

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of  
LaPorte County

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

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Summer 2005



# Answers to your most important recycling questions!

## Who should recycle?

Everyone—you, your family, friends, and neighbors!

## Where do I recycle?

At the curb, of course! On your recycling day, be sure that your red or blue recycling bin is clearly visible from the street. Your bin signals the driver to stop.

## When do I recycle?

Curbside collection is scheduled every other week. On your collection day, have your recyclables at the curb by 6 a.m. Don't guess what time the truck will arrive—just get your cart to the curb by 6 a.m.!

## Which is my recycling week?

If you lose track of your recycling week, simply visit our website. Not only can you

find your week, but you can schedule regular e-mail reminders so that you won't forget in the future.

## What can be recycled?

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 down in 2-inch 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).

## Why should I recycle?

• Recycling is easy to do. You simply rinse containers and then keep recy-

clable containers and paper products separate from trash.

- Recycling keeps us from wasting the resources that were used to make the product.
- Recycling creates less pollution than making products from new resources that come directly from nature (referred to as "raw materials" or "virgin materials").
- Recycling creates less pollution than disposing of trash.
- Recycling, by making new products from reused materials, uses less energy, including fuel and electricity, than making the same products from raw or virgin materials.
- Recycling creates jobs.
- Recycling helps keep our planet cool by creating fewer of the "greenhouse gases" that are warming it up.



## How do I get more information?

Visit our website,  
www.solidwastedistrict.com,  
or call 326-0014 or 1-800-483-7700.

## Hazards lurking



Have you looked under the kitchen sink lately? Once you get past the dish soap, there is a vast dark area that may be filled with old, unused household chemicals. Or, maybe at your house, these products don't lurk under the kitchen or bathroom sink. Instead, maybe they are on shelves in the laundry room, garage, or basement. Wherever your old chemicals are hiding, now is a great time to sort through them and properly dispose of the ones that you no longer need.

To help residents dispose of outdated, unneeded, and unwanted household, automotive, and garden chemicals, we provide several Household Hazardous

Waste Collection events each year. These collections are scheduled in both LaPorte and Michigan City to provide convenient drop off for all county residents.

At these Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Collections, you can drop off all of these items at no charge:

- Aerosols
- Automotive supplies (antifreeze, oils, other fluids)
- Batteries (automotive and household)
- Corrosives
- Expired medications
- Mercury-containing products (fluorescent tubes, thermometers with silver bulbs, thermostats, other mercury-containing items)
- Paint and related products (oil-based paint only, thinners, solvents)
- Pesticides (fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, other poisons)
- Sharps (needles, syringes, lancets, and injectables used in personal medical care)
- Waste fuels (diesel, gasoline, kerosene, other flammable liquids)

For more information, call Tom Buford at 1-800-946-4449 or 219-326-1425.

### Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Collection Schedule

Friday, July 15, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., Kabelin Ace Hardware, Michigan City  
Saturday, August 13, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., LaPorte County Fair Grounds  
Saturday, September 10, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Kabelin Ace Hardware, Michigan City  
Saturday, October 15, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., LaPorte County Fair Grounds

## Green waste getting you down?

If your backyard compost bin is full, never fear! The Solid Waste District of LaPorte County offers a convenient, year-round drop-off facility for all of your excess green waste.

The Yard Waste Drop-off Site is located at the north end of Zigler Road, just past the grandstands on the west side. (Zigler Road runs along the east side of the LaPorte County Fair Grounds.) The site is open during daylight hours, seven days a week.

At this site, you can drop off all sorts of garden and lawn wastes, including leaves, grass clippings, yard trimmings, branches and brush, as well as chipped wood and clean lumber. You must unload your own material at the site.

You may drop off materials in special kraft paper lawn and leaf bags, which may be purchased at local grocery and hardware stores. However, if you place your yard waste into plastic bags, you MUST empty the yard waste at the site and MUST take your plastic bags away with you. NO plastic bags can be left in or mixed with the material!

The yard waste we collect is composted. This compost is available on a first-come, first-served basis to LaPorte County residents at these self-serve locations during daylight hours:

- Fish Lake — Fish Lake Community

Building (Old Lions Club property), on 800 East

- Hanna — County Highway Barns
- Hudson Lake — Hudson Township Park
- Kankakee/Rolling Prairie — County Highway Barns, corner of 700 E. and 400 N.
- Kingsford Heights — Grayton Road on left (cement slab by sewage plant)
- LaCrosse — Owego and Dominic Streets
- LaPorte — City Street Department, 1206 Second Street
- Michigan City — Hitchcock Street
- Union Mills — Mill Pond, off Water Street
- Wanatah — At sewer plant, 12562 S. 1050 W.
- Westville — Prairie Meadow Park

The self-serve compost is for small quantities of compost for residential (home) use ONLY. Homeowners needing a larger quantity or businesses can pick up material at the compost site. Mulch is priced at \$6.50 per cubic yard and compost is \$10.50 per cubic yard. For information, call the facility at 219-785-2511, extension #4935 (use # sign in dialing), and ask for Joe.

Wondering how we make this compost? Turn to the back page and read all about it.

# 10 tips for summer shopping



Whether you're getting ready for school yourself, getting someone else ready for school, or just taking care of your own end-of-summer shopping, there are ways that you can reduce your waste, improve our environment, and save money, too.

1. Before you shop, plan ahead. Evaluate what you already have on hand and make a list of what you really need.
2. Reuse. Did you know that if you washed and reused zipper plastic bags 50 times you would keep 1,500 bags from being disposed—and save at least \$150 per box of 30 bags? Look through your own closets and shelves for forgotten tote bags, backpacks, lunch boxes, and refillable containers. Need organizers? Use old shoe boxes or shipping boxes that you already have around the house. Reuse is also a lot less stressful than hitting the stores.
3. Shop reused first. Look for used items through online services such as www.freecycle.org, at garage sales, or at resale shops. You can find clothes, shoes, appliances, books, toys, games, office supplies, and household goods.
4. Select recycled-content paper. Each back-to-school season, Americans purchase about 3.4 million tons of printing and writing papers. Every ton of 100-percent, post-consumer, recycled-content paper saves 24 trees and 4,100 kilowatt hours of electricity!
5. Look for other recycled-content products, too. You should be able to find pens, pencils, scissors, rulers, file folders, binders, storage containers, and jewelry. If you don't, 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.
6. Purchase refilled or remanufactured

ink jet cartridges for your printers. Or, buy a refilling kit and do it yourself.

7. Enjoy cool recycled accessories, such as folders made from old maps, clipboards made from old computer parts, and more. Look for these at department and specialty stores. Or, shop online.
8. Shop for food and flowers at Farmers Markets. Not only do these markets support local farmers, they also provide fresh food without the 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? For more information about Farmers Markets or to locate them here or as you travel, go to [www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/](http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/).
9. Develop your own sense of style. Surround yourself with items that you find comfortable and comforting. You'll probably find that you are less tempted to replace what you have to buy something "trendy."
10. Avoid buying collectibles that are here today but "so yesterday" tomorrow. In 1999, 250 million Star Wars action figures were sold, weighing about 5,700 tons. If you aren't a collector, stay away from unneeded souvenirs.

On Earth Day, Consumer Reports, a nationwide consumer-product testing and rating organization, launched a new website aimed at "green consumers." The site features environmental evaluations of various products, making the point that often those products that are better for the environment will also protect public health and save money. To learn more about becoming a greener consumer, visit [www.greenerchoices.org](http://www.greenerchoices.org).

The Center for a New American Dream also offers advice to consumers. For more information, go to [www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org). You'll find great information under "Buy Wisely" and "Make a Difference."

# How well do you know your hauler?

During February, NBC "Today Show" co-host Matt Lauer moonlighted as one of the guys in green—a New York City Department of Sanitation crew member. After Lauer's day-long gig, he encouraged people to practice kindness toward sanitation workers, who are doing a job that needs to be done.

Another New Yorker, anthropology professor Robin Nagle, also moonlighted for the Sanitation Department. Nagle, who teaches the course "Garbage in Gotham: The Anthropology of Trash" at New York University, wanted to find out firsthand what life is like on the streets for the city's sanitation crews. She spent three weeks as part of a crew and chronicled her experiences in an online diary at [Slate magazine](http://Slate magazine) ([slate.msn.com/id/2106849/entry/2107445/](http://slate.msn.com/id/2106849/entry/2107445/)) or go to [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com) and search for "Nagle". A book-length account, *We All Wear Green: Loading Out with Sanitation Workers in New York*, will be published in 2006.

Practice kindness toward your haulers. Follow setout guidelines. Don't zoom around slow or stopped trucks. Give them room to do their jobs. They are

doing work that we need to have done. And if you get the chance, say "thank you."



# Bag, borrow or steal



A new Internet service can deliver hip and trendy handbags to your door—and take them back when you tire of them. "Bag Borrow Or Steal" is a monthly membership service for designer handbags. You select your desired level of service, depending on which designers interest you and whether you want to borrow one or two bags at a time. Then, you select the bag you want to borrow and it is shipped to you. You use it until you are tired of it and want a new one. Then you send it back and your next choice is shipped to you. It's a "Netflix" for handbags!

If you decide that one of your borrowed bags is a keeper, you can buy it by selecting the "Steal It" option and receiving a price quotation.

For more information, visit [www.BagBorrowOrSteal.com](http://www.BagBorrowOrSteal.com).

# QUOTES REQUOTED

*I realized then and there that no matter how many worms I raised, or was responsible for other people raising, the earth could only be better off. I was going to restore and replenish rather than destroy and exploit the earth.*

*You, too, can vermicompost. This simple process with the funny name is a lot easier to do than you thought. After all, if worms eat my garbage, they will eat yours, too.*

Mary Appelhof, the "Worm Woman" Author of *Worms Eat My Garbage* and champion of vermicomposting 1936 - 2005



# Recycling aids tsunami recovery efforts

The tsunami that hit the Indian Ocean last winter left behind huge quantities of debris. In Banda Aceh, which is located in Indonesia and was one of the hardest hit cities, the tsunami left behind as much as 13 million cubic yards of debris, enough to fill three football fields to a height of three stories.

To deal with this debris, provide employment for those who were made jobless by the tsunami, and capture usable resources, the United Nations Development Programme announced in February that as many as 1,000 people in Banda Aceh, and eventually up to 30,000 in all tsunami-damaged areas, would be employed in waste recovery efforts.

The recovered materials will be sorted

to be sold for recycling (plastic and metal), used as compost for land regeneration (organic waste), turned into fill for eroded areas (dirt, crushed concrete, and stone), or utilized in the construction of temporary and permanent housing (bricks and wood). The initial sorting will be done by hand, pulling out the reusable and recyclable materials. After that, heavy equipment will be used to crush concrete and stone or chip wood.

In addition to providing a fair wage, vaccinations, appropriate clothing, and health and safety training, this recovery effort also allows residents to participate in a positive and constructive way in rebuilding their homes, businesses, communities, and lives.

# Engineers give best grade to solid waste

Every few years, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) issues a "Report Card for America's Infrastructure." The 2005 report card gave America's infrastructure an overall grade of D, but Solid Waste received a C+—the best grade given in this year's report. In addition to solid waste, infrastructure evaluated by ASCE included transportation, water systems, energy, schools, and parks. ASCE



looks at a variety of factors, including condition, capacity, funding, and outlook.

Since the first report card was issued in 1988, Solid Waste has raised its grade from C- to C+, largely because the system for reducing, recycling, composting, and disposing of trash has improved, resulting in a dramatically increased national recycling rate which places less long-term demand on disposal facilities.

# The Soggy Lettuce Report

Waste professionals aren't the only people taking a good look at trash. During April 2004, Prudential (yes...the financial services giant) interviewed more than 1,000 adults in Great Britain about their trash. What did they find? The average British adult wastes the equivalent of about \$3,150 on food, luxury items, entertainment, travel, gadgets, and hobbies. This amount would pay off the annual average credit card debt and leave money left over for investment. According to the report, "In short our wastefulness prevents us from getting ahead."

This is not to suggest that all money spent on hobbies, travel, or other items that made the list is wasted or wasteful. Instead the survey focused on items that went unused or underused. For instance, many respondents had purchased all of the equipment to begin a hobby or exercise program and then never used any of it. Plus, they admitted to

owning unread books, unwatched movies, ordering drinks they didn't finish at restaurants, buying new passes to venues because previously purchased ones had been left at home, and even failing to use plane tickets. A few honest souls confessed to hiding purchases from family members and friends—and never using the items at all. While many of these items were eventually donated to be used by someone else, the money spent on them had been wasted by the original buyer.

More money is wasted on food than any other category. A third of the respondents reported throwing away food regularly, including frozen foods too old to eat and restaurant leftovers taken home but not eaten. The item most likely to be discarded each week? Lettuce.

To read the full report, go to [www.pru.co.uk/include/userinclude/pdf/presscenter/soggy\\_lettuce\\_report.pdf](http://www.pru.co.uk/include/userinclude/pdf/presscenter/soggy_lettuce_report.pdf).



# Princely paper for Potter

Bloomsbury, the British publisher of J.K. Rowling's newest installment in the Harry Potter series, *Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*, will be printing all of the United Kingdom editions on 30-percent Forest Stewardship Council Certified Paper. This certification guarantees that paper was not made from the trees of ancient forests. Last year, Bloomsbury printed the UK paperback editions of the previous book, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, on 10 and 20 percent recycled-content paper.

The Canadian publisher, Raincoast Books, printed the last book on post-consumer, recycled-content, ancient forest friendly paper. The new book will be printed on the same type of paper.

Scholastic, the U.S. publisher, is also printing on paper that is free of fiber from ancient forests.



Did you know that there are 106.5 million acres of wilderness preserved in the United States? This includes 677 National Wilderness Preservation Areas in 44 states. These areas, along with our state and national parks, provide wild places where we can be reminded of our connection to the wonders of nature.

Visiting a wild place might be a good way to finish off your summer. If you go, remember to think about your energy use and transportation emissions. For instance, a car full of people gets more miles per gallon per person. If you're traveling a long distance with a small number of people, a train or plane may be a lower-impact option. At your destination, walk, hike, and bike as much as possible.

Although the places that you'll visit are wild, they aren't wild about trash. Whatever you carry in with you should be placed in an appropriate recycling bin or trash can. In some locations, you'll be asked to carry your own recyclables and waste out of the park or wilderness area. Place trash only in properly designated bins. If you don't find recycling bins while you're traveling, bring your recyclables home—we'd love to have them!

## Learn more about wilderness areas and our national parks!

[www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net)  
[www.wildernesswatch.org](http://www.wildernesswatch.org)  
[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)  
[www.leaveonotrace.org](http://www.leaveonotrace.org)

**"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed."**

*Wallace Stegner, 1909-1993*

**"A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."**

*Wilderness Act, 1964*

Travel with reusable mugs and cups. Even if no discount is offered for the refill of your own container, you'll still be reducing your waste. Take along a canvas bag or two to carry your purchases and say "no thanks" to plastic and paper store bags. Keep an old towel in your car or bag to clean up spills.

Don't take papers that you don't need or won't read. How many times have you arrived home with a fistful of untouched brochures? Did you ever go back and read them? Take only the brochures and flyers that you will need. If you don't want to keep them, return them to the information desk for another visitor at the end of your visit.

Remember—take only photos and leave behind only footprints.

# WHAT'S UP?

**Are there children in your life?**

**Is summer vacation getting a bit dull?**

**If so, spice it up with some fun "reuse." Here are some ideas:**

- Use the local library. Check out a book that you can each read and discuss.
- Rent a video and watch it together.
- Explore an antique store, flea market, or secondhand store. Kids love to look through old "junk" in search of treasure.
- Sort through old toys. Make a pile of giveaways that are no longer family favorites.
- Loan board and video games to friends, neighbors, or cousins. Borrow some of theirs, too. Everyone will get to enjoy a "new" game or two.
- Teach them about "hand-me-downs." Help them sort through outgrown clothes and pass them along to a family member or friend who is smaller. Donate the extras.
- Turn household objects that would have been headed to the trash into the raw materials for arts and crafts.



**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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 70% POST-CONSUMER NEWS CONTENT, USING SOY INKS

## Feeding the beast

By Susan Bortell

Compost is a necessary ingredient for full, lush flower gardens and rich productive vegetable gardens. Both compost and mulch are byproducts of things that for many years were wasted in LaPorte County. Not so any longer.

The District's Compost Facility, located in Westville, produces "gold" from what would otherwise be waste. Here's how that happens.

Our grinder—known by its formal name, The Beast—can chew up and pulverize a tree limb that is up to 30 inches in diameter, although it is not called upon to do this often. The Beast is primarily used to mulch wood scraps from untreated lumber. The Beast converts wood materials into usable mulch at a rate of 70 cubic yards per hour.

Our trommel, which utilizes the same premise as a kitchen sifter, screens and separates oversized particles and converts them into compost.

The basic components of compost are leaves, wood, yard waste, and vegetative food scraps. The yard



**Wood mulch is one of the products created from LaPorte County's organic waste.**



**This Trommel helps create compost, a soil amendment.**

waste, wood, and food scraps are mixed together in correct proportions and then placed in windrows (long, narrow piles). The moisture and temperature are tested regularly, indicating when the compost needs to be turned and watered. The windrows stay on the ground for approximately six months. To keep track of the decomposition and maintain our high quality standards, the windrows are numbered with the most aged row first.

The compost is put into piles which are then placed into the trommel separation screen. The long conveyor belt on the back removes all over-sized materials. The compost is filtered through a screen, and it is then pushed out the side onto the smaller conveyor belt.

Everything brought into the site is recycled.



**The "Beast" chips woody waste.**

### Thanks to these hardworking compost gurus who keep the compost cooking!

Joseph D. Jokantas, Project Coordinator,  
 Solid Waste District of LaPorte County

Ted Ostrega, Maintenance Supervisor,  
 Department of Corrections

Pam Sawyer, Officer,  
 Department of Corrections

## Print Priorities

Did you know that most ink jet cartridges can be refilled for reuse three to five times? Did you know that ink jet cartridges can also be recycled? In spite of these facts, a recent survey found that more than half of printer users throw away spent cartridges, resulting in more than 40 million pounds of waste each year.

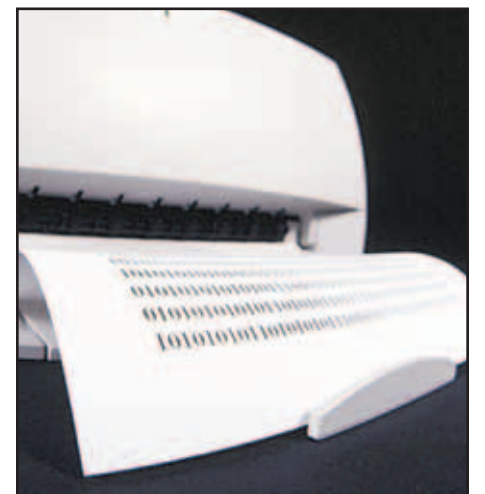
Here are some tricks to help you reduce your use of ink:

- Print only when you really need a hard copy to use or file. Don't print e-mails, web pages, and documents that you can read online or on-screen

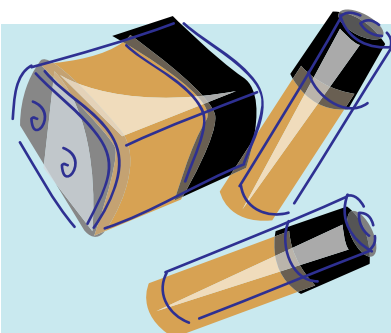
and access again later.

- Set your printer default to "draft" mode, which is sometimes called "economy" or "faster printing." Draft mode is good enough for most of what you print—especially for internal use.
- Avoid shaded boxes and large fonts for most of your day-to-day work. If you use shading, opt for lighter shading, which uses less ink.
- Replace your cartridges when they are totally empty. Many printers will warn you when your cartridges are nearing empty. Often you can print for many more pages or several more days before needing to change the cartridge.

When your cartridges are empty, you can recycle them for FREE. There are more than 60 locations where you can drop off ink jet cartridges or pick up



postage-paid envelopes to mail your cartridges in for recycling. For every qualified cartridge, \$1 goes to Leadership LaPorte County to help establish a scholarship fund.



## Battery Boxes

**You can drop off all types of household batteries for recycling at any of these locations in LaPorte County:**

- Amoco J-Mart, 1338 State Road 2, LaPorte
- Amoco J-Mart, 10300 US Highway 30, Wanatah
- Amoco J-Mart, 2913 South US Highway 421, Westville
- City of LaPorte Recycling, 102 "L" Street, LaPorte
- LaPorte Herald-Argus, 701 State Street, LaPorte
- Kabelins Hardware, 512 Andrew Avenue, LaPorte
- Kabelins Hardware, 432 St. John Road, Michigan City
- Kingsford Heights (Nutrition Center) Community Building, 515 Wayland Road, Kingsford Heights

- Markey Enterprises, 304 "J" Street, LaPorte
- Michigan City Sanitary District, 3700 East Michigan Blvd., Michigan City
- Pepsi, 600 West US Hwy. 20, Michigan City
- Radio Shack, 311 "J" Street, LaPorte
- Sears (Electronics Dept.), 3901 S. Franklin Street, Michigan City
- Solid Waste District Office, 2354 N. US 35, LaPorte