

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County

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

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Spring 2007



Please, do your part!

The District recycling program is a great one, and it is still the largest full curbside program in the state. Most residents are really following the rules and putting amazing amounts of recycling at curbside on their pickup day. Their bins are out at 6 a.m.

Because we offer our citizens a full year's recycling calendar on our website (or by calling our office), it's difficult to understand why problems occur. Is there something that we can do better? Are the rules unclear? We would like to hear from you about this as your comments are always welcome.

The horrible late winter cold and snow certainly made it difficult for the trucks to reach some areas, but they tried their best. Homes located at the bottom or top of slippery hillsides were problematic. Homes located on unplowed roads were difficult for our trucks to maneuver. The trucks are longer than a trash truck and often heavier, so roads accessible by auto were often not easy for the trucks to navigate.

And, sad to say, we still have those folks who won't follow the rules.



Recycling must be put at the curb in the bin we provide to you by 6 a.m. That is the marker for the driver. Additional containers may be used if they are clearly marked RECYCLING. We have free peel-and-stick labels here in our office for those containers. Of course, garbage is NEVER to be put in the recycling bin.

The 6 a.m. rule has always been in

effect since the program's beginning over 14 years ago, yet by some, it is being ignored. On your recycling day, if you take your bin out and all your neighbors' are picked up and there are turned-over bins on both sides of your road and/or street, it usually indicates that one of the rules of recycling was not followed.

Drivers must run routes on the scheduled days. To take a truck away from a given route to collect recycling that is not in the proper bin or was not out on time is costly and time consuming. It also robs others of having their recycling picked up on time. We will no longer be making trips to pick up recycling that was not put out according to the rules. Telephone calls to



our office made three or four days after the supposed "missed pickup" cannot be acted upon. You must wait until your next scheduled pickup day.

Please, do your part.

Hazards lurking

Have you ever looked under the kitchen sink? 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 for your family to sort through them and properly dispose of the ones that you no longer need.

At our Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Collections, residents can drop off a wide variety of household chemicals, as well as old medications and "sharps" (see box). Mobile collections will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on these Saturdays:

- March 31 at Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall, Michigan City

- May 12 at Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall, Michigan City
- June 16 at Kabelin Ace Hardware, Marquette Mall, Michigan City
- 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

For more information, contact our office at 1-800-946-4449 or 219-326-1425, or visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com.

What can I deliver to the Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Collections?

Aerosols
Automotive supplies
 Antifreeze
 Oils and other fluids
Batteries
 Automotive
 Household
Corrosives
Expired medications
Mercury-containing products
 Fluorescent tubes
 Thermometers with silver bulbs
 Thermostats
 Other mercury-containing items
Outdated medications
Paint and related products
 Oil-based paint*
 Thinners

Solvents
Pesticides
 Fungicides
 Herbicides
 Insecticides
 Other poisons
Waste fuels
 Diesel
 Gasoline
 Kerosene
 Other flammable liquids

*Bring oil-based paint ONLY to the mobile collections! NO latex paint is accepted at these events! Remove lids from latex paint cans; add a cup of cheap, CLAY cat litter; allow to dry and harden; and dispose of with your regular garbage (leave lids OFF cans).



Now is the time to speak up

As many of you have probably read in the two local newspapers, the Solid Waste District has recently been under attack. Using misinformation and claiming to speak for the general public, these folks are directly speaking for YOU. Would you take a moment of your time and write, FAX, or e-mail our office to give your opinion, in your name, on the many programs we offer at no charge as well as the proposed rate increase in the recycling User Fee?

Do you want someone to use your voice in their name? Please contact us to support our programs.

FAX 219-326-5310

Direct E-mail sbortell@csinet.net

Address Solid Waste District
2354 North US Hwy 35
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Webpage www.solidwastedistrict.com



10 Tips for Creating Compost

You can make your own backyard compost. The ingredients you'll need are readily available—"green" and "brown" organic waste, water, and air. After you've mixed these ingredients and given them some time to cook, you'll have a finished compost that will make a nutritious amendment for your soil.

Follow these steps to create your own compost:

1. Choose a level area in your yard. You don't want your compost bin or pile to be in the way, but you don't want it too far away from your source of organic material either. You'll need at least a 3 by 5 foot area to give your pile or bin room to

2. Select a spot that is out of direct sunlight most of the day.
3. Make sure that you have access to water nearby and a hose that will reach the spot.
4. Use a heap, build your own bin, or purchase a commercial compost bin. The size and type will depend on how much organic material you have available and how fast you want your compost to cook.
5. Layer "brown" yard waste, such as dry leaves and dead plants, with "green" organic waste, such as grass clippings and fruit and vegetable scraps. You'll want about 2 parts

"green" for every one part "brown." If you are grasscycling most of your lawn clippings, coffee grounds are a good "green" organic material (even though they are colored brown); coffee grounds are a source of nitrogen, as are other "greens." Mix the material as you fill your compost bin or build your heap. Be sure that food scraps are at least 10 inches below the surface of the pile—this will keep unwanted visitors away.



6. Chop larger waste, such as twigs, into smaller pieces. You can chop this material manually using trimmers or loppers, or you can run twigs and branches through a chipper/shredder. (You could share a chipper/shredder with your neighbors or rent one.) Chopping this woody waste will help it rot more quickly.
7. Turn the pile at least every other week. Use a pitchfork, a shovel, or a compost turner. Be sure that the material is thoroughly mixed each time you turn it. The more often you turn your pile, the more quickly your material will decompose.
8. Add water if your pile becomes dry. Mix the water evenly through the material. During most weather conditions, your pile should be moist but not soaking wet. If your pile becomes soggy during wet weather, turn and mix the material to add air and help dry it out. A tarp can help keep your composting materials from getting too wet during heavy rains.
9. Give your compost up to six months to cook and cure. For faster compost, turn the pile more often. When the

- waste has become dark and crumbly, you have compost!
10. Spread the compost as mulch around trees or under bushes, mix it into your garden soil, or combine it with soil or sand to make a great potting soil.

For more information, visit www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/composting/by_compost.htm or contact the Cooperative Extension Service.

DO compost these:

- Grass clippings
- Twigs and leaves
- Coffee grounds, filters, and tea bags
- Egg shells (ground into tiny pieces)
- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Shredded newspaper
- Dryer lint

DON'T put these in the pile:

- Diseased plants
- Weeds that have gone to seed
- Plants that are spread by runners, such as Morning Glory or Buttercup
- Cat, dog, hog, or human waste
- Chemically treated wood products
- Glossy or coated papers
- Ashes
- Meat and fish scraps and bones
- Oils and other fatty food products
- Milk products



A composter's diary

Do worms have lungs? Can corks go in compost piles? These are just two of the questions handled by compost hotline operator Spring Gillard at City Farmer, Vancouver, British Columbia's non-profit

urban agriculture group that has been thriving for 25 years. Gillard began her diary with online posts in 1996. Through humorous stories, silly scenes, and even a compost "rap," the posts touched on the essentials of composting, alternatives to pesticides, organic and edible landscapes, compost teas, drug-free lawns, rainwater harvesting, and urban agriculture in big cities. Laugh and learn as you read *Diary of a Compost Hotline Operator: Edible Essays on City Farming* by Spring Gillard (New Society Publishers, 2003).

The Possibilities Are Endless... Compost!

International Compost Awareness Week is May 6-12, 2007. Compost Awareness Week would be a great time to show off your compost pile to the neighbors, start a new pile, buy compost to use in your garden, or plant a tree using compost to prepare the soil. For more information, visit www.CompostingCouncil.org and click on "Compost Week."

How green is your party?

We're fast approaching the season of graduation parties and weddings. Each year in the United States, more than 2.7 million youth graduate from high school, nearly 1.2 million adults graduate from college, and 2.27 million couples marry. That's over 6 million pieces of paper—just for the diplomas and marriage certificates. When you add to it the invitations, announcements, greeting cards, and thank-you notes, as well as the special clothes, the decorations, the food, and the gifts, you have a huge pile of stuff, some of which almost immediately becomes waste.

For instance, if you purchase a "Congratulations, Graduate!" banner, what happens to it after the party? What becomes of the wedding reception centerpieces? How about the envelopes that held the invitations, cards, and other correspondence? If you use paper plates and cups for the party, where are they at the end of the day? As you can see, these celebrations have the potential to leave behind a lot of waste.

You can make your festive occasions

less wasteful. Whether you are hosting a graduation party, a wedding reception, a family reunion, a retirement celebration, or a business or school meeting, you can plan ahead and create less waste. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

- Avoid a lot of extra paper in invitations, such as double envelopes and reply card envelopes. If you need replies, request a phone call, an e-mail, or include a stamped, self-addressed postcard.
- For less formal events, e-mail your invitations. Remember to call to invite people who don't have e-mail addresses!
- Print everything, from invitations to programs, on recycled-content paper.
- Look for used clothing for the occasion. If you need formal wear, costumes, and or just a different summer dress, shop at secondhand or vintage stores. Accept hand-me-downs with thanks!
- Rent or borrow apparel that you won't use again. For the men, rent tuxes or

suits or borrow a friend's jacket for the event. Women can also rent many items or borrow from a friend or relative. If you often attend semi-formal events, create a "swap shop" with your friends so that you can trade clothes and have something new-to-you to wear.

- Decorate with what you already have. For instance, if you're toasting a graduate, decorate with childhood photos.
- Use washable and reusable plates, cups, napkins, and tablecloths. If you are hosting an event and don't have enough for the number of guests who will be attending, rent or borrow extras. Minimize your use of disposables, and you'll minimize your waste.
- Whatever kind of party you're hosting, recycle! Be sure that beverage container recycling bins are located near each trash bin. For multi-day events, such as family reunions or meetings, be sure to provide newspaper recycling, too.

- Send leftovers home with guests. Donate unopened and non-perishable leftover food to a food pantry.
- Avoid party favors. Your guests are there to share your special event—not to take a goodie bag home! If you think you must give some kind of party favors, give things that are consumable, such as candy, cookies, teas, or coffees.
- If you register for gifts, be sure to register for things you really need and will use.
- Instead of gifts, ask guests to donate to a cause or charitable organization or to bring canned or boxed goods to donate to a food pantry.
- When you buy gifts, look for durable and reusable products. Or, consider giving future events that the recipient will enjoy, such as a museum membership, theater tickets, movie passes, or restaurant gift certificates.
- Donate or re-gift items that you can't use rather than storing what you don't need and won't use.



Share the good news about Earth Day

In the early 1960s, Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, proposed a nationwide conservation tour to President John F. Kennedy. The tour, which took place in September 1963, was overshadowed by other events. However, six years later, in the summer of 1969, Nelson got the idea for a national “teach-in” about the environment. Planning began for this teach-in, which was dubbed Earth Day and set for April 22, 1970. A call went out. And Americans responded.

Going into that first Earth Day, no one could have predicted what was about to occur. School children, college students, community leaders, public officials, and citizens mobilized a huge, grassroots effort. By April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans, or 10 percent of our nation’s population in that year, took part.

This demonstration for the environment brought about sweeping changes at the federal and state levels. Later that same year, President Richard Nixon established the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by Executive Order. In the years that followed, dozens of environmental laws were passed, protecting our coastlines, clearing our air, and cleaning up our water supplies.

Today, nearly 40 years later, the successes of Earth Day are readily apparent. The worst of our day-to-day environmental problems have been addressed. In most places and by most standards, we have cleaner air and safer water than we did four decades ago.

However, this year and every year, Earth Day reminds us that there is still work to be done. We’ve cleaned up many of our old messes, but we aren’t finished. Plus, we need to continue to monitor our progress, making adjustments and improvements as testing and technology change. And, of course, along the way, we’ve created some new problems, such as the huge pile of electronics that we discard each year.

The good news is that Earth Day—then and now—is about individuals acting to make a difference. Today, you can make that difference. Get involved. Reduce the amount of waste in your life—conserve energy, save water, and create less trash. Recycle all that you can, providing useful materials to the manufacturing process. And, spread the word, especially to children and youth. Someday soon this will be their environment. Show them how and why to take care of it now.



A checklist for the planet



It’s almost Earth Day. Are you ready? Use this checklist to help you evaluate your actions. This will also give you some ideas for improving your planet-friendly habits.

- I turn off the lights when I leave the room.
- I have replaced at least some of my incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents.
- I turn off TVs, games, music players, and computers when I’m not using them.
- When I purchase new electrical appliances and electronics, I look for the “Energy Star” certification.
- I keep my showers short.
- I turn off the water while brushing my teeth.
- I walk or bike for short trips instead of hopping in the car.
- I plan my errands and trips so that I drive the fewest possible miles and spend the least possible amount of time stuck in traffic or sitting at stop-lights.
- I turn off my engine and walk inside rather than idling in drive-through lanes.
- I buy secondhand and used goods whenever possible.
- I am creative in reusing what I have by finding new uses for old stuff.
- I’m a regular at the local library, borrowing books, movies, CDs, and more.
- I use both sides of paper.
- I recycle all of the materials accepted in my local program.
- When I travel, I look for and use recycling bins for beverage containers and newspapers.
- I use refillable water bottles.
- I never mix hazardous chemicals or other hazardous waste with my household trash.



QUOTES REQUOTED

Every increased
possession loads
us with a new
weariness.

John Ruskin, 1819–1900
Author and Social Critic

Eco Action through Action Sports

The X Games are all about extreme action on the ramps and the slopes. But the organizers are also serious about extreme environmental activity. From on-site recycling and environmental education for spectators to clean energy credits to offset carbon emissions created by the event, the X Games are walking their talk, or should we say “grinding their rail.”

Here are a few of the eco-friendly actions that have been a part of the recent Winter and Summer X Games. The plastic bottles from Winter X 10 were used to create 21,000 snow jackets insulated with fiberfill made from recycled plastic beverage bottles. The 360 truckloads of dirt used to build the Moto X track for Summer X 12 will be reused to build tracks at future action sports events. The skateboard ramps at the summer games were made from wood grown in sustainable forests or built using reclaimed wood from previous events. This wood will be reused for future events.

For more information about the X Games “Environmentality,” visit <http://disney.go.com/environmentality/xgames/index.html>.



WHAT'S UP?



Residents will be able to drop off **tires and white goods (large appliances)** for recycling on Saturday, May 12 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Gates close at 2 p.m. and rules are strictly enforced.

To help offset the costs of recycling these items, some fees do apply. For details about the fees, please visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com, or call our office at 1-800-483-7700 or 219-326-0014.

No large tire loads will be accepted until a count has been completed and the charge is applied.

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

There will be another Tire and White Goods Collection on Saturday, October 13.



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

**2354 North U.S. Highway 35
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www.solidwastedistrict.com

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CONTENT, USING SOY INKS**

What's up with litter?



Have you noticed a lot of litter lately? We have, too! We're sure some of the litter is accidental. For instance, on windy collection days, some lightweight items blow out of trash cans or recycling bins. Some litter may be the result of carelessness. For example, if you have loose paper and empty plastic bags on the floor of your car, they can blow out and away quickly when you open the doors. But at least some of the litter must have been thrown out on purpose. You know what we mean—chairs don't accidentally end up along creeks and fast-food bags don't accidentally fall out of cars at red lights.

In order to have less litter, we need to make sure that each person is careful and considerate. Here are some tips. Feel free to share these with your friends, family members, and neighbors.

- Keep lids closed on trash and recycling containers. If your container

doesn't have a lid, make sure heavier items are at the top on collection day.

- Tossing litter from moving vehicles is dangerous—especially to cars and bicyclists behind you. Don't do it!
- A car litter bag reduces parking lot and roadside litter. Loop an old plastic shopping bag over an arm rest, and you have a convenient, on-the-go litter bag.
- Pick up after yourself. If you drop something on the ground, stop and pick it up. Dispose of it in a trash can or recycling bin.
- Help pick up litter. You can take part in community cleanups. You could organize a cleanup. Or you can simply carry a trash bag along with you on your walk once a week or so. Be sure to wear gloves to protect your hands. Wash your hands thoroughly when you're done.

Free drop-off for yard waste at District site

The Yard Waste Drop-off is for **residents only**. It is not open for business or industry.

Location — North end of Zigler Road (runs along the east side of the LaPorte County Fairgrounds), just past the grandstands on the west side

Site Hours — Daylight hours, 7 days a week

Accepted Material — 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" of dirt

Preparation of Material — Special kraft paper leaf bags, which may be purchased at local grocery and hardware stores, may be used. 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.

Unloading — Residents bringing items to the site must provide their own labor for unloading.



Prohibited Materials — 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, or other non-organic materials may NOT be disposed of at the site nor mixed with acceptable materials.

Final Destination of Materials — All yard waste is transported to the Indiana Department of Corrections Facility at Westville to be turned into compost. For information about purchasing this compost, visit www.solidwastedistrict.com.

Do you grasscycle?

You recycle bottles, cans, and newspapers, but what about grass? Do you recycle your grass clippings? If not, you should! When you "grasscycle," you simply let clippings drop back onto the lawn as you mow. Nature takes care of the rest!

Grass clippings provide your lawn with nitrogen, a food that it needs. In fact, letting your grass clippings drop back onto the lawn each mowing season may cut in half the amount of lawn food (fertilizer) that you'll need. Grass clippings, which are 80 to 90 percent water, provide some of the moisture your lawn needs, meaning you water less often, too.



Grasscycling also saves you time. When you grasscycle, mowing takes about one-third less time. So if your lawn takes an hour to mow when you bag the grass, it will only take about 40 minutes when you grasscycle. The way we see it, that's 20 more minutes for taking a walk, reading a favorite book, or napping!

Any mower can be a grasscycling mower. Mulching mowers will chop the grass blades into tiny pieces. However, other mowers can grasscycle, too. Simply remove the bag attachment from your mower and insert the "chute cover," a safety device that covers the hole where the bag is normally attached.

No matter what kind of mower you use, you should be "trimming" your grass. In other words, give it regular trims, not one big "haircut." Each time you mow, you should trim the top one-third or less off your lawn. If the grass is growing quickly, you may have to mow more than once a week. The small clippings will quickly begin to rot before the next mowing. If you chop off more than one-third in a single mowing, it is hard on the grass plants and you leave behind long clippings that take longer to break down.

If you'd like to learn more about grasscycling, mulching, or composting, call our office at 219-326-0014 or 1-800-483-7700, or visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com/education/how_to.html.