

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County

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Winter 2008



Our Pride Is Showing!

On September 17, 2007, our office was notified that our Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program, under the direction of Tom Buford, had been chosen as an award winner for Public/Private Partnership by the North American Hazardous Materials Management Association (NAHMMA). The Public/Private Partnership award is given "to recognize companies, government agencies, non-profit groups, and political entities that have worked together as partners to accomplish a goal that is supportive of the mission of NAHMMA and its members."

The inter-local agreement between Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties, which formed the Lake Michigan Districts program, shows this willingness to work together as partners. The program, as well as Coordinator Tom Buford, has demonstrated the great value of such a cooperative endeavor.

The awards ceremony was in San Diego, California in October. The attractive, fact-filled written presentation packet was submitted by the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County. The written presentation, as well as an interview, will be online at the NAHMMA website under the heading of Public/Private Partnerships. This documentation will also be contained in their archives and be available for public viewing.

The Mid-West region, Indiana specifically, has not been awash with winners in the past, so the accolades and recognition are certainly proof that our ongoing HHW collections, under Buford's direction, have a great future. Many residents have commented often about how much they appreciate and



Tom Buford is the coordinator of the Lake Michigan Districts HHW program.

utilize this program.

We applaud Coordinator Buford, his fine program, and the great workers.



Have your recycling bin at the curb, where it is clearly visible to the driver, by 6 a.m. Trouble getting up that early? Set it out the night before!

Treecycle!

You grasscycle your lawn clippings, recycle your containers and paper, and e-cycle your computers. Now it's time to "treecycle" your cut, real Christmas tree. If your family enjoyed a real Christmas tree this past holiday season, it's time to recycle it.

We'll be accepting cut, real trees at the Solid Waste District of LaPorte County's Zigler Road Yard Waste Drop-Off Site. Zigler Road runs along the east side of the LaPorte County Fairgrounds;

the Drop-Off Site is just past the grandstand on the west side. The Drop-Off Site is open 7 days a week during daylight hours. Make sure that your tree is totally bare. Remove all decorations, ornaments, lights, tinsel, and garland, as well as the stand. Please do NOT put trees into plastic bags.

This drop-off is for "real" Christmas trees only. Please place broken artificial trees into your trash.



Remember to remove ALL the decorations from your tree before you treecycle!

Galena, Hudson, Noble, and Scipio Townships are really racing to the recycling front. We want you to know we've noticed!

Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive Director's Desk



This time of year is always a good time to sit back and relax while you reflect on and are thankful for all your many blessings. It is easy to be grateful for the things we see and feel each day—family, health, job, friends, Mother Earth, and the Sun, to mention a few.

Since I've mentioned the Sun (notice how I slid this into the conversation?), I hope you explored some of the solar-powered holiday displays. There are also year-round solar-powered additions to your home that are cost-effective. These items look good while saving energy and preventing greenhouse gas emissions. Also, why not practice your composting skills by using all the proper holiday food scraps along with any leaves still scattered in your yard?

You can also think about changing light bulbs to the new compact fluorescent bulbs. They are cost-saving and provide mood lighting as well. WOW—I sure wandered away from my original thoughts about how thankful and blessed I am to live and work in this great community of such wonderful recyclers. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Thank you all for our great year. I sincerely hope the New Year brings you happiness and health. Best Wishes for 2008!

Thought for 2008: "We can all do so much more!"

Clay

10 Tips to reduce your footprint



Ever walked down a beach or through a soggy meadow and looked back? You probably saw your footprints, a clear trail of the path you'd taken. You might not realize it, but your life choices are also leaving behind footprints. Only these footprints are ecological—resource extraction, energy consumption, water and air emissions, and waste.

The concept of ecological footprints begins with the obvious—we have only so much land here on Earth. Of this land, only about two-thirds can be considered productive. This productive space must be capable of meeting all of our needs and absorbing all of our wastes. Based on the world's current population, there are about 4.45 productive acres available per person per year. However, the average global citizen has a footprint of about 5.56 acres. Not surprisingly, the average American's footprint is larger than the international average—about 23 acres.

Decisions we make about transportation, travel, housing, food, energy consumption, and more have a direct impact on how many resources and how much energy our lives require. These decisions also impact what and how much we waste. Follow these tips to create a smaller, and more earth-friendly, footprint:

1. At least once a week, eat foods that were produced in-state. Much of our food travels from overseas or from distant states. In fact, the average meal travels about 1,000 miles to get to your plate. This transport of food uses a great deal of fuel and produces harmful air emissions, as well. By “eating local” at least once a week, you reduce the amount of fuel required to provide your diet. Eating locally or regionally produced food can also reduce waste. Why? When foods are transported long distances, there is often a higher rate of spoilage. While you don't necessarily throw this waste away at home, it is thrown away on your behalf.
2. Thirsty? Choose tap water instead of buying water bottles, many of which were filled with tap water from someone else's community water supply. Buy durable water bottles and fill your own. At home, keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator and fill a glass. Every time you drink a glass of tap water, you eliminate a plastic bottle that you'll need to recycle.
3. As long as we're talking about reusables, let's talk about coffee and tea. If you're a regular at a local java joint or tea shop, carry your own reusable mug. Most stores will give you a slight discount on your drink. Plus, you'll eliminate the waste of one cup and perhaps a cardboard sleeve for every drink that goes into your reusable mug.
4. Use what you already own for a longer period of time. Many items—from toaster ovens to iPods—are replaced while they are still in perfect working condition. Rather than replace what is working, keep using it. In the long-run, what is “cooler”—having the money in your pocket and no waste in your trash or having the newest “it” gadget?
5. Recycle everything that is accepted



6. Start composting. Your yard waste, plus many of your fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps, can be composted, turning a “waste” into a valuable nutrient for your lawn and garden.
7. Choose the least toxic products for every household and home improvement job. And remember to buy *only* the amount you will need to use. Not only can household chemicals contribute to indoor air pollution, as well as soil and water contamination, but they also end up as “hazardous wastes” when we no longer need them. Hazardous wastes are costly to dispose properly.
8. Save money on gas and reduce your air emissions. Plan your errands to make efficient use of your time and fuel. If possible, make your trips during lower traffic times, when you will spend less time idling in congested traffic. Planning your errands also helps eliminate waste by reducing the chances that you'll make impulse purchases. Remember to carry your own reusable shopping bags and eliminate disposable bag waste, too!
9. Carry around your trash. For one day (or one week, if you are brave and daring!), carry all of your non-recyclable waste with you. Keep it in a sealed plastic container or resealable bag to reduce odors. Make sure it is never more than 5 feet away from you. By the end of your project, you'll have come to some conclusions about what you use and what you waste. In fact, you may have decided that it is time to make some changes.



10. Stop thinking of yourself as a “consumer.” What if you began to think of yourself less as a *consumer* and more as a *producer, creator, inventor, artist, community leader, or volunteer, or even friend, parent, or child?* The labels we use can change the way we think about ourselves and our world. They can also affect the decisions we make. This is one of the points that Ernest Callenbach makes in his book, *Living Cheaply with Style: Live Better & Spend Less*. He argues that the environment, personal health, and family finances are part of an interrelated triangle. When one is out of balance, the others are negatively affected. By keeping these three factors in balance, you can spend less, enjoy more, and treat our communities and planet with care. Check out his book at your local library or look for it in a used bookstore.



locally. For instance, no beverage bottles and cans, steel cans, or newspaper needs to go into your trash. Make sure that your trash is “recyclables free.” Remember that recycling conserves natural resources, saves energy, eliminates waste, and reduces air and water pollution. It's better for our planet than disposal and better than making new products from virgin materials.

Learn more! Do more!

Find out how you are doing. Several websites allow you to calculate your ecological footprint by completing an interactive survey. At the end, most of these sites show you how many planets it would take for everyone on Earth to live your lifestyle. The results may surprise you!

Adventures with Bobbie Bigfoot
www.kidsfootprint.org

Best Foot Forward: Bringing Sustainability Down to Earth
www.bestfootforward.com

Ecological Footprint Quiz
www.myfootprint.org/

Global Footprint Network
www.footprintnetwork.org

The Green Office: Carbon Offsetting
www.thegreenoffice.com/carbon

What will they think of next?



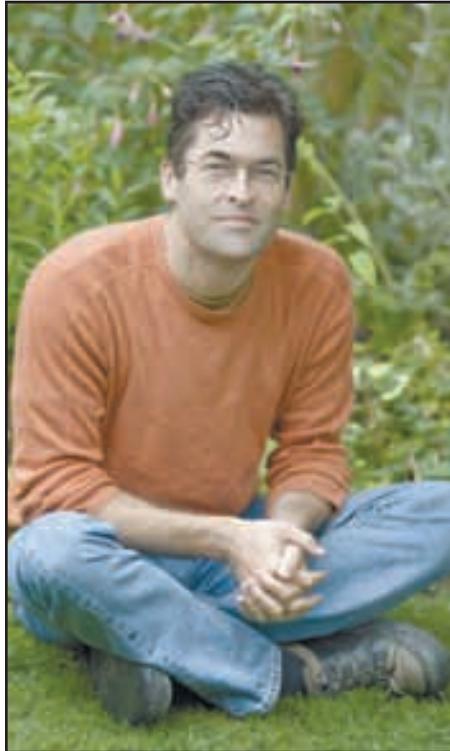
Last fall, a British reality TV show invited 11 volunteers to participate in a “Survivor”-type challenge at a South London garbage dump. The volunteers were dropped off on the landfill and challenged to survive for three weeks. Learn more about the show, discover what happened to the volunteers after they left the dump, or watch episodes online at www.channel4.com/lifestyle/green/dumped/index.html.

Running the Numbers

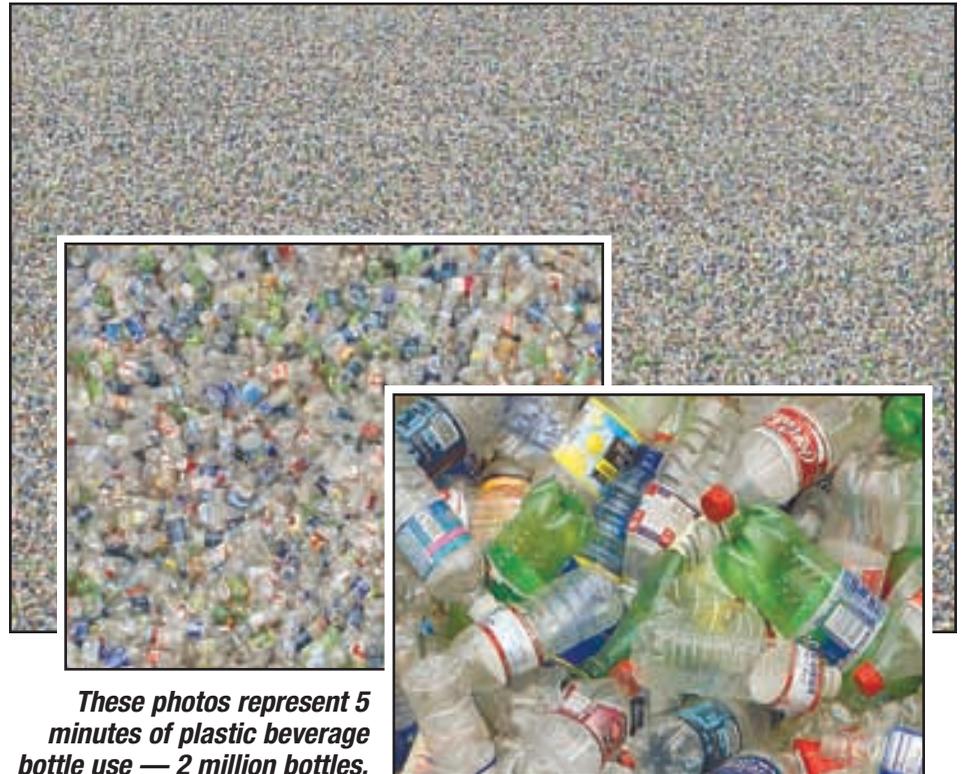
Artist Chris Jordan believes that statistics can tell stories, helping to create an American self-portrait. His new series of large-scale photographs depicts a specific quantity of selected items, such as five minutes of office paper use (15 million sheets), 30 seconds of aluminum can consumption (106,000 cans), five minutes of plastic beverage bottle use (2 million bottles), a day's worth of retired cell phones (426,000 phones just in the U.S.), and an hour of paper grocery bag consumption (1.14 million brown bags).

Jordan writes, "This project visually examines these vast and bizarre measures of our society, in large intricately detailed prints assembled from thousands of smaller photographs." He continues, "My underlying desire is to emphasize the role of the individual in a society that is increasingly enormous, incomprehensible, and overwhelming."

For more information about Chris Jordan's series, "Running the Numbers: An American Self-Portrait," including a list of galleries that will be exhibiting his work, visit www.chrisjordan.com.



Photos Courtesy of Chris Jordan



These photos represent 5 minutes of plastic beverage bottle use — 2 million bottles.

Change is in the air

In a little more than a year, TV will be changing. There will still be the Big 3 networks, news will still be available 24/7, and you'll still be able to enjoy your favorite shows. However, the way that TV is being transmitted will change.

Since the inception of television, most television came into your home as an analog signal. Beginning on February 17, 2009, all TV signals will have to be broadcast digitally, using computer-type code instead of over-the-air frequencies. Since nearly every home in America has at least one television, this change will affect almost everyone.

Older televisions have analog tuners built in, so these TVs will not be able to read the new digital transmissions. This doesn't mean your old TV will be obsolete. It does mean that you may need a converter box to keep using it.

During the coming year, you'll be hearing more about this change. You'll probably also see a lot of

advertisements encouraging you to get new TVs that include digital tuners to replace your older TVs. Remember—you don't have to replace your TVs!

If you are a cable TV or satellite subscriber, call your cable or satellite company to find out what you'll need to do to continue using your older TVs. In many cases, you won't even need a converter box, but your fees may change. If you rely on an antenna, you'll need to purchase a converter box. The federal government has set aside funds to help Americans purchase converter boxes.

For more details about the conversion to digital transmission and how it will affect you and your TVs, visit the Federal Communication Commission's website, <http://dtv.gov/>, and the National Association of Broadcasters website, www.DTVanswers.com.

If you do choose to replace your old TV, remember that TVs shouldn't go into the trash! Contact us about proper disposal.



Tissue facts

Each year, Americans use about 50 pounds of tissue paper products, such as toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels, paper napkins, and similar products. About two-thirds of tissue products are used at home, with commercial and industrial products constituting

the remaining one-third. According to Conservatree, more than 40 percent of tissue products do have some recycled content, and overall 60 percent of the fibers used to make new tissue products come from recycled paper. However, the most popular commercial brands of tissue products used by people at home, including toilet paper, facial tissues, and paper towels, are all made from 100 percent virgin forest fibers.

While you have no direct control over the type of paper used to print your favorite magazine, you have total control over what type of tissue paper products come into your home. When you shop, look for recycled-content tissue products. There are many brands that contain a high percentage of recycled fiber.

Check the labels.

Remember to reduce your use of disposable tis-

sue paper products, as well. Instead of paper towels, choose washable cloths and rags. Instead of paper napkins, opt for cloth napkins.

For more details about tissue paper products, including a list of which brands contain recycled content, visit www.conservatree.org/paper/PaperTypes/tissueoverview.shtml#intro.

QUOTES REQUOTED

The only lost cause is one we give up on before we enter the struggle.

Václav Havel, 1936–
Czech writer and former president



E-cycling now available year-round

Remember the old days when your Solid Waste District held a FREE two-day Electronics Collection? Well, those old days are new, improved, and more readily available. FREE e-cycling is now more convenient and available year-round!

You can now drop off computers, monitors, electric typewriters, printers, fax machines, copiers, stereos, televisions, VCRs, DVD players, telephones, laptops, cell phones, adding machines,



zip drives, palm pilots, keyboards, mice, hard drives (erased, please), calculators, scanners, electronic games, microwaves,

power supplies, battery backups, etc.

We are accepting these items on Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1027 Hitchcock Road, Michigan City. To get to this facility, take Highway 20 West, go past Marquette Mall (Michigan City) to Hitchcock Road, and turn right. Cross Earl Road and continue on Hitchcock Road for approximately a quarter of a mile. Turn left at the first open gate, directly past the white water

tower. You'll see our signs, so there should be no confusion.

This site is monitored on a daily basis and is for the convenience of **LaPorte County residents only.**

Business, industry, and schools cannot utilize this drop-off because of limited space in the gaylords and trailers. However, businesses, industries, non-profits, institutions, and schools can drop off electronics at ICRI, 1824 W. 35th Avenue, Gary. For more information, call ICRI at 219-887-7000. If you tell them your load is from LaPorte County, it's all still FREE.

On paper Buy, sell, or trade

Every year, we each use about 670 pounds of paper and paper products. That's the equivalent of about one sheet every 12 minutes! While that is a lot of paper, we have some good news. First, our use of paper has declined from about 735 pounds per person just a few years ago. Second, more than half of that paper, about 360 pounds per person per year, is now being recovered for recycling.

Plan to recycle more paper and paper products. Recycling paper reduces the demands on our forests and tree farms. In addition, making new paper products from recaptured paper uses less total energy and less water, requires less bleach, and results in fewer toxic releases of air and water pollutants. In LaPorte County, you can recycle newspapers, any inserts, tabloids, small flyers that originally came with the paper, catalogs, phone books, magazines, cardboard boxes cut into 2-foot strips, stationery, copy paper, and cereal boxes. The publication you're reading is printed on recycled paper.

Learn more about paper use and recycling by visiting these websites: www.environmentaldefense.org/papercalculator/ and www.paperrecycles.org.



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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Buy, sell, or trade

Does your business or organization have unneeded, but usable, industrial process wastes, byproducts, surplus raw materials, chemicals, off-specification products, or packaging? A materials exchange can help you get these items out of storage, keep them from disposal, and save money. Or, maybe you don't need to get rid of anything—maybe you have something you need. With a materials exchange, you can buy, sell, or trade.

A materials exchange is an information service that lists products available

from some businesses and institutions, as well as items wanted by others. Materials listed and wanted include pallets, boxes, wood, leather, metals, construction materials, equipment, acids, solvents, and more. This information is published by category in an electronic list, which is updated with regular emails as new items are posted. The exchange does not broker any deals. The businesses or institutions make their own arrangements for the exchange of the materials, including transportation

and payment.

If you have materials "available" or "wanted," sign up today. Here's the information that you'll need for your posting:

1. A complete and accurate description of the material available or wanted
2. The exact amount of material that is available or wanted
3. Any special considerations or requirements, such as the physical state of the material, contaminants present or allowable, packaging, or shipping expectations

For more information, go to the Indiana Materials Xchange website at www.in.gov/recycle/imx.

Powering our portables

Batteries provide cordless, portable power by turning chemical energy into electrical energy. In turn, these batteries provide the electrical power needed to run cell and portable phones, remote controls, flashlights, laptop computers, music and DVD players, power tools, smoke detectors, digital cameras, PDAs, the dog's invisible fence collar, and much more.

Household batteries come in two basic varieties: single-use and rechargeable. Rechargeable batteries can be used, recharged, and used again. Some rechargeables must be taken out and placed into a charger that is plugged into a wall outlet. These rechargeable batteries usually look a lot like single-use batteries and come in the same varieties, AA, AAA, C, D, and 9-volt. Other rechargeable batteries are "built-in" to the item. You don't remove these batteries to recharge them. Instead, you simply plug a charging cable (often called an "adapter") into the item and plug the other end into a wall outlet, a car's lighter, or a computer's USB port.

Since many of the things you use every day depend on batteries for electrical power, make the most of your batteries. When you do, you'll save energy and reduce your waste.

First, reduce your use of batteries by turning off items when they are not in use. Store unused batteries in a cool, dry location. Keep your inventory of extra batteries together in one place—this ensures that your replacement batteries are fresh and also keeps you from buying duplicates of what you already have on-hand.

Second, choose rechargeables. Rechargeables, which can be used as few as 50 to as many as a thousand times, create less waste and require less energy per use than single-use batteries. Many items come with rechargeable batteries built-in, such as laptop computers and cell phones. In other cases, you need to



select rechargeable AA, AAA, C, D, and 9-volt batteries and purchase the appropriate type of recharging unit. Make sure that the recharger is made for the type of batteries you select. For instance, rechargeable alkaline batteries may require a different recharging unit than rechargeable NiMH (nickel metal hydride) batteries. The recharging unit is a one-time purchase. Be sure that everyone in your family knows which batteries are rechargeable.

Third, recycle your "dead" or "spent" batteries. These include single-use batteries, as well as rechargeables that will no longer accept a charge. Many batteries contain metals and chemicals that can be hazardous if disposed improperly. To prevent pollution and recapture usable metals, the Lake Michigan Districts HHW program provides recycling containers and collection for household batteries at these LaPorte County locations:

- Amoco J-Mart, 10300 US Highway 30, Wanatah
- Amoco J-Mart, 2913 South US Highway 421, Westville
- Criterion Catalyst, East Dunes Highway, Michigan City
- LaPorte Herald-Argus, 701 State Street, LaPorte
- Kabelin Hardware, 512 Andrew Avenue and 605 E. Lincolnway Avenue, LaPorte
- Kabelin Hardware, 432 St. John

Road, Michigan City

- Kingsford Heights Community Building, 515 Wayland Road, Kingsford Heights
- Krueger Middle School, 2001 Springland Avenue, Michigan City
- LaPorte County Court House, 813 Lincolnway, LaPorte
- LaPorte County Health Department, County Complex, 4th Floor, LaPorte
- LaPorte County Health Department, 802 W. 8th Street, Michigan City
- LaPorte County Soil & Water District, 100 Legacy Plaza, LaPorte
- Markay Enterprises, 304 "J" Street, LaPorte
- Michigan City, City Hall, 100 East Michigan Blvd., Michigan City
- Michigan City Port Authority, 200 Heisman Harbor, Michigan City
- Michigan City Park Department, Office, Six on the Lake, Michigan City
- Michigan City Park Department, Senior Center, Two on the Lake, Michigan City
- Michigan City Sanitation District, 1100 E. 8th Street, Michigan City
- Michigan City Water Department, 719 Grand Avenue, Michigan City
- Pepsi, 600 West US Highway 20, Michigan City
- Purdue Cooperative Extension (4-H), 2358 North US Highway 35, LaPorte
- Purdue North Central, Schwarz Hall, Rooms 18 and 73, and Technical Building, Room 141, Westville
- Radio Shack, 311 "J" Street, LaPorte
- Sears, 3901 S. Franklin Street, Michigan City
- Solid Waste District Office, 2354 North US 35, Suite #6, LaPorte
- Tracy United Methodist Church, 1702 East US Highway 6, LaPorte
- Trail Creek Marina, 1 East Michigan Boulevard, Michigan City
- Wal-Mart, 333 Boyd Boulevard, LaPorte
- Westville High School, 207 East Valparaiso Street, Westville