

A Quarterly Newsletter of



Solid Waste District of
La Porte County

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

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Winter 2012



Elston Middle competes in Recycle-Bowl

Elston Middle School students are hoping their contribution to the nationwide Recycle-Bowl competition will bring them out on top. The Michigan City school could win up to \$3,500 in the competition, which ended Nov. 12, if they recycled the most pounds of items per student.

"Even if we don't win, what we accomplished during this competition in raising awareness of how many items you can recycle and getting more kids to do it—to me, we've already won," said Kate Triemstra, the seventh-grade science teacher who led the competition.

Using mathematical conversion factors provided by Recycle-Bowl sponsor Keep America Beautiful, Triemstra said she calculated that Elston students recycled more than 26,000 pounds of paper, plastic, and other materials over the four weeks of the competition.

"Even though we already recycled well over half of what is used outside of the cafeteria, we saw a lot more participation and awareness," she said. "I think what really helped was that the Green Team put up posters over all the trash cans that said, 'Can this be recycled?' with a list of things that are recyclable under it."

The La Porte County Solid Waste District's donation of in-classroom recycling bins to the AK Smith Center, located in the same building, helped increase the amount of recycling that could be contributed to the competition, according to Triemstra.

"There were days we couldn't even fit all of our recycling in the dumpster we share because they filled it up," she joked.



Triemstra is in charge of the Green Team, which has existed for six years at Elston as a strong student-led recycling team. The Green Team is in charge of collecting recycling from classrooms each week. During Recycle-Bowl, they measured the efforts of each of the school's grade-level teams.

"We worked with the teachers to do this," said Jysica Zacarias, the Green Team's eighth-grade captain. "Some of my teachers told us to recycle our graded papers."

The team that recycled the most was determined to be 7A, Triemstra said, including efforts led by teachers Daena Sisk, Shannon Galloway, and Amy Wojasinski-Labis. That team of about 100 students, as well as the Green Team, will receive a special reward sponsored by the Solid Waste District.

"I am so proud of what these students have accomplished," said Alicia Ebaugh, District Education Coordinator. "Like those of us with the District, they believe in making this world a better place through recycling as much waste as possible to conserve resources."

Earth Day Open House



On November 15, the Solid Waste District celebrated America Recycles Day with thousands of others across the country. At our open house, visitors got to tour our new office. We accepted plastic bags for recycling from about 75 residents and replaced them with reusable shopping bags. We also had giveaways for environmentally friendly, non-toxic cleaning products, locally chopped firewood, and one of our South Shore/County Fair poster prints. It was a fun way to support recycling in our community and eat some cookies in the process!

Going social

You now have more ways than ever before to get the information you need on recycling in La Porte County! Whether you want our updates by email, text message, or on your Facebook news feed, we have solutions for everyone.

Facebook

www.facebook.com/LPCoRecycling

This is the easiest way to stay informed about upcoming events, find changes to district schedules, and even get links to eco-friendly projects and products. We are also randomly giving away a few of our neat County Fair/South Shore prints when we reach 400 "likes" of our Facebook page, so become a fan today!



Twitter

www.twitter.com/LPCoRecycling



Follow us on Twitter. You can even opt to get our feed sent to your cell phone so you will be in the know on the go!

YouTube

www.youtube.com/LPCoRecycling

Watch the first video we posted on our brand-new YouTube channel about how our big 4-in-1 collections work! Coming soon—a video on what you can and can't put into your recycling bin. Make sure you subscribe to our channel so you will always see our latest videos!



E-Green Club

Sign up at: <http://eepurl.com/eiyHs>

We send out email newsletters about once a month to remind residents of upcoming events, and we also include an online version of our quarterly print newsletter. And you never know when we might have a random contest giveaway!

Website

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Of course, you can always find answers on our website, where we post copies of our curbside pickup calendar, a list of acceptable recycling items, and our education coordinator's class offerings, plus lots more!

Turner Talks Trash

from the Executive Director's Desk

By now, "The Great Move of 2011" is over and we are in our new office, located at 2857 W. State Road 2, Suite E, La Porte. Well, it might not have been the Great Move of 2011, but it was a pretty good move. We were able to do a lot of the things that we tell our residents to do—you know, "practice what we preach." We cleaned out, organized, downsized, donated, and upgraded during the move.

When you have occupied the same place for so long, you tend to accumulate a lot of stuff you really don't need. We went through files and boxes of old receipts and correspondence and properly disposed of the ones that were no longer of any importance. The District provided a safe way for residents to clear out files by offering two document shredding days during 2011. We took advantage of these events ourselves this past year! We also cancelled duplicate magazine subscriptions and switched to electronic subscriptions for some magazines, reducing our waste.

We upgraded two of our computers. The extra components went to other people in the office, and the outdated items that could no longer be used were dropped off at one of our Electronic Recycling sites for proper disposal. There is a site in Michigan City at 1027 Hitchcock Road and one in La Porte at 1805 5th Street (La Porte County Highway Department).

We have moved into a building with geothermal heating, which is more efficient and will save money on heating bills. The rent at our new location is lower than it was at our previous office, so we are saving there. Plus, our new office is accessible to people with disabilities, giving us a better opportunity to reach more of our citizens.

Using shared space is a new wave in the business world, so for the first time we'll be sharing our conference table in a large conference room with Purdue Extension and Soil and Water Conservation. It's a lower-cost and more environmentally friendly solution for all of us—truly a win-win!

We have changed to a new Internet and phone service provider that will save the District a few dollars each year. It really pays to shop around for those services.

The District employees now all have new email addresses that are similar to our website address, www.solidwastedistrict.com. This minor change creates a savings of \$16 per month. This may not sound like much, but, when combined with all of the other savings, it does add up.

We took the opportunity to eliminate junk mail before making our address change. You can do this too by going to www.dmachoice.org and www.optoutprescreen.com and opting out of unwanted mailings.

We hope by now that you have had a chance to see our new office. If not, come to our Open House on Thursday, January 26, from 2-6 p.m., have a look around, and find out what new programs we will be offering for 2012.

Clay

If people want to change, they will. If they don't want to, it's hard to make them do so. The current interest in the environment is a good thing. The best way to make a contribution in fashion is to promote the idea that a fundamental interest in preserving the environment is itself fashionable. ~ Giorgio Armani





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Fleece season

This time of year, fleece is everywhere—sweatpants, pullovers, jackets, vests, gloves, scarves, blankets, and more. We are so used to seeing fleece during the cool weather that you might be surprised to know that the first fleece product wasn't sold until the early 1980s. By 1993, some of that fleece was being made with post-consumer recycled plastic bottles. Today, many plastic bottles become fleece and other polyester products.

To turn bottles into fleece, used bottles are sorted by color, cleaned, chopped, and ground. The flake plastic is then melted, reformulated, and turned into chips. The chips are heated and sent through a machine called a spinneret (much like a showerhead) to become yarn. A knitting machine turns the yarn into cloth that can be dyed, textured, and finished. A process called napping gives fleece its famously soft, fuzzy feel.

"How It's Made" on Discovery Science Channel has a feature on how fleece is made. Watch it on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/YHHqFwDhGTM>.

FAST FACTS

From holiday to home

The 74-foot Norway Spruce decorating New York's Rockefeller Center will come down on January 7. When it does, it will be turned into lumber which will be donated to Habitat for Humanity. Since 2007, the lumber from the Rockefeller Center tree has been donated each year to Habitat's home-building efforts. Read more and watch a video at "From Shade to Shelter" in *Habitat World* online: <http://magazine.habitat.org/stories/shade-shelter>.



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As simple as soap

Derreck Kayongo, a humanitarian relief expert and former refugee, knows firsthand about the challenges faced by displaced

persons—the daily struggle for food and fresh water, and the diseases that result from lack of soap and clean water. When he learned that American hotels discard about 2.6 million bars of soap a day, Derreck and his wife and father began the Global Soap Project. The project accepts donated bars of soap from hotels, reprocesses and remolds it, and then donates the soap to existing relief organizations that serve refugees, orphans, and disaster victims. Learn more about the Global Soap Project at www.globalsoap.org.



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Constant connection

If it seems like you are always online, it may be true. CTIA—The Wireless Association conducts a semi-annual survey of wireless subscriber connections, which is the total number of devices, such as cell phones, smartphones, tablets, and laptops, that people have connected on cellular networks. In 2011, for the first time, the number of connections at 322.9 million exceeded the population of the U.S., which is about 312.7 million.

WellHome has created an infographic about electronic waste — where it comes from and what happens to it. Check it out at www.wellhome.com/blog/2011/05/electronic-waste-where-does-it-all-end-up.



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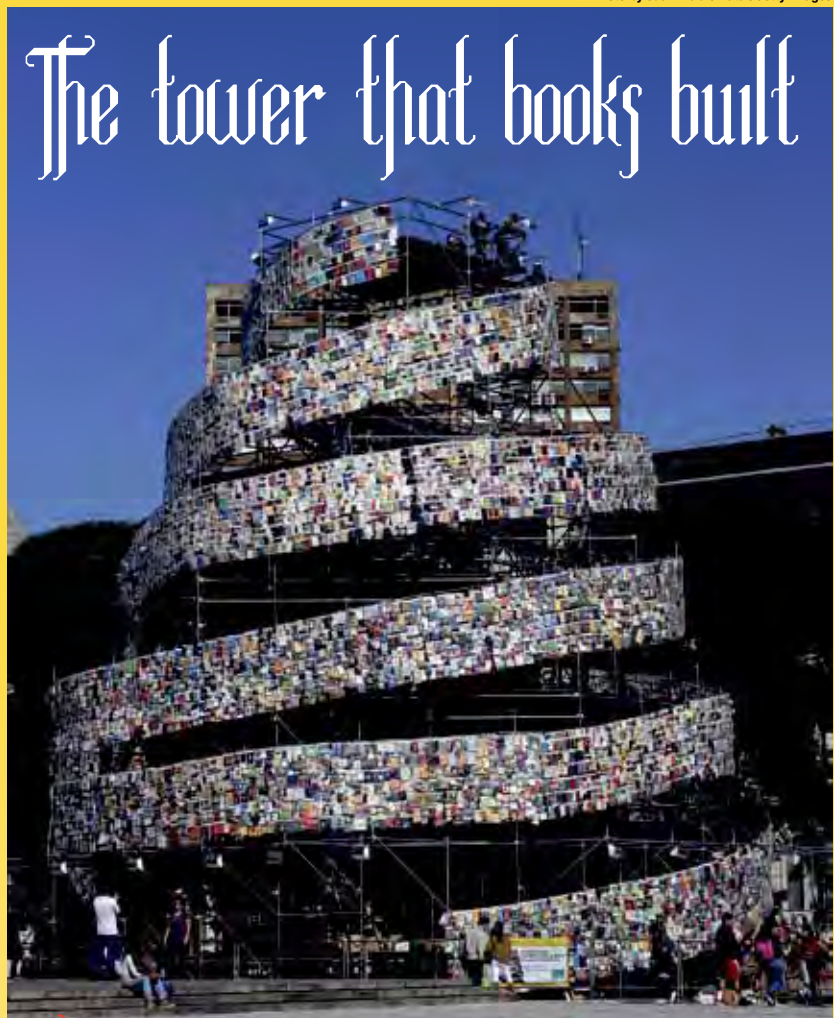


Photo by Juan Mabromata | Getty Images

The tower that books built

During May 2011, Argentinean artist Marta Minujín created a seven-story tower of books in Buenos Aires. Entitled "The Tower of Babel," the display included 30,000 books in hundreds of languages. The books were donated by embassies, libraries, and others around the world and ranged from children's books to comics to poetry to philosophy. A metal ramp allowed visitors to climb the tower, examining the books and enjoying the city's skyline. A soundtrack featured Minujín repeating the word, "book," over and over in many different languages. At the end of the installation, some books were given to visitors, but the majority were donated to create the city's first multilingual library.



Renew your commitment to the 3R's

It's the time of year when we're thinking about making things better—ourselves, our families, our homes, and our budgets. As you're making your resolutions, give some thought to the 3R's:

Reduce

- Before you buy, ask yourself these questions: Do I need this? Do I already have something like this? Do I need something new right now? Does it have too much packaging? What will I do with this when I no longer need it?
- Stop making "wish lists." Oftentimes, the items on a wish list are things you want but don't necessarily need. Whether you make them online, write them on a scrap of paper, or keep them in your head, wish lists keep you thinking about what you don't have—often creating dissatisfaction with the things you do have.

Reuse

- Start your exercise, weight-loss, or other self-improvement program on borrowed or shared equipment. If you stick with the program or hobby, you can purchase your own supplies and equipment later, if you need them. If and when that time comes, remember to look for secondhand equipment.
- "Shop" at home. You probably have books you haven't read, movies you haven't watched, games you haven't played, kitchen gadgets you haven't tried, and supplies for hobbies you haven't started. Put them to use now.
- Find your library card. The library is a great resource for no-cost entertainment. Look for books, magazines, music, movies, and more. Ask your library about downloads for e-readers and MP3 players, too.
- Scan your pantry shelves. We all have canned and boxed goods that we purchased but never got around to using. Find recipes for the supplies you already have on hand. Also, pull out food that your family won't eat. Check the "use by" or "best by" dates and donate unexpired items to a local food pantry or other non-profit organization.

Recycle

- Recycle. You do this by shopping for groceries and other products with recycling in mind. Know what you can recycle and choose products packaged in those materials.
- Collect recyclables and recycle them!
- Commit to recycled-content products.

Successful recycling programs depend on having manufacturers use your recyclables. If you need a new fleece vest or jacket, look for fleece made from recycled soft drink bottles. If you need printer paper, select post-consumer recycled-content paper.



Recycling means jobs

In 2008, with the nation recycling and composting about one-third of its discards, nearly 732,000 Americans worked in jobs directly related to recycling and composting of municipal solid waste and construction and demolition debris. A recent study by the Tellus Institute and Sound Resource Management concludes that increasing the nationwide recycling rate to 75% by 2030 could add as many as 1.5 million more recycling and composting jobs to the U.S. economy. In other words, every percentage point of improvement in our national recycling rate could lead to 30,000-35,000 new jobs.

In addition to job creation, the report also explores potential reductions in harmful emissions, such as carbon dioxide. Increasing the national recycling rate to 75% would be equivalent to removing 50 million cars from our roadways.

The final report, "More Jobs, Less Pollution: Growing the Recycling Economy in the U.S.," is available online at www.recyclingworkscampaign.org.



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Gift cards GALORE



Gift cards are big business. In fact, by most estimates, gift card sales for 2011 will top out at around \$91 billion in the U.S. At \$25 per card, which is the most common gift card value sold, that is a whopping 3.64 billion cards.

While 95% of American adults have given or received a gift card, only about 20% choose to refill cards after the value has been expended. This leaves a lot of depleted cards headed to the trash. How often have you had a clerk ask, "Since this is empty, do you want me to throw it away?"

Gift cards are just one type of wallet-sized plastic card. About 17 billion total cards are produced to be used by American consumers each year, including gift, loyalty, discount, membership, debit, store charge, and credit cards. As a result, as much as 75 million pounds of plastic cards, most of it PVC, are discarded each year.

At least one company, Earthworks in Ohio, has begun to accept used plastic cards for recycling. The cards are recycled in a closed-loop process, with old cards melted and turned into the plastic sheets used to make new cards. Individuals can mail in empty or expired cards. However, Earthworks hopes to work with stores, hotels, and other businesses that would collect customer cards and send in larger quantities for recycling. To learn more about Earthworks, visit www.earthworkssystem.com.

Ask retailers whether they will accept your depleted cards for recycling. Other waste-reducing ideas include refilling existing gift cards and giving virtual or electronic gift certificates instead. Also, be sure to use up the funds on your gift cards. The average amount left on cards is \$2.30, which adds up to about \$5 billion in unspent value each year!

QUOTES REQUOTED

We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

Marian Wright Edelman, 1939-



1ST AND GREEN AT SUPER BOWL XLVI

When you think of the Super Bowl, you probably think of football, commercials, and "tailgating" food. However, look behind the scenes at any Super Bowl since 1994 and you'd see a growing list of environmental initiatives. The 2012 Super Bowl to be held in February is no different. Working with the NFL, the local host committee has planned recycling, food recovery, donating supplies and equipment after the event, planting trees, and a sports equipment/book donation project involving local kids. Learn more at www.1standgreen.com.



4-in-1 collections

Our last 4-in-1 recycling collection of 2011 was held on October 8 at the La Porte County Fairgrounds. Residents dropped off household hazardous waste (HHW), confidential papers for shredding, tires, appliances, and electronics.

We'll have our drop-off dates for 2012 set soon. Watch for details on our website, through our social media channels, and in our newsletter!



▶ We accept most expired or unwanted medications at our HHW collections, except those labeled as "narcotics," which are controlled under federal law (such as Valium, Ritalin, and Vicodin). Here, our contractors sort through several canisters left by a resident.

▶ Workers from Creative Recycling help a resident remove a TV and other electronics from his truck at the Solid Waste District's last big collection event of 2011 on October 8. In cooperation with the Solid Waste District, Creative Recycling operates two drop-off electronic recycling sites — one in Michigan City and a second in La Porte. Creative Recycling then recycles the electronics at their facilities.



▶ Household Hazardous Waste Mobile Collection Director Tom Buford (left) pauses for a quick picture near the oil and gas disposal area at the Solid Waste District's October 8 collection. We accept all kinds of vehicle fluids, as well as household cleaners, pesticides, fluorescent bulbs, batteries, and more!

Cleaning up after the holidays

- Did you get new electronics for Christmas? Take your old electronics to our Electronic Recycling drop-off site. The District has two locations — one in La Porte and one in Michigan City. For locations, hours, and materials accepted, visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com, or call our office at 219-326-0014.
- Did you get an electronic reading device? Deliver your old books to our Book Collection in 2012. The date will be announced soon.
- How about all of the batteries that you are going through to operate those new toys and gadgets? Bring the dead batteries to our office or to one of the many other drop sites located throughout La Porte County. Call us for a list of locations or find them on our website.
- Did you clean and paint the house to spruce up for the holidays? Take old cleaners, paint (oil-based only), and paint thinners to our Household Hazardous Waste

- Mobile Collections. Dates for 2012 will be announced soon.
- New toys and clothes? Come to our Swap and Switch in 2012 to replace your old items with new-to-you toys and clothes.
- Were you lucky enough to get a new appliance or new tires for your car? Bring your old tires and appliances to our annual Tire and Appliance Collection.
- Are you ready to get rid of your Christmas tree? We accept cut, real Christmas trees at our Compost Facility on County Road 1100 West in Westville and our Yard Waste Drop-Off Site on Zigler Road at the La Porte County Fairgrounds, just past the grandstand on the west side. Be sure to remove all decorations, lights, garland, and tinsel, as well as the stand, before delivering the bare tree. And, please do NOT put it in a plastic tree bag.
- Now to shred all of those bills and receipts from the holidays—watch for our Shredding Events in 2012.

Recycling Schedule

LEGEND:

Where listed below, Township means outside of City Limits.

- A City of La Porte – South of Hwy. 2 and West of Monroe (Hwy. 4); North of Hwy. 2 and West of 35
- B City of La Porte – North of Hwy. 2 and East of Route 35; Also, East of Hwy. 4 and South of Hwy. 2, including Kankakee Township
- C The Town of Westville; New Durham Estates Mobile Home Community; Cass Township; Dewey Township; Hanna Township; Prairie Township
- D Clinton Township; Noble Township; Scipio Township; Town of Wanatah
- E Johnson Township; Lincoln Township; Pleasant Township; Union Township; Washington Township
- F Michigan City – West of Karwick Road; Trail Creek; Sheridan Beach; Pottawattamie Park
- G Michigan City – East of Karwick Road; Springfield Township; Long Beach; Michiana Shores; Shoreland Hills
- H Coolspring Township; New Durham Township (excluding the Town of Westville and New Durham Estates)
- I Center Township
- J Galena Township; Hudson Township; Wills Township

January						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Holiday No Recycling	A	B	C	D	E	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	F	G	H	I	J	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	A	B	C	D	E	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	F	G	H	I	J	
29	30	31				
	A	B				

February						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			C	D	E	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	F	G	H	I	J	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	A	B	C	D	E	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	F	G	H	I	J	
26	27	28	29			
	A	B	C			

March						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				D	E	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	F	G	H	I	J	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	A	B	C	D	E	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	F	G	H	I	J	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	A	B	C	D	E	

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Your totes must be out by 6:00 a.m. and placed at least 5 feet from mailboxes, light poles, shrubs, trees, and other containers.
- Additional containers must be clearly marked RECYCLING.
- If you are missed, please leave your toter out and call our office within 24 hours.
- Please contain plastic bags to prevent littering. (Bag your bags inside one bag and tie it shut.)
- Each toter is numbered and registered to the address where it was originally delivered and should remain there. If you move, DO NOT take that toter to your new address. If you do not have one, please call our office.

Recycle these materials:

- Glass – juice, pop, soda, and water bottles; beer and wine bottles; and food jars
- Metal Cans – tin food cans and aluminum beverage cans
- Paper – newspapers, any inserts, tabloids, or small flyers that originally came with the paper; catalogs; phone books; magazines; cardboard boxes in sizes of no more than 2' square; stationery and copy paper; and cereal boxes
- Plastic – all plastic with the recycle symbol on it, #1 through #7

Do NOT put the following materials into the recycling toter: liquids, food waste, fabrics, wood, and scrap metal (except for cans).



In 2011, the Solid Waste District formed a partnership with La Porte County Sheriff's Deputy Diann Gonsorek to donate all cell phones and chargers collected in our drop boxes to American men and women serving in the military overseas. Diann started collecting the phones and chargers in 2010 to send to the

United Service Organizations Inc. (USO), a private, nonprofit organization that provides morale and recreational services to members of the U.S. military.

"My first collection for the phones was at Christmas," said Diann. "But then I thought, 'Why should we stop at Christmas? They need them all the time.' So I started putting up fliers and spreading the word."

Diann has received used cell phones from all kinds of businesses and organizations, including South Shore commuter line employees and Blue Chip Casino. She also once collected a large box of 97 phones and chargers that were confiscated from inmates at the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City.

Thank you, Diann, for your generous work to help these men and women who are serving our country.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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