

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Solid Waste District of
LaPorte County

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Fall 2008



Mulch Men ... Compost Kings ... Firewood Fellas

In July 2008, we were informed that our Solid Waste District Compost Facility in Westville had been awarded the national Bronze Excellence Award by the Solid Waste Association of North America.

Project Coordinator Joe Jokantas is quite proud to fly to WASTECON 2008 in October to receive his award. We personally would like to thank Ted Ostrega of the Westville Correctional Facility for working side by side with Joe. The team effort certainly paid off handsomely. Not only is the award an honor, but it speaks volumes about the quality of the compost, mulch, and firewood sold at our facility.

To be honored by an association as large as the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) is quite an accomplishment given the vast number of competitors and the quality of the competition.

All of that said, it further shows that Project Coordinator Jokantas knows how to take a tiny operation at its inception and turn it into a recognized facility in North America.

Pride, work ethic, and dedication to our environment really are key elements, and we hope you will join us in congratulating our productive and professional

Project Coordinator, Joe Jokantas, and his crew the next time you stop at the Compost Facility in Westville to buy compost, mulch, or firewood.



Joe Jokantas (right), the Coordinator of the Solid Waste District Compost Facility, speaks with Ted Ostrega (left) at the site, which is located on the grounds of the Westville Correctional Facility.

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!



The FREE recycling bin provided to you by the District is the driver's marker to stop and pick up recycling at your curb. If you have more recyclables than will fit into your bin, you may use additional plastic containers (30-gallon maximum) with RECYCLING clearly marked on the side or front (we offer free stickers for your extra bins). Remember—NO RED/BLUE BIN, NO PICKUP! So, fill your FREE recycling bin first and be sure to set all of your recycling at the curb on your recycling day! Please remember, your containers on wheels are too heavy for the driver to empty. Be considerate!

2009 brings 95-gallon recycling containers. Watch for them!



Scouts scurry and sort with style

How do you know it's summer in the City? Easy. Just watch the crowds gather in LaPorte for the 4th of July parade on Lincolnway Avenue. The faithful, as well as newcomers, gathered for this year's much awaited and much enjoyed event. The theme was "Giving Back to the Community," and our local Boy Scout Troop #880 had a real handle on what was important.

Coming up with an idea and then creating a float is a daunting task, but it wasn't for the Scouts. Using what they had learned in their scouting activities as well as in school, they decided to do a recycling float shaped like a recycling container with built-in recyclers.

We let them use some red bins and

donated stickers, and the guys did the rest. Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts walked the parade route picking up plastic bottles, cardboard, and other items thrown into the streets (shame on those who did the littering). Then the young fellows sorted all they collected. They disposed of the trash and properly recycled the other items in a drop-off container.

We at the District applaud Troop #880 for their great creation, their use of an idea that's important to community service, and their strenuous efforts in picking up the mess. These young gentlemen are those who will, we hope, continue to care for the earth!

Great job, guys!

Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive
Director's Desk



Fall is here, and with that comes the changing of the seasons, from hot days, humid nights, swimming at the beach, and spending time with the kids, to warm days, cool evenings, football games, and the kids going back to school. The changing of the seasons is inevitable and arrives whether we want it or not or whether we are ready for it or not.

Like the seasons change, so change your Solid Waste District and its program! Starting on or before January 1, 2009, we will be delivering larger recycling containers—95-gallon containers with lids and wheels for easy mobility. This change was made based on requests from our residents. Yes, the containers will be large and quite different, so please give them a try before saying, "They can't be used at my house." In fact, we think that the new containers will make recycling easier at your house.

Using these new containers, we are estimating that our collected recycling tonnage can increase by 15 to 30%. We also hope this change will increase the participation rate, as well. These new containers will have our name, logo, phone number, and website address on them, so you will have no trouble reaching us should you have the need. This new labeling also shows that the program belongs to the residents of LaPorte County.

The program guidelines will be the same as before, with a pickup every other week. You will still be able to co-mingle all of your recycling. 6 a.m. will still be the time to have your bin at the curb—out on time and in the right place are the keys. If you need a refresher course on what we recycle or when your collection day is, just call us or check the calendar on our website.

Like the changing of the seasons, let's embrace this change for all that it is and the wonder it can be. Recycling 35% of our trash reduces emissions in an amount equivalent to taking 36 million cars off the road.

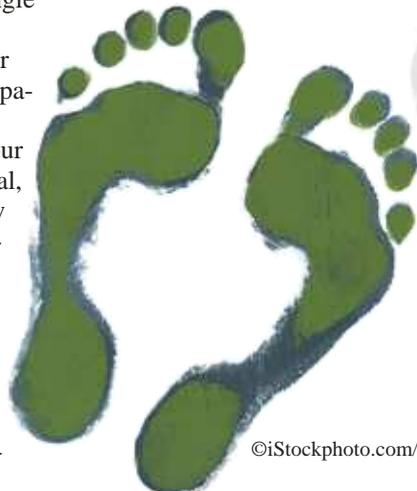
Clay

Measuring the human footprint

How big a footprint does the average American boy or girl leave behind over the course of a lifetime? National Geographic set out to answer this question. The result was the *Human Footprint* project, which premiered on the National Geographic Channel last spring.

During the film, a lifetime supply of potatoes spills from the back of a dump truck, a lifetime supply of bread is laid out to make an enormous American flag, and 28,433 rubber ducks represent the number of showers the average American will take in a lifetime. There are many other striking images of the sheer mass of consumption that goes into a single American life.

From your morning newspaper to the bananas on your breakfast cereal, you'll see how much one person uses. For instance, over the course of a lifetime, an American will read 5,054 newspa-



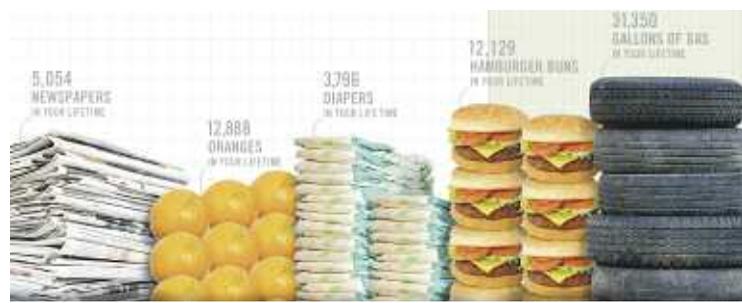
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pers, which is 43 trees' worth of paper. This same American will eat 5,067 bananas, which will travel a total of 11 million air miles to arrive on the breakfast table.

At the website devoted to the project, you can read a short essay entitled "Trash Talk," which introduces you to the facts and figures of America's waste habits. You can watch three short videos, which are excerpted from the 90-minute program, to get an idea of what "mass" consumption looks like. You'll also find "Consumption Interactive" (at the bottom of the web page). Click on this and you'll be able to see how your own consumption of eggs, milk, bananas, soft drinks, potatoes, and bread, as well as newspapers, the diapers from your early childhood, your regular showers, and your car, compare with national and international averages. You can also click through to watch the video about each of these items. Go to www.nationalgeographic.com/channel/human-footprint and explore.

Teachers, there is a nine-page Educational Resource Guide at the website for downloading, as well as additional information on National Geographic's Preserve Our Planet series.

The DVD of *Human Footprint* is available for \$24.95 at www.shopngvideos.com.



Source: National Geographic Channel, 2008

FAST FACTS

Total Annual Waste Generation in U.S.
251.3 million tons

Per Person Waste Generation
4.6 pounds per day

Total Annual Recycling & Composting in U.S.
81.8 million tons

National Recycling Rate
32.5%

Nationwide Benefits of Recycling & Composting
Equivalent to conserving 10 billion gallons of gasoline and removing 39.4 million passenger cars (and their emissions) from our roads

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Municipal Solid Waste Generation, Recycling, and Disposal in the United States: Facts and Figures for 2006"

GARBAGE: THE MOVIE



Canadian filmmaker Andrew Nisker set out to learn about trash. He enlisted the help of the five-member McDonald family for his documentary project. The McDonalds were asked to collect every piece of trash that they generated over three months and store it all in their garage. (They didn't keep "wet trash," such as rot-

ting food waste, as that would have been a health hazard.) As you can imagine, it turned out to be a huge pile of waste!

The 76-minute documentary, *Garbage: The Revolution Starts at Home*, explores the waste created by the McDonald family, as well as where the materials came from and where they will go after leaving the garage. During the project, the McDonalds and the viewers begin to see that each action in the home has a reaction in the environment.

To learn more about the film, visit www.garbagerevolution.com. Online, you'll find a list of upcoming viewing opportunities, information on ordering the film, 12 things you can do right now to make a difference, and more.



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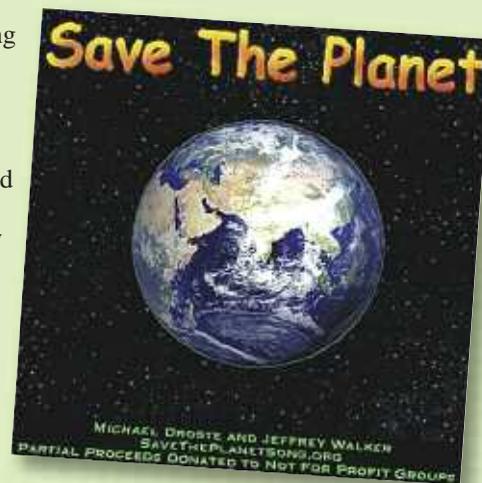
Save the Planet

What happens when two creative teachers join forces to teach their students about the environment? In the case of singer Jeffrey Walker and musician Michael Droste, who both teach in Illinois, the result was the "Save the Planet" song and video.

The song and video focus attention on the ways that humans have damaged the earth. However, the song isn't gloomy and doesn't scold anyone. Instead, it reminds each of us that our everyday habits—from conserving water and saving energy to recycling—can make our planet better and healthier for all of us. The chorus of the song reminds us all to "Save the Planet from Destru-u-ction." You'll still be humming long after the music stops.

Several versions of the song are available for download at Amazon.com. To watch the video, go to www.YouTube.com and search for "Save the Planet Song." To learn more about Walker and Droste's project, visit www.savetheplanetsong.org.

While you're at YouTube, also check out "Kids 2 Save the Planet."



QUOTES REQUOTED



We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.

Charles Franklin Kettering, 1876–1958
American inventor and engineer

WHAT'S UP?

Do you Freecycle? If so, you're in good company!

Freecycleers are part of a virtual community that began with about 40 people in Tucson, Arizona in 2003 and has grown to 4,566 groups with 5,604,000 members around the world. Each Freecycle group is local and independent, but all groups follow a few simple guidelines—everything offered or accepted must be free, legal, and appropriate for all ages.



Members can post items that they would like to receive (Wanted) or items they would like to give away (Offer). An email alerts all members of these postings. People freecycle office and school supplies, clothes and shoes, sports equipment, books and magazines, toys, games, computer accessories, sheets and towels, CDs, DVDs, and so much more.

If you are interested in joining a local Freecycle group, visit www.freecycle.org and search for LaPorte or Michigan City, Indiana, depending on which city is closer to your home.



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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Fun Facts

- Where is 99.5% of all the fresh water on earth located?
 - In the polar icecaps and glaciers
 - In the oceans
 - In fresh water sources

- What percentage of landfill space is taken up by discarded packaging?
 - 10%
 - 25%
 - 50%
- What former dump site near Niagara Falls became so toxic that it had to be evacuated?
 - Three Mile Island
 - Love Canal
 - Fresh Kills
- What is the earth's most environmentally efficient country?
 - China
 - United States of America
 - Germany
 - Japan
- What does water always seek?
 - Your basement
 - Plants
 - Its own level



- Who said, "Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother and whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth"?
 - John F. Kennedy
 - Chief Seattle
 - Buffalo Bill
 - John Denver

Answers: 1.A; 2.C; 3.B; 4.D; 5.C; 6.B

Paper or plastic? No, thanks!

Reducing your waste is easy—stop accepting the free paper and plastic bags at the store. Once you get home to put away your groceries or other purchases, you are stuck with these bags. The bags are reusable, but a lot of them just go into the trash. Plus, many of the lightweight plastic bags end up on our roadsides or hanging from trees as litter.

You probably already have several canvas bags that you can reuse. Put some in your car. Then remember to grab the bags on your way into a store.

If you don't have lots of extra canvas bags, you can purchase reusable shopping

bags. Some are so small and lightweight that they fold up to fit into a pocket or purse. Many of these reusable bags will hold as much as three to four plastic or two paper bags full of groceries. That also means fewer trips from the car to the house while you are unloading—and we know you'll like that!

Each year in the U.S., retailers hand out more than 380 billion plastic shopping bags and another 10 billion paper bags. When you say "No, thanks" to plastic and paper bags, you reduce the potential for litter and your weekly waste, and you conserve fuel that would have been

used to deliver bags to the store. Carrying your own reusable bags is an easy way to help our environment, keep our community cleaner, and make your unloading a breeze.



Fall leaf frenzy

As autumn brings us cooler temperatures, the trees display their beautiful, annual show of color. Once those trees begin dropping their colorful leaves, you probably have a big cleanup job. As you're taking care of leaves this fall, remember there are many ways to reuse them in your yard:

- Shred the leaves with a mulching mower (or a mower with the bagger removed) and let them stay on the grass. These shredded leaves will provide a protective winter cover and decompose by spring. If you have a lot of leaves, you'll need to mow often during the weeks with the

heaviest leaf-fall.

- Pick up leaves with your bagging mower. The mower will shred the leaves as it picks them up, creating a great mulch. Use the leaf mulch in your gardens or flower beds.
- Rake or blow the leaves into piles. Carry these leaves to mulch planting beds or add them to your compost pile.
- Mix fall leaves with over-ripe fruit and vegetables and grass clippings in a compost pile or bin to help the material decompose more quickly.

If you have more leaves than you can



mulch or compost, drop them off at the District's Yard Waste Drop-Off Site, which is located at the north end of Zigler Road (runs along the east side of the LaPorte County Fairgrounds), just past the grandstands on the west side. The Site is open seven days a week, during daylight hours. Materials accepted include cut, "real" Christmas trees (please, no artificial trees), leaves (whole or shredded), chipped wood, clean lumber (no nails), grass clippings, yard trimmings and brush, branches up to 6' long and 12" in diameter, pine needles and pine cones, corn stalks, bark, and sod with no more than 4" of dirt. 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, **THEY MUST BE DUMPED AND THE PLASTIC BAGS TAKEN AWAY AS THEY WILL NOT DECOMPOSE.**

Remember—don't burn your fall leaves! Leaf burning releases many pollutants into the air. Smoke from just 5 pounds of burning leaves creates a full pound of pollution. Leaf burning can create health hazards for children, the elderly, and people with breathing difficulties. Burning can also put nearby properties at risk.