



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

www.solidwastedistrict.com

Winter 2016

# "one man's trash..."

Solid Waste District of La Porte County

Your guide to reducing, reusing, and recycling



## Store events promote plastic bag recycling

The La Porte County Solid Waste District educated residents about the right way to recycle plastic bags in November, taking in more than 14,000 plastic bags for recycling during its four bag swap events at Al's Supermarkets to celebrate America Recycles Day.

"It's very important for people to know that we no longer accept loose plastic bags in our recycling program, and these events gave me a chance to explain why to hundreds of residents," said Alicia Ebaugh, the District's education and public outreach coordinator. "It's even more important that everyone knows they can bring plastic bags back to many stores to be recycled."

Ebaugh used these events to promote the fact that all Al's Supermarket locations now accept plastic bags for recycling year-round, but she noted that they can also be



**La Porte County Solid Waste District educator Alicia Ebaugh celebrates the District's bag swap events at Al's Supermarkets, which brought in more than 14,000 plastic bags for recycling during November. This photo was taken at the last event at Al's Karwick in Michigan City.**

taken to other stores, like Meijer, Kroger, Walmart and Carson's. Not only are grocery bags acceptable to recycle, but you can also include clean and dry retail, newspaper, dry cleaning, bread, produce, and other plastic bags labeled #2 and #4; plastic food storage bags; furniture and electronic wrap; and case wrap from around paper towels, diapers, bathroom tissue, and water bottles.

The sheer number of plastic bags – about 100 billion – used each year in the United States is astounding, Ebaugh said. That figures out to about



**Citizen Advisory Board member Jim Irwin and District educator Alicia Ebaugh worked together at Al's Franklin in Michigan City to count bags well into the afternoon.**

## Clothing and textile recycling at Goodwill

La Porte County residents who would like to recycle clothing, bedding, towels, and other textiles, regardless of their condition, may bring them to Goodwill stores in Michigan City or La Porte.

"As long as all of the items are clean and dry, we will take them at any

of our stores. It doesn't matter if they are ripped or stained," said Guy Fisher, Goodwill of Michiana's Vice President of Mission Advancement. "They'll be used for many different purposes, including secondhand clothing, rags, and insulation.



Photo courtesy of Goodwill Industries of Michiana

The goal is to keep things out of landfills, which is something we are all interested in doing."

The District's former textile recycling partner, USAgain, unexpectedly removed their remaining green and white containers from the county in November.

313 per person, so she said a family of four might go through about 1,250 single-use plastic bags per year. The amount collected at this year's events would have been used by only about 45 residents over one year.

"We bring plastic bags home from pretty much anywhere we shop for food, clothes, and other items, our newspapers are often wrapped in them, and we even buy more to simply throw away," Ebaugh said. "Plastic bags may be convenient, but when our county can go through more than 34 million of them in a year, it's time to start thinking about ways to reduce the amount of waste we create."

Most of all, though, the District used these events to promote reuse, she said, giving out about 250 reusable bags to residents in exchange for plastic bags during the events.

"When you make the switch to reusable

bags for shopping, you not only reduce waste, you reduce the amount of litter that ends up in our communities," Ebaugh said.

The amount of bags collected for recycling at this year's events was less than last year, but Ebaugh said she hopes this proves that the District's education efforts are working.

"We've been educating on the proper way to recycle plastic bags – at the store – for a year now, and many participants said they've been doing just that," she said. "Plus, those who have gotten reusable bags are using them, reducing the number of plastic bags they are bringing in even more."

The District would like to thank Al's Supermarkets for their continued partnership on these events, as well as other sponsors, including Keep America Beautiful and Republic Services.



## Turner Talks Trash from the Executive Director's Desk

There's no time like the holidays to kick-start recycling and reuse efforts, just in time for the new year! Start 2016 off right by making sure all of your holiday scraps are properly disposed, reused, or recycled. Not only will you have a cleaner home, but you'll also help us have a cleaner environment!

With holiday tree recycling, "undecking" the halls is easy. Once you remove and put away your ornaments, lights, and garland, as well as the stand, you can recycle your tree. Trees are accepted at the District's two compost sites, which are located on Zigler Road in La Porte and at the Westville Correctional

Facility. Please do not use plastic tree bags. If you do put your tree in a bag, remove it from the bag at the compost site and take the bag home to throw in the trash. If you live in a city or town, your local street department or trash hauler may pick up your tree at the curb for composting, so check with them on the schedule.

Now that your tree is on its way to a second life, let's give wrapping supplies the same chance. Any usable wrapping paper, boxes, bags, bows, or tissue paper can be folded and stored for next year. If you're careful when opening presents, this should provide most of next year's supply. Torn wrapping paper, ribbons, and bows

that can't be reused are trash. We do not accept wrapping paper, ribbon, or bows in our recycling program.

However, boxes beyond reuse can be broken down and recycled. Be sure to remove tissue, plastic bags, and other packing material. You can recycle shipping boxes as well as gift boxes.

And what about the holiday greetings? Plain holiday greeting cards and envelopes can be recycled like other mail. However, if the card has plastic or metal doodads and decorations, put that one in the trash.

Some of the gifts wrapped in those bags and bows might have replaced old toys or become unwanted toys themselves. Some stores will accept new toys without a receipt in exchange for store credit. You can always donate new or gently used toys, as well as clothes and other goods that have been replaced, to a local charity or to Goodwill and The Salvation Army.

The new toys here to stay might

need batteries. Consider purchasing rechargeable batteries for these gifts. Rechargeable batteries can be reused multiple times with the help of a charging dock. However, even rechargeables eventually die. When this happens, be sure to recycle them. Harmful chemicals and metals in rechargeable batteries don't belong in landfills and can be recycled to make new batteries. You can recycle rechargeable batteries, along with other household batteries, at more than 20 locations in La Porte County.

For a list of battery recycling locations and to learn more about all of our great programs that can help you have a cleaner new year, visit our website, www.solidwastedistrict.com.

Clay

"WHAT THE NEW YEAR BRINGS TO YOU WILL DEPEND A GREAT DEAL ON WHAT YOU BRING TO THE NEW YEAR." ~ Vern McLellan

## Picking Up

So much has been written about the daily lives of police officers and firefighters that many of us feel we have a decent grasp of what those lives entail. There are many devoted fans of television and movie dramas revolving around these two professions. Some of those fans may imagine that, after years of faithful viewing, they possess the requisite skills to solve mysterious crimes or save innocents from peril. It is safe to say that few people toiling away in their office cubicle spend a moment of their time daydreaming about life as a skilled and courageous garbage collector. With her book, *Picking Up: On the Streets and Behind the Trucks With the Sanitation Workers of New York City*, Robin Nagle hopes to make a dent in the wall of indifference most people feel about sanitation workers and their lives.

Nagle would have us believe that sanitation workers are invisible to most of us. Like offensive linemen in football, you only notice them when they make a mistake or their job is not getting done. Unlike football players, sanitation workers perform their duties among us every day. And, as long as the unwanted trash and recyclables disappear as planned, we only notice them if we are stuck behind a collection vehicle in traffic. Reading this book will reveal a profession peopled with rich characters who work, struggle, and face daily danger with a mix of humor, resolve, and pride.

As a cultural anthropologist, Nagle spent many years studying the history, processes, and individuals of New York City's Department of Sanitation. DSNY employs 9,216 workers to collect waste, sweep streets, and plow snow across the five boroughs of the city. The majority work out of 57 districts, or garages, that are littered evenly across the city to serve a population of 8.2 million residents. Nagle takes a few chapters to summarize nearly 400 years of the city's history as it struggled to handle its waste. The first 40 years (1624-1664), the Dutch employed haphazard efforts to keep livestock penned, dead animals buried, and "tubbs of odour and nastiness" (chamber pots) from being emptied into the streets and canals. Later came the British, who fared little better in dealing with the waste. Sixty years after the first settlers arrived, a tax was levied to pay the salary of a street cleaning supervisor, and 10 years later, in 1694, scavengers were on the city payroll. Despite a professional labor force, it would be another 200 years before the city expe-



rienced streets and alleys regularly cleared of waste, snow, and garbage. Colonel George E. Waring, Jr., a Civil War veteran, took command of the Department of Street Cleaning in 1885 and began to build the systems, procedures, and pride that evolved into today's DSNY.

History is not the best part of the book, however. Through countless hours of interviews, riding along, and pitching in, Nagle discovered many characters that animate the stories in the book. Collecting waste and recycling is hard work and it is quite dangerous. As of 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics calculated it to be the fourth most dangerous profession after fishermen, loggers, and aircraft pilots. In 2008, the fatality rate per 100,000 police officers, firefighters, and trash collectors were 15.7, 6.9, and 35.5, respectively. Nagle tells the tragic story of a 23-year veteran who was killed when a jug of acid illegally hidden in the trash exploded as the blade came down to push trash out of the hopper. Two thousand sanitation workers attended his funeral. Then there is the story of a beloved father of two young children who knew the names of many people along his route. He suffered a far more common fate when he was run over by a driver blinded in the late afternoon sun. In 1986, DSNY hired its first two women into the uniformed workforce. By 2004, it experienced its first female fatality: a 9-year veteran who was cleaning debris from the top of the truck, unknown to her partner, who activated the mechanical arm.

In one chapter, we learn what it means to "mongo," the forbidden practice of searching for treasures in the trash as it is

collected. There are stories of perfectly useful electronics, home furnishings, and clothing being found by the workers. The author herself was present as a worker found a pair of women's Armani pants in unused condition, price tag for \$1,325 still attached. Much of the richness of the narrative comes from time the author spent with DSNY employees. But, even better than observing, she spent a period of time on the payroll.

After years of studying the department, Nagle completed an application. Three months later, she was called to take a written exam, and seven months after that she took the physical test. More than a year after applying, she began training to wear the uniform of DSNY. We then follow the author through the process of acquiring a Commercial Driver's License. There are bureaucratic curmudgeons to slow her progress, iconic instructors to inspire her, and surly partners attempting to get her into trouble. The struggles, pettiness, and politics common to working in any large organization are illuminated with stories from an insider's perspective. The stories are interesting, entertaining, and humorous.

Over 12,000 tons of household trash and recyclables are collected each day in New York City. The streets are cleaned regularly. Under most circumstances, snow is plowed and removed in an unremarkable and routine way. This is due to the efforts of several thousand workers who must work mandatory overtime for as long as necessary to get the city up and running after each storm. This book will provide you with a renewed appreciation for the people who make that happen, both in New York City and in our community.

## Boost workplace recycling

Setting up a recycle-friendly home is easy. Recycling at work can be just as simple if you know what to do!

Offering each employee a desk-side recycling bin with a smaller trash bin can increase office recycling by 20% according to the 2015 "Recycling at Work" study commissioned by Keep America Beautiful. The study, which compared several different methods of workplace recycling, including equal-sized trash and recycling bins and recycling bins only, set out to discover the best practices to increase workplace recycling.



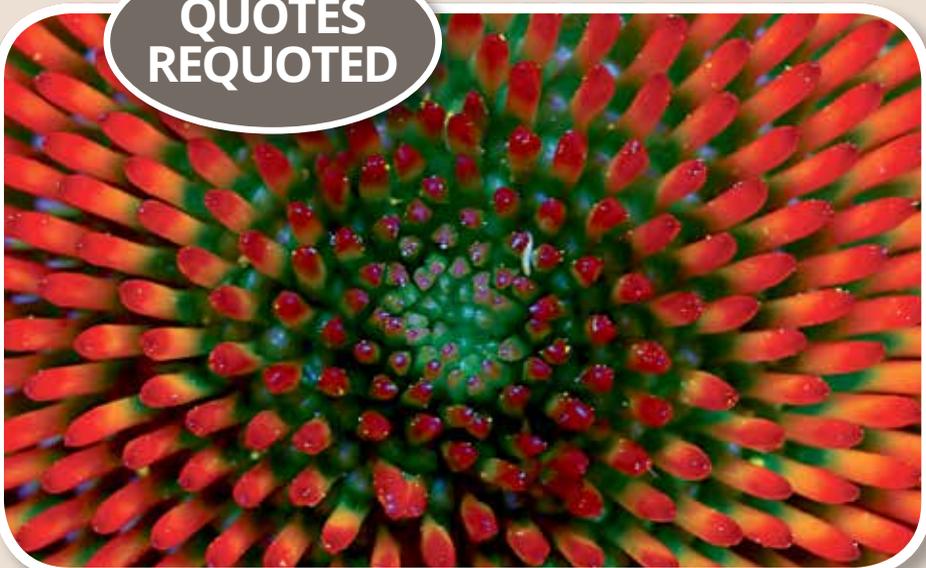
The little trash bins not only helped employees recycle more, but also improved the quality of the recycling by reducing contamination from non-recyclables by 20%. Keeping recyclables out of the trash and trash out of the recycling are key to reducing landfill waste and improving the efficiency of commercial recycling programs.

Improve your workplace recycling program by adopting these habits:

1. Set up recycling bins next to trash cans and in paper-heavy areas. Make sure recycling bins are marked and, if possible, color-coded. Blue is the color most strongly linked to recycling.
2. Purchase recycled-content paper products for the office, such as printer and copier paper, Post-it notes, and file folders.
3. Recycle office paper (make sure you've used both sides first!) in the appropriate container. 50% of the offices in the study had paper in their trash cans.
4. Keep paper towels and other soiled paper products out of the recycling bins.
5. Communicate by email. Use electronic organizational systems already built into most email platforms to keep track of important messages and documents. For tips, search online for "organize email."
6. Share documents as PDFs or with Dropbox or Google docs. Make comments electronically with "track changes" features.

For free workplace recycling tools and resources, visit <http://recyclingatwork.org>.

### QUOTES REQUOTED



Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.

Frank Lloyd Wright,  
1867-1959

American architect and designer

# Lean, green, minimizing machine

“Decluttering.” “Living with less.” “Downsizing.” No matter what you call it, minimalism is a growing trend, causing people to step back and think about what “stuff” they really need in their lives to be happy. It also gives us a chance to think about the first “R,” which is “reduce,” and how reducing can lessen our impact on the earth.

Although minimalism largely focuses on simplifying life, it also considers where all of our stuff comes from and the larger implications of buying the latest thing. Francine Jay, minimalist and author of *The Joy of Less: A Minimalist Living Guide*, asks those considering a minimalist lifestyle to think about their impact on the world. “Every item we buy, from food to books to televisions to cars, uses up some of the earth’s bounty,” she writes.

While minimalism looks different to every person, it offers a simple way to take responsibility for your footprint. By reducing your material possessions, you can also reduce the impact you have on earth’s resources.

One easy first step is to spend money and time on experiences instead of stuff. When choosing to invest in an experience instead

of the latest material good, you are often happier and more satisfied with your purchase. Experiences offer memories without the added memento to throw onto your coffee table. They also mean less waste, since we typically come away with very few tangible objects.

Shifting to less shopping in general is a natural second step as you begin to put more money toward experiences and memories. Think about that first “R”

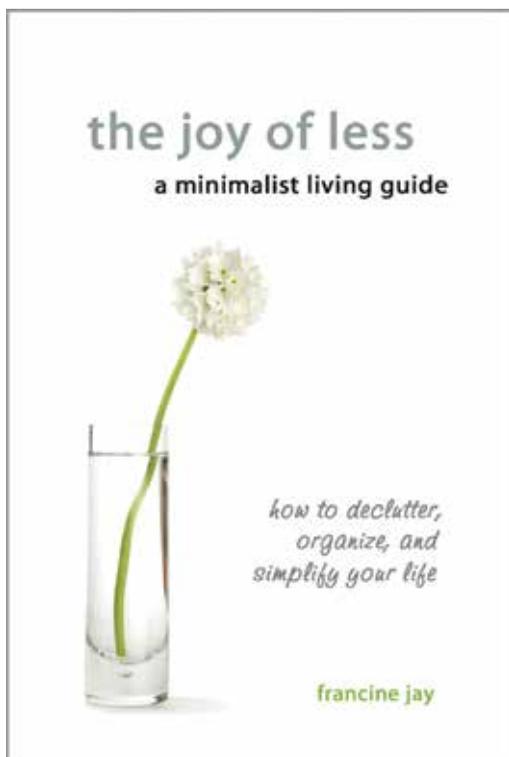
again. Reduce what you purchase along with what you own. Keep a donation box in a frequently used room in your house. Every time you come across an item you haven’t used for a while, put it in the donation box. When it’s full, drop off the items at a local charity or donation center.

Educating yourself on the items you do buy also helps curb shopping habits. Before making a purchase, consider the lifespan of that item. How long will it last? Will it be useful or in style in five years? Can it be recycled or reused down the road? If an item doesn’t meet these criteria, move on to a different brand or don’t purchase the item at all.

When you set out to shop, make sure you start with a list of what you need and stick to it. Try using only cash so you can see the money you’re spending instead of letting it disappear with the swipe of a card. Also consider the one-in/one-out rule, and don’t allow any new purchases into your home without removing something older.

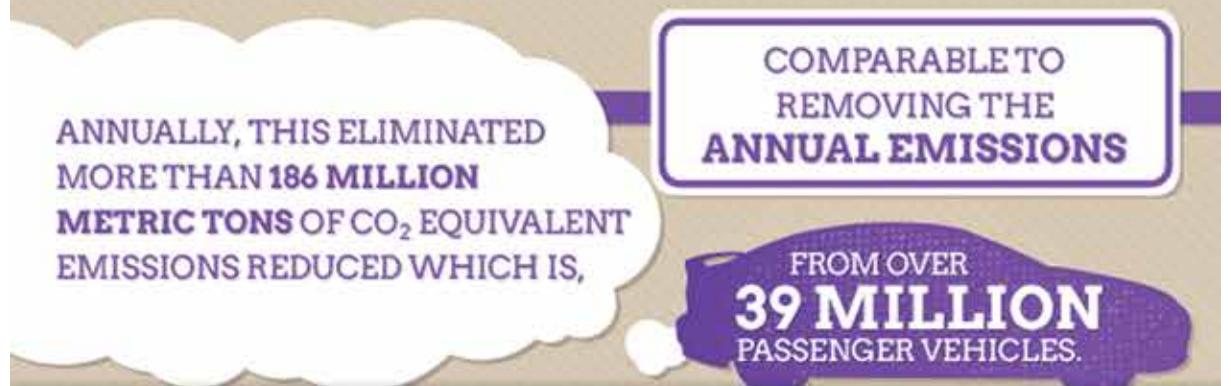
Once you decrease how much you buy, begin to purge material possessions from your home. Set a long-term goal first, then take several small steps that will accomplish your goal. Set aside designated time each week or month to purge one space. Remove everything from that space and only put back what you really need and truly enjoy. Donate, sell, reuse, or recycle the rest. Continue to do this throughout your home. It can take up to a year or two to completely declutter, but as long as you continue working toward your goal, visible progress occurs every month.

With a clean and green home, you’ll have more time to spend with friends and family and on hobbies. Being a minimalist doesn’t mean getting rid of everything you own; it means thinking about where your stuff comes from and just how much of it you really need. When we take the time to reduce our possessions, we reduce the impact we have on our planet and give everyone more room to breathe.



## THE IMPACT

RECYCLING HELPS TO CREATE CLEANER LAND, AIR, AND WATER, AND BETTER HEALTH.



## RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING HELPS SAVE NATURAL RESOURCES.



Source: Based on data from U.S. EPA’s “Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: Facts and Figures 2013” – [www.epa.gov/smm](http://www.epa.gov/smm)

# New electronics under the tree?

More than likely, someone in your household got some new electronics. Perhaps it was a new TV, computer, tablet, e-reader, iPod/MP3 player, game system, or smartphone. If those new electronics replaced something you already owned and now no longer need, don't throw



your old electronics into your trash. All electronics, no matter how small, contain chemicals and metals that can be harmful to the environment when mixed with household trash. Plus, these metals and other components can be used to create new electronics. Sell or donate usable and unwanted electronics. No takers? Recycle them, along with any electronics that no longer work, at the District electronic recycling trailer nearest you:

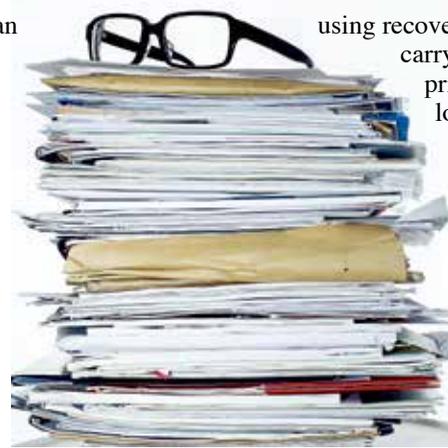
- La Porte County Solid Waste District, 2857 W. State Road 2, La Porte – Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday (closed holidays)
- 1027 Hitchcock Road, Michigan City – Hours: 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday (closed holidays)

# Capture more of your paper for recycling

On average, each American recycles 321 pounds of paper and cardboard per year. However, recent studies have found that about 15% of the material in the trash each week is also recyclable paper and cardboard.

Are you ready to boost your paper recycling? Here are seven things you can do to be a smart consumer and keep paper out of landfills:

- Keep a recycling bin next to your trash can and in spots where paper is heavily used, like your desk or family room. Clearly mark each bin to keep the trash out!
- Know what paper you can recycle. You can recycle all of these paper products in your curbside cart: newspaper, office and printer paper, mail and envelopes, cardboard, paperboard boxes, kraft paper bags, cardstock, file folders, phone book pages, and tubes from empty paper towel and toilet paper rolls. Keep recyclable paper and boxes clean and dry.
- Use both sides of paper before recycling it. Print drafts on the back of used printer paper or keep a stack for use as notepaper.
- Reuse file folders and envelopes by covering old information with sticky labels.
- Sort your email and documents into electronic folders instead of printing them. If you aren't sure how to do this, find step-by-step instructions online by searching for "organize email" or "organize computer files."
- Check labels on paper products and look for the words "recycled content," which tell you the paper was made



using recovered paper. Many stores carry recycled-content printer paper, notebooks, loose-leaf paper, note cards, Post-its, greeting cards, and more.

Making recycled paper uses 64% less energy and 58% less water than making the same type of paper from virgin natural resources.

- Strive to purchase post-consumer recycled-content paper. "Post

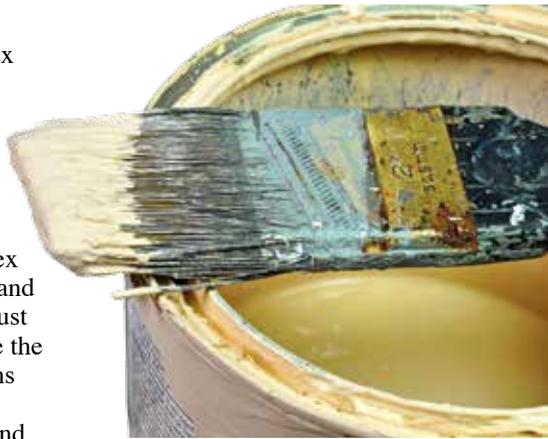
consumer" means that the recycled paper used to make the product came from a program like ours. Buying this paper helps complete the recycling circle and helps create demand for paper from local recycling programs.

For more information about paper recycling in America, visit [www.paperrecycles.org](http://www.paperrecycles.org).

# What do I do with latex paint?

Latex paint is not hazardous waste. Latex paint is a water-based product and does not contain oil or chemical solvents. **We do not accept latex paint at our mobile household hazardous waste events since you have other safe and appropriate disposal options.**

The best option is to dry out the latex paint and dispose of the dried-out paint and can in your household trash. If there is just a small amount of paint in the can, leave the lid off until the paint has dried. With cans that are one-third to two-thirds full, add kitty litter, sawdust, or shredded paper and leave the lid off the can. Allow the paint to harden. In both cases, be sure that the open paint can is not accessible to children or pets. After the paint is dried and hardened in the can, dispose of the can and lid in the trash.



Remember—enamel paint, which is oil-based, and paint thinner are hazardous waste. Watch for the dates of our 2016 mobile household hazardous waste events in our spring newsletter or check our website, [www.solidwastedistrict.com](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com).

## Staff of the Solid Waste District of La Porte County

- Clay Turner, Executive Director
- Lisa Woodson, Executive Secretary
- Nancy McVay, Recycling Coordinator
- Alicia Ebaugh, Educator
- Michelle Buford, Controller
- Tom Buford, HHW Coordinator
- Troy Taylor, Compost Coordinator



[www.facebook.com/LPCoRecycling](http://www.facebook.com/LPCoRecycling)  
[www.twitter.com/LPCoRecycling](http://www.twitter.com/LPCoRecycling)  
[www.youtube.com/LPCoRecycling](http://www.youtube.com/LPCoRecycling)  
 Green E-Club: <http://eepurl.com/eiyHs>



*We want your suggestions, questions and comments!*

**Solid Waste District of La Porte County**  
 2857 W. State Road 2  
 La Porte, IN 46350  
 (219) 326-0014 • (800) 483-7700  
[www.solidwastedistrict.com](http://www.solidwastedistrict.com)

Copyright© 2016

The Solid Waste District of La Porte County and Eco Partners, Inc. All rights reserved.



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER  
 70% POST-CONSUMER NEWS CONTENT,  
 USING SOY INKS

# Curbside Recycling Schedule

- 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 – East of Hwy. 4 and South of Hwy. 2, including Kankakee Township; East of Hwy. 35 and North of Hwy. 2 to Brighton Street
- C** City of La Porte – East of Hwy. 35 and North of Brighton Street; 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; Sheridan Beach; Pottawattamie Park; Village Green
- 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); Weatherstone Village; Terrace Acres
- I** Center Township
- J** Galena Township; Hudson Township; Wills Township; Trail Creek (Michigan City); Rolling Prairie Mobile Home Park

**NOTE:** Township is outside of City limits. Never remove toter from assigned address.

January						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
					Holiday No Service	E
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	F	G	H	I	J	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	A	B	C	D	E	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	F	G	H	I	J	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	A	B	C	D	E	
						31

February						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
	F	G	H	I	J	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	A	B	C	D	E	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	F	G	H	I	J	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	A	B	C	D	E	
28	29					
	F					

March						
Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
		G	H	I	J	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	A	B	C	D	E	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	F	G	H	I	J	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	A	B	C	D	E	
27	28	29	30	31		
	F	G	H	I		