Second, the students wanted to demonstrate that bio-fuel results in greatly reduced harmful

emissions. For instance, carbon monoxide emissions are reduced by 43 percent, hydrocarbons by 56 percent, particulates by 55 percent, and sulfurs, a particular problem with petroleum-based diesel fuel, by 100 percent.

A third goal was to promote domestic farming operations that grow the crops that become cooking oils, as well as the U.S. companies that produce and use the oils.

Finally, by utilizing cooking oil as fuel, the bus takes a waste product and reuses it.

The downside of veggie oil fuel? The odor from the bus might make you hungry!



Read more about it!

www.projectbiobus.com

Do we really need disposable DVDs?

Remember those *Mission: Impossible* tapes that would self-destruct. A digital video disc manufacturer is working to develop a disposable DVD that does just that. Once the package is opened, the DVD would work just like a normal DVD for 48 hours. But after 48 hours, exposure to air would cause the DVD to turn black and become unreadable to the laser in a DVD player.

If they make it to consumers, these self-destructing DVDs would be marketed as an alternative to rentals that must be returned and to movies that are purchased and kept. Either way, they replace a durable and reusable item that can be shared and enjoyed by many people at many different times. And worse, they replace it with a disposable product with a very short shelf life and a chemical coating.

When you are looking at DVDs, stick with reusables.

World's highest garbage dump cleaned up

By the mid-1990s, Mount Everest was home to about 1,000 tons of garbage that had been left behind by climbing expeditions. This garbage included oxygen bottles, food packets, tents, climbing gear, and more.

This year, as the world celebrates the 50th anniversary of the first successful summit attempt of Mount Everest, there is more to celebrate. Climbers have been working for years to haul down the trash that had accumulated at high elevations. This year, they've caught up, carrying down the last ton or so of debris.

The highest garbage dump in the world is now closed—and the world's tallest peak has been returned to its original glory.

WHAT'S UP?

Yard waste is accepted year-round at the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County's Yard Waste Drop-off Site, which is located at the north end of Zigler Road. (Zigler Road runs along the east side of the LaPorte County Fairgrounds.) The site is open during daylight hours, seven days a week.

You can drop off any of the following material:

- Leaves (whole or shredded)
- Chipped wood
- Clean lumber (no nails)
- Grass clippings
- Yard trimmings
- Brush
- Branches up to 6 feet long and 12 inches in diameter
- Pine needles and pine cones
- Corn stalks
- Bark
- Sod with no more than 4 inches of soil attached

You may drop off materials in special kraft paper leaf bags, which may be purchased at local grocery and hardware stores. You must unload your own material at the site.

If material is transported to the site in plastic bags, the plastic bags MUST BE emptied. You MUST take your plastic bags away from the site. The plastic bags will not decompose in the compost and will contaminate the organic materials.

PLEASE, NO: construction debris, rubble, wooden skids, wire, nails, rope or twine, glass, metal objects, plastics (any type, including plastic trash bags, flower pots, and Styrofoam), treated or painted wood, plywood, particle board, or other non-organic materials.

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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70% POST-CONSUMER NEWS
CONTENT, USING SOY INKS

Prevention is the best cure

Avoiding hazardous materials or limiting your use of them means less hazardous WASTE in the future. Here are some suggestions to help you prevent more waste:

- Ask yourself if you can use a non-chemical solution, such as pulling weeds or using a scrub brush instead of harsh chemicals.
- If you find that you will need a chemical, choose a product that will solve the problem. If multiple products are available, choose the most benign.
- Make a list. Don't buy chemicals on the spur of the moment at the grocery, home improvement, or discount store.
- Read the label while you're at the store. Is the product difficult to use? Will spills be hard to clean up? How will

you dispose of used chemicals or leftovers?

- Purchase the right amount for the job. If you can't use up the larger-sized bottle, it isn't a good deal!
- Keep leftovers in their original, labeled containers. Never pour potentially harmful chemicals into food or beverage containers for storage.
- Store products away from sources of heat and out of reach of children. At least 47 percent of households with children under the age of 5 have pesticides stored within reach, creating a significant risk of poisoning and other injury.
- Don't pour leftovers down the drain or dump them in your trash. Use them up. Give them to a friend or neighbor. Or, call us to ask about safe disposal.

Junk your mail woes

According to the Center for a New American Dream, each U.S. Postal Service letter carrier delivers about 17.8 tons of unsolicited business mail each year. About 44 percent of this mail is recycled or thrown away unopened. Opening the remainder will consume eight full months of the average American's life.

Here are some ways that you can get off mailing lists:

- Ask not to have your name and address sold, traded, or rented. When you apply for a credit card, order a product, fill out a warranty card, or donate money, check the box that says "Please do not provide my name or address to other organizations." If there is no box, write this message in large letters.
- If you receive catalogs that do not interest you, call the toll-free numbers provided and ask to be removed from the mailing lists.
- Call your existing credit card companies and ask them not to rent, trade, or sell your name and address. The same is true for online vendors and services that you use regularly. Most websites give you the option of setting your privacy preferences. However, these are often "opt-out" not "opt-in," meaning that information about you is made available to other vendors or list managers unless you specifically ask that it not be.
- Register your name with the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), which keeps a "delete" file of people who have asked to be removed from unsolicited mailing lists. To register, send your name and all of its variations, along with your complete address, the date, and your signature, to the DMA at the following address:

DMA Mail Preference Service
P.O. Box 643
Carmel, NY 10512

Each member of your family or



household who receives "junk mail" will need to complete and send in a request. Within about three months, you'll start to find less junk in your mailbox each day.

- Request that credit bureaus remove your name from their direct marketing files. Four of the largest agencies—Equifax, Experian, Innovis, and Trans Union—share an automated "opt-out" line that you can call to request removal. Dial 1-888-5-OPTOUT (567-8688) or 1-800-353-0809 and follow the prompts. You will be asked to provide name and address information, as well as your

Social Security Number, which they already have anyway.

Mail may not be the only marketing intrusion into your home. What about those telephone calls and e-mails? The DMA also has telephone and e-mail preference services. For more information, go to the website www.the-dma.org, and click on "Remove Name from Lists" (under "Consumer Help"). Or, to remove your name and number from call lists, you can send your name, address, phone number, and signature to: Telephone Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 282, Carmel, NY 10512.

**Remember
to recycle
the junk mail
that does
make it into
your home!**

Recycling Q&A

What does the recycling symbol on plastic mean?

The chasing-arrows symbol on the bottom or side of plastic bottles, containers, and bags isn't a recycling symbol. It's a code that tells you what "recipe" was used to make that type of plastic. Plastic containers are coded with numbers one through seven, as well as letters that are abbreviations for the name of the type of plastic. These codes help recyclers sort plastic so that manufacturers receive the correct "ingredients" to make new products.

Why do I need to empty and rinse my containers?

Containers that aren't emptied can leak out a sticky, gooey mess. Whether the mess is mostly jelly or mostly laundry detergent, you don't want it on the floor of your garage or the trunk of your car. Plus, the contents of containers—from soup to ketchup to soft drinks—can attract bugs, bees, rodents, and larger animals, such as cats, dogs, and raccoons. First, these intruders can create a nuisance. Second, they can leave behind a littered mess. And finally, animals could be injured on sharp edges or could ingest plastics, which can create dangerous intestinal blockages.

It's easy to avoid these problems. Simply use clear water to rinse all residue from your containers. Turn them upside down in the sink to let the water drain out. Then, place them into your recycling bin.

Why do I have to remove caps and lids?

Caps and lids need to be removed because they are often made of different materials than the container. For instance, while both the glass bottle and its metal lid are recyclable, they cannot be sent to the same manufacturer for reuse. The metal cap goes to a metal recycler and the glass bottle to a glass manufacturer. If the metal cap is left on the glass bottle, the metal can ruin batches of new glass and damage equipment, as well.

Plus, it is simpler for you. When you empty a container, the cap or lid is already off. Don't save it and put it back on after you rinse the container!