

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



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



Electronics recycling set for October 2-4

Attention, LaPorte County residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations! You can recycle your residential, commercial, and business electronics in early October. We'll host a drop-off event for obsolete electronics Thursday, October 2 through Saturday, October 4 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. Residents may drop off materials Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. Business and commercial electronics will be accepted for recycling on Thursday and Friday ONLY. If you have over 10 large items, call our office to be put on our list.

Simply deliver obsolete comput-



ers, monitors, telephones, VCRs, DVD players, copiers, radios, pagers, printers, CD players, computer peripherals and cables, electronic games, FAX machines, TVs, modems, electronic typewriters, and microwave ovens during this three-day drop-off event.

Last year at our three-day event, we recycled 75 tons of electronic waste, diverting this material from landfills. Since elec-

tronics contain both hazardous materials and valuable components, this is great news!

Call the Solid Waste District at 219-326-0014 or 1-800-483-7700 for more information.

There's a time for recycling

And that time is 6 a.m.! On your scheduled recycling day, please be sure that your recycling bin is at the curb by 6 a.m. Recycling routes and drivers change—so your recyclables are not always picked up at the same time of day. If you have your bin out by 6 a.m., your recycling bin should not be missed. There are no return trips to pick up recycling that is not out on time!

Also, please be sure that your blue or red bin is visible to the driver as he or she travels down your street or road. Your bin is the driver's signal to stop and pick up recyclables. If you have more recyclables than your bin will hold, fill your bin first. Place the remainder into a container that has been clearly marked "Recycling," and set it next to the bin.

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



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

printed in the LaPorte *Herald-Argus* by township. Look on Page 2 of the newspaper under the heading "Did You Hear."

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

Tire and White Goods Recycling Day to be October 11

Again this fall, residents will be able to drop off tires and white goods (large appliances) for recycling. The one-day event will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 11 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds.

There is no charge to 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. Freon will be extracted from refrigerant appliances at no charge.

If you have more than 10 tires, you must make arrangements in advance with the District Recycling Coordinator. If you do not make arrangements in advance, we will only accept 10 tires. In addition, a driver's license and vehicle registration must be presented to the officer at the collection prior to dropping off tires. The District reserves the right to refuse any loads.

This drop-off event is for residents ONLY. No businesses or industries may drop off items.

Last chance this season

Saturday, October 4 is your last chance this season to drop off household hazardous waste (HHW). Our last collection of 2003 will be held on October 4 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds, 2581 W. State Road 2. Deliver HHW, including oil-based paint, pesticides, fertilizer, automotive fluids, household cleaners and mercury-containing products, for recycling and safe disposal.

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.

Mobile collections will begin again in the spring.

With questions about the HHW drop-off program, call the Lake Michigan Districts HHW Program at 1-800-946-4449 or 219-326-1425, or visit www.alco.org/solidwaste.



Giving you a "leaf" up

If you and your family have more leaves than you can turn into mulch in your yard and gardens or compost in your backyard bin, we can help.

Residential 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.

Please, note: This site is **NOT** for business use. To dispose of commercial yard waste, call our office to request a sticker for your truck window. Business trucks WITH STICKERS go directly to the Compost Facility at Westville, where there is a tipping fee.

What's inside your lunch?



Lunchtime can be a very wasteful time of day. After lunch, people throw away uneaten food, inedible food scraps, packaging, and containers. Adults who “brown bag it” or purchase carry-out food, as well as students who eat lunch at school, produce quite a bit of garbage. For instance, students throw away an average of 67 pounds of lunch waste each year.

At lunch today or tomorrow, take a look around. How many reusable lunch boxes or insulated bags do you see? How many disposable paper bags? Lurking inside the bags and boxes, how many disposable plastic bags, wrappers, plastic spoons and forks, throwaway drink containers, and one-time microwave containers do you see? How many washable, reusable containers do you see? How much uneaten food is thrown away at the end of the meal? Are recyclable containers being placed in a nearby recycling container or taken home for recycling?

Here are some tips to help you pack a waste-free lunch:

- Use a reusable insulated bag or lunch box.
- Place foods into washable, reusable containers. You can buy lunch containers, or you can wash and reuse margarine and cream cheese tubs.
- Bring a drink in a reusable bottle or thermos. Again, you don't have to buy reusable bottles. Simply save the next plastic water bottle that you buy and keep washing it out. Or, bring a drink in a recyclable bottle or can.
- Use “real” silverware—and take it home to wash.
- If you purchase single-serve containers of fruit or other items, be sure to select recyclable steel cans whenever possible.

Then, recycle your empty containers.

- Buy food, such as applesauce, yogurt, or chips, in bulk. Each day, put a serving into your own reusable container.
- Include a cloth napkin.
- Choose foods that you'll eat in quantities that you'll finish.
- Be sure to thoroughly wash your reusable containers. Use hot, soapy water. And remember to wash your hands before you pack your lunch.
- Start recycling in your lunchroom—or, if you can't, be sure to take recyclable containers home to recycle.
- Vermicompost your uneaten food and scraps, such as apple cores and banana peels. Vermicomposting is small-scale composting in an indoor container using red wiggler worms.

Here are some tips to help you reduce waste if you purchase lunch:

- Select foods that you like.
- Choose portions that you'll be able to finish. If you are at a restaurant that only serves very large portions, share the meal or take the leftovers home.
- If you know that you'll be taking leftovers home, bring along your own foil or reusable container.
- Whenever possible, go to restaurants that use reusable plates, silverware, and napkins.
- If more than once a week you eat at a restaurant that uses disposable containers and packaging, cut back. You don't have to go “cold turkey.” Just give up one of these disposable meals per week. Over the course of the year, you'll throw away a lot fewer bags, cups, and other containers.

Wacky Uses

Joey Green's website, like his books, is a wealth of wacky information on using everyday products in unexpected ways. For instance, have you ever polished furniture with old pantyhose?

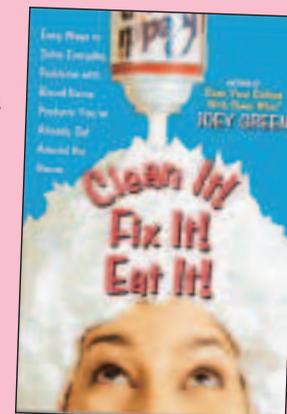
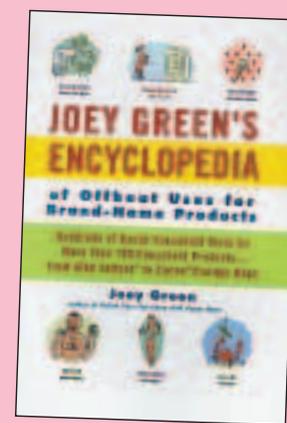
According to Green, you might want to.

Full of humor, as well as clever ideas, Green's books and website contain suggestions for using products that you might already have in your home, such as baking soda or aluminum foil, to help with household chores. Find out how to use what you have—and avoid purchasing some new or single-use items.

Look for these and other books by Green at your library or favorite used bookstore:

- *Joey Green's Encyclopedia of Offbeat Uses for Brand-Name Products: Hundreds of Handy Household Hints for More Than 120 Household Products from Alka-Seltzer to Ziploc Storage Bags*
- *Clean It! Fix It! Eat It!: Easy Ways to Solve Everyday Problems with Brand-Name Products You've Already Got Around the House*
- *Polish Your Furniture With Panty Hose: And Hundreds of Off-Beat Uses for Brand-Name Products*
- *Paint Your House With Powdered Milk, and Hundreds More Offbeat Uses for Brand-Name Products*

For even more of Green's use and reuse ideas, visit his website, www.wackyuses.com.



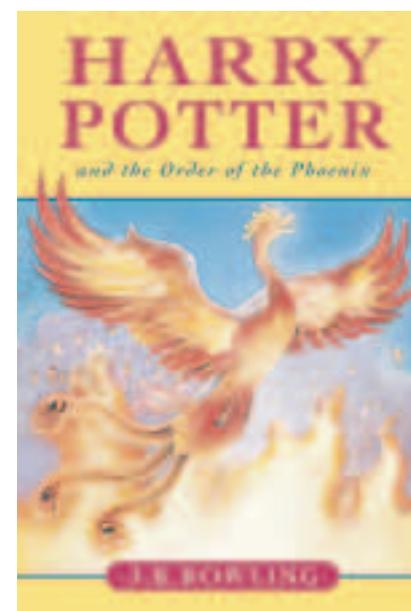
North of the border, Potter gets recycled paper

When the Canadian edition of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, the fifth in the Potter series, was published this summer, all 935,000 copies were printed on 100-percent recycled paper.

According to the Canadian publisher, Raincoast Books, this resulted in saving:

- 29,640 trees from Canada's old-growth forests
- 12,419,261 gallons of water, enough to fill 31 Olympic-sized swimming pools
- 1,396,739 pounds of garbage
- 20,248 BTUs of electricity, enough to power the average North American home for 195 years

J.K. Rowling, author of the series, was happy to see the greening of Harry Potter. She wrote of this recycled-content edition, “The forest at Hogwarts is home to magical creatures like unicorns and centaurs. Because the Canadian editions are printed on Ancient Forest Friendly paper, the Harry Potter books are helping to save magnificent forests in the Muggle world, the home of magical animals such as orangutans, wolves, and bears. It is a good idea to respect ancient trees, especially if they have a temper like the Whomping Willow.”



Laptop lunches

Two California moms took a look at children's lunches—and saw too much waste and too little nutrition. They responded by creating the Laptop Lunchbox. This Lunchbox includes five, removable inner containers (two with lids) to accommodate several different types and sizes of food, as well as a stainless steel fork and spoon. Each Laptop Lunchbox comes with *The Laptop Lunch User's Guide: Fresh Ideas for Making Wholesome, Earth-Friendly Lunches Your Kids Will Love*. This book has a lot of great information, as well as many pages of menus and recipes for healthy packed lunches. Kids and adults might enjoy the offerings.

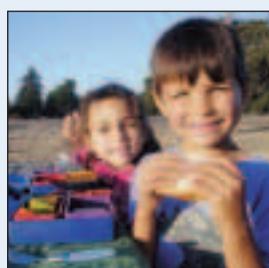
If you're in the market for a new lunch box or bag, you might want to check this out. If you aren't, the book can be purchased separately. You also might want to find out if your library has or could get you a copy to borrow.

For details, visit www.laptoplunches.com or call 831-457-0301.



For more information on waste-free lunches, visit:

www.wastefreelunches.org
www.ciwm.ca.gov/Schools/WasteReduce/Food/ZeroWaste.htm
www.kidsrecycle.org/reduction.html
www.grn.org/resources/excess_packaging.html
www.informinc.org/getatlunch.php



Greening fall and winter festivities

Fall and winter bring families and friends together for lots of celebrations. Unfortunately, these celebrations often result in a lot of extra waste. Included in this waste are uneaten food, disposable paper products, shopping bags, used costumes, boxes, wrapping paper, unwanted gifts, and much, much more.

As the fall and winter festivities get underway, consider these tips to reduce your waste:

- Avoid disposable decorations, costumes, paper products, and serving ware.
- Decorate with your family treasures. Having a football bash? Display your football card collection. Hosting a Thanksgiving dinner? Find the turkeys children in your family made in preschool or elementary school and make a centerpiece.
- Don't make too much food. If you have too many leftovers, send food home with your guests.
- Shop reused first. Look for unique used gifts at antique and second-hand stores. Select books from used bookstores.
- On shopping trips, carry your own reused paper and plastic shopping bags or reusable cloth bags.
- Select consumable gifts, such as movie passes, event tickets, or museum or zoo memberships.
- Give the gift of time. Help a friend clean out a room or garage. Offer to walk your neighbor's dog. Volunteer to babysit for a young child.
- Extend the circle of giving beyond your family and friends. Donate gently used items to charities that support struggling families.
- Make your own wrapping paper. Brown paper grocery bags, the colored sections of newspapers, maps, fabric scraps, and colorful pictures from magazines or old books make good gift wrap.
- Recycle paper at home by creating handmade paper. Then decorate your paper with family photos to produce great seasonal cards.

If you are looking for more great ideas, look no further than the Internet. Simply go to your favorite search engine and type in "holiday waste reduction." Or, look for ideas at these websites:

- www.eco-artware.com/tips/
- www.newdream.org/holiday/
- www.use-less-stuff.com and click on "42 Ways to Trim Your Holiday Wasteline"

Nickelodeon gives aluminum can recycling a kick

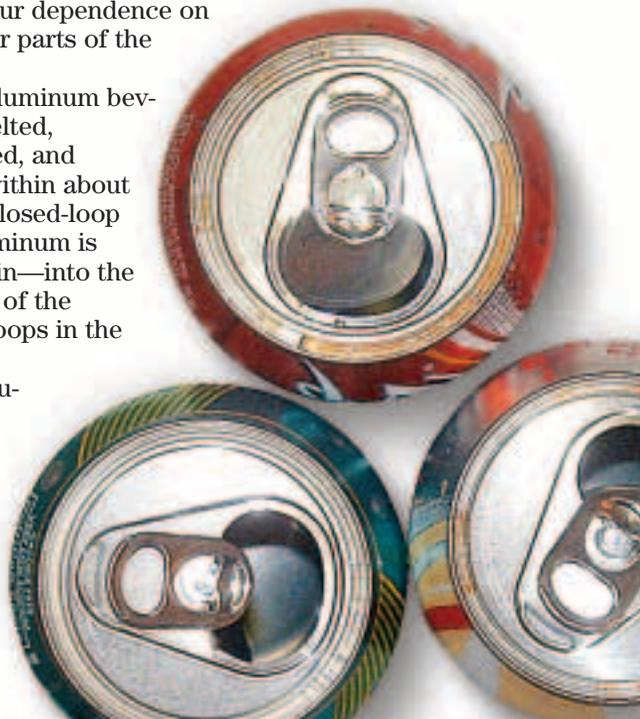
Jimmy Neutron and his dog, Goddard, from the Nickelodeon television series "The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius," are reminding kids of all ages to recycle aluminum beverage cans.

Recycling aluminum saves a significant amount of energy. In fact, making new cans from used aluminum consumes about 75 percent less energy. Recycling also helps conserve natural resources here and abroad. In the case of aluminum recycling, it helps reduce our dependence on mined resources from other parts of the world.

When you recycle an aluminum beverage can, it is crushed, melted, formed into a new can, filled, and returned to store shelves within about two months. This is true "closed-loop recycling" because the aluminum is turned—over and over again—into the same product. It's also one of the fastest and most efficient loops in the recycling industry.

To learn more about aluminum can recycling, visit www.recycleyourcans.org.

The Aluminum Association, a group of aluminum producers and can and parts manufacturers, is working with Nickelodeon to promote can recycling, which has declined over the past several years.

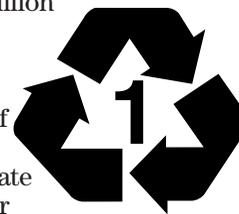


...And a bottle of water, please

What do cell phones, coffee cups, and water bottles have in common? They are among the things you're most likely to see people carrying when you're out in public.

Bottled water is now available at convenience stores, fast-food restaurants, vending machines, and even in check-out line coolers at sporting goods and other retail stores. According to the Beverage Marketing Corporation, about 1.7 billion gallons of water in single-serve plastic bottles were sold during the year 2000. This is equivalent to 10.88 billion 20-ounce (1.25 pt.) bottles. Single-serve bottled water sales are expected to increase by at least 15 percent by 2005 to nearly 2 billion gallons, or an amount equivalent to about 12.8 billion 20-ounce bottles.

Single-serve water bottles are made from a type of plastic called polyethylene terephthalate (abbreviated PET or PETE). These bottles, which are marked on the bottom, side, or label with a chasing-arrows symbol, the number 1, and the letters PETE, are recyclable. They can be turned into carpet, household products, and fabric used to make T-shirts, sweatshirts, and blankets. However, because many of these bottles are purchased and used away from home, too many of them



end up in trash containers or, worse, along roadsides or on the ground in parks and other public places.

Keep your water bottles for reuse or recycling. When you get home, consider washing, refilling, and chilling the bottles. "Homemade" bottled water can be just as refreshing, is cheaper, and reduces your overall use of plastic bottles, saving energy, conserving resources, and reducing transportation requirements. If you choose not to reuse your bottles, be sure to recycle them. If there isn't a recycling container nearby, put the bottles into a bag or box and take them home for recycling.

Conscious consumption

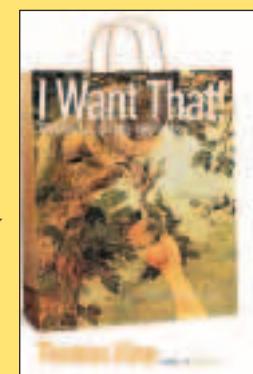
According to the second annual Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability survey conducted in 2003 by the Natural Marketing Institute, about 68 million U.S. adults, or about one-third of consumers, said they were concerned about environmental and social issues. As a result, these consumers reported making purchasing decisions with those things in mind. This was an increase of 7 percent from the previous year.

These consumers are committed to what can be called "conscious consumption." Conscious consumers consider what items are really needed, where these products came from, what resources were used to make them, how they are packaged, and what will happen to them when they are no longer useful.

This fall, the Center for a New American Dream will launch a new "Conscious Consumer" section to its website. The Conscious Consumer site will be designed to help consumers make better decisions based on more reliable information. Look for more information soon at www.newdream.org, or go to www.ibuydifferent.org.

How is it that we all became shoppers?

Malls did not build themselves. For a historical account of how shopping came to be what it is today in America, check out *I Want That! How We All Became Shoppers* by Thomas Hine (HarperCollins, 2002).



For a commentary on our buy-it-now culture, listen to "Ka-Ching!" on Shania Twain's newest CD, *Up!* (Universal, 2002). Throughout the song, Twain belts out, "All we ever want is more; A lot more than we had before; So take me to the nearest store." Borrow the CD (or see if you can find it used) and take a listen.

WHAT'S UP?

Tree-use and tree-recycling

Did you know that for every Christmas tree harvested, two to three seedlings are planted in its place the following spring? At present, about 33 million trees are cut each winter, meaning that at least 70 million seedlings will be planted at tree farms next spring.

According to a survey by the National Christmas Tree Association, Americans recycled 69 percent of the cut trees they enjoyed during the last holiday season. Most commonly, holiday trees are chipped and turned into mulch, used to create fish habitat in lakes and ponds, or submerged to prevent shoreline erosion and to stabilize shores.

If your family enjoys the tradition of a cut tree, be sure to recycle it after the holiday season. Remove all the decorations, stand, and tinsel, and deliver it to the Yard Waste Drop-off Site on Zigler Road.

As you plan for the holidays this year, consider reusable trees. Live trees can be used indoors during the holidays and planted outdoors afterward. Be sure to dig the hole before the holidays; otherwise, the ground may be frozen when you need to plant the tree. Artificial trees are also reusable; you just pack them up and put them in the basement or attic for the next year.



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.

Solid Waste District of LaPorte County

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CONTENT, USING SOY INKS**

Compost — know why and know how



Composting is nature's recycling system. With help from the right combination of moisture, air, microorganisms like bacteria and fungi, and macroorganisms such as worms and millipedes, organic materials are transformed into dark, nutrient-rich compost.

In the wild, nature makes its own compost. Beneath your feet in the woods, nature is turning leaves and other dead plant matter into soil. However, fortunately, composting is for more than forest floors. Homeowners, apartment dwellers, schools, and businesses can participate in this kind of recycling program.



Maybe you've just trimmed some trees and need a chipper/shredder. Perhaps you're having a big party and need tables. Of course, you don't need the chipper/shredder or the tables forever—and you don't want to buy, store, and maintain them. Renting offers the perfect solution.

Most rental stores offer items by the hour, day, week, or month. You may be asked to make a deposit that is returned to you or credited to your rental fee when the items are returned in good condition. In addition to construction equipment and tools, you can also rent leaf blowers, car-top carriers, video cameras, baby furniture, furniture, sprayers, pressure washers, chairs, tables, and tents.

You might want to consider renting instead of buying under the following circumstances.

- You need to get a big job done.
- You don't want to purchase and own expensive equipment or items.
- You will only need the item once—or just once in a while.
- You don't want the trouble or cost of maintaining the equipment.
- You don't want to buy something that will quickly be obsolete or worn-out.
- You don't have, or don't want to give up, the storage space to keep the item.

The American Rental Association website, www.ararental.org, has a search engine to help you find a rental store near you.

Why compost?

Composting can save two valuable resources—time and money. Rather than bagging and hauling yard trimmings, food scraps, or organic trash to the curb or landfill, save time by adding them to the compost pile. The finished product serves as a valuable soil amendment for plants and gardens at no cost to you. You may also save money on trash bags, fertilizer, and insecticides.

Composting will improve your soil. Whether you are potting plants or growing a garden, compost benefits the soil and the plants growing in it. Compost contains essential plant nutrients, such as carbon and nitrogen. Plants grown in nutrient-rich soil are hardier and more disease-resistant.

Composting reduces waste. Instead of being bagged and shipped off for final disposal, unwanted materials are transformed from waste into a useful product again.

How to compost

The first step is selecting a location for your compost pile. A level spot outdoors is ideal. Bins may be used to contain the materials, but they are not necessary.

Next, add equal amounts of “browns” and “greens.” Browns are carbon-containing materials such as chipped wood and branches, dried leaves, sawdust, and shredded boxes and paper. Greens are nitrogen-containing materials such as grass clippings and weeds. Kitchen scraps, such

Short on space? Composting can be done indoors with the help of worms! For more information about vermicomposting, contact our office, visit a local library, or search the Internet.

as coffee grounds, tea bags, egg shells, and fruit and vegetable peelings, can also be added to the pile.

For the composting process to progress, your pile will also need air and water. At all times, the pile should be about as damp as a wrung-out sponge. If the pile gets too dry, sprinkle it with water. If it is too wet, stir it to

help evaporate the extra moisture. To give the compost pile air, turn it with a rake or pitchfork regularly.

What to do with compost

Use compost anywhere you want to improve the soil for plants. Although it's not a substitute for fertilizer, compost can boost the nutrient content of sandy and clay soils. In addition, compost helps clay soils drain better and sandy soils retain moisture better. It is also great for potting indoor plants and seedlings.

Using compost as mulch around trees, annuals, and shrubs helps prevent weed growth, retain moisture, reduce erosion, and prevent soil compaction.

Where to learn more about composting

Information on composting is widely available in libraries, bookstores, and on the Internet. We are also available to answer questions. Contact our office at 219-326-0014 or 1-800-483-7700, or visit our website, www.alco.org/solidwaste, for more information.

Make every day America Recycles Day!

As you celebrate another America Recycles Day on November 15, don't just think about recycling—do something about it. If you aren't recycling, now is a great time to start. If you are, now is a great time to commit to do better during the coming year. Make your motto: “I'll recycle what I buy, and buy what I recycle.”

First, shop with recycling in mind. We refer to this as *pre-cycling*. When you pre-cycle, you choose products and packages that you know you'll be able to recycle locally. This includes 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; catalogs; phone books; magazines; cardboard boxes of no more than 2-feet square; 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).

Second, don't let your recyclables fall through the cracks—and into trash cans. Capture all the recyclables that are used in your home, office, and school. Set up convenient recycling

containers. Put a collection container for recyclables in your kitchen, near your workstation, or in your classroom. Don't trash containers that you use away from home. If there aren't recycling bins nearby, carry the containers home for recycling.

Third, buy what you recycle. When you shop, look for and buy recycled-content products made from the type of recyclables you generate. For instance, look for fleece sweatshirts made from plastic soft drink bottles. Buy plastic lumber made from milk jugs. Remember that many common packages are made from recyclables. These include cardboard boxes, paperboard (“flatboard” that tears gray or brown), steel food cans, aluminum beverage cans, glass bottles and jars, molded-paper egg cartons, and laundry detergent bottles.

Make this America Recycles Day your best one yet! Recycle what you buy—and buy what you recycle.

