



3R Review

Summer 2006

Reduce ♻️ Reuse ♻️ Recycle ♻️
Naturally!

Saint Louis
COUNTY
HEALTH

CALLING ALL HOUSEHOLDS!

CAN YOU MEET THE COUNTY'S 50% WASTE DIVERSION GOAL?

You may have heard – Saint Louis County residents are being encouraged to send **LESS** waste to landfills.

Why the 50% goal?

In addition to the environmental benefits, it makes economic sense to send less trash to the landfill. Recycling can keep trash hauling costs down. Local landfills are filling up, and new landfills are likely to be further away, increasing trash hauling costs. The recycling and reuse industry is also a significant driver of economic activity. For example:

- Recycling and reuse creates four jobs for every one job created in the waste disposal industry.
- Waste diversion keeps the raw materials and energy used to manufacture products in the economic loop versus buried in a landfill.
- Locally the recycling, reuse and remanufacturing industry employs almost 16,000 people in 1,500 recycling businesses.

The more people recycle, the greater the economic gains. As of 2003, residents were diverting 30% of their waste. The County, recognizing the environmental and economic benefits, has set a goal of diverting 50% of all waste by 2010. To meet 50%, we all need to think of ways to reduce, reuse and recycle even more.

Secrets to Reducing Waste

If you are stumped about how you and your family can meet the 50% waste diversion goal, consider these ideas:

- Add a small recycling bin or trash can next to every regular trash can in your home. You'll be surprised how much paper you will accumulate for recycling. Also, get a second recycling

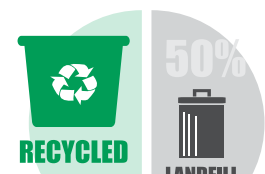
bin for your garage. Many times we stop recycling when the bin starts to overflow, missing a lot of recycling opportunities.

- Add at least one category of items to your recycling list like cardboard or food cartons. Call your hauler to find out if they offer single-stream recycling. It's an extended list of recyclables which go all together in one bin – no separating required.
- Instead of buying individual juice drinks for kids, make drinks from powdered or frozen mixes and store in a covered pitcher in the fridge. If you have to buy juice or drinks in single-serving sizes, choose recyclable containers.
- Use refills. Many refills are available in concentrated forms that use less packaging.
- Clean up spills with cloth towels instead of paper towels.
- For the really adventurous, start a worm bin for organic materials. Here's a great web site that shows you how to do it: www.yucky.discovery.com and click on "worm world."

Residents are diverting 30% of their waste from the landfill. The County has set a goal of diverting 50% of all waste by 2010.



**CURRENT
Landfill Use**



GOAL

RECYCLING MYTHS

Sometimes inaccurate information discourages people from recycling as much as they could. Let's separate fact from fiction about some common misconceptions about recycling.

Myth 1: *The trash hauler makes money off my recyclables. They should be paying me!*

No, the hauler does not make money off your recyclables. At this time, the market for recyclables doesn't completely cover the cost of collection, processing and transportation.

Myth 2: *The truck picking up my recyclables looks like the truck that picks up my trash. My stuff is probably going to the landfill.*

You can be sure that does not happen because of simple economics: If the hauler takes trash to the landfill, he has to pay a tipping fee. If instead, he takes his load of recyclables to a recycling center, he does not pay landfill tipping fees.

Also, by using trucks that can pick up recyclables one day and trash another day, the hauler can help keep costs down by eliminating the need to purchase or maintain a double fleet of trucks. (Trash trucks come with compacting apparatus that can be used to compact recyclables, resulting in a greater

volume of recyclables collected per truck, thus improving the economics further.)

Myth 3: *Labels on jars and bottles have to be removed before putting in the recycle bin.*

Nope, you don't have to do this. However, you do need to remove and pitch plastic lids. Aluminum and steel (tin can) lids can be placed inside the cans and recycled.

Myth 4: *It's better to pitch a peanut butter jar than to use up resources trying to clean it for recycling.*

It is not necessary to clean sticky containers until they are spotless. Small food residue will be removed in processing. It's always a good idea to do a quick rinse to keep bugs or small animals from visiting your recycling bin.

Myth 5: *Cans must be flattened for recycling.*

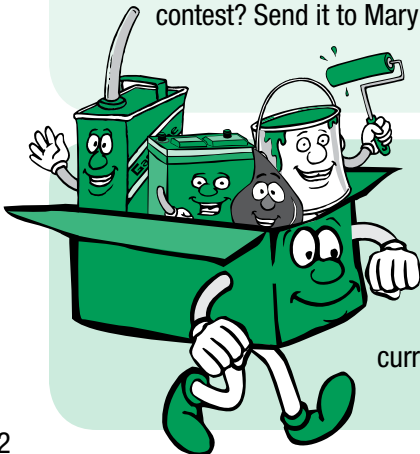
Flattening cans is a good idea because it saves space in your bin and the recycling truck, but it is not mandatory.

Myth 6: *I don't have time to recycle.*

Hmmm, that's kind of like saying "I don't have time to throw something away." You just put recyclables in a different container and there you go!

RECYCLING CONTEST IDEAS WANTED... WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We are planning contests and challenges for families, businesses and subdivisions that will be announced throughout the upcoming year, but we also want to hear from you! What would help you to recycle more? Do you have an idea for a contest? Send it to Mary Patterson at Saint Louis County Health Department, 111 S. Meramec, St. Louis, MO 63105. Or email ideas to Mary Patterson at mpatterson2@stlouisco.com.



ORDINANCE UPDATE • ORDINANCE UPDATE

The draft Solid Waste Management Ordinance was submitted to the County Council for review in late spring, and two public hearings were held in June. To see a copy of the draft ordinance and current news releases on its status, visit our website or call (314) 615-8958.

GO BACK-TO-SCHOOL GREEN!

The end of summer marks a fresh beginning for many families – with parents buying new clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks, and other school supplies each year. Now more than ever, Back-to-School is a perfect time to “Close-the-Loop” and buy recycled-content products. You can also protect the environment by choosing non-toxic school supplies.

It used to be that recycled-content was hard to find, but now great quality recycled products are readily available and competitively priced, including notebooks, folders, index cards, printer paper, and pencils.

Almost every retail outlet stocks recycled-content products, and the more consumers ask for it, the more options will become available.

Shopping Tip

Look for labels on packaging that refer to the amount of “post-consumer content”. This means the product has been manufactured with discarded consumer materials (paper, plastic, etc.) that otherwise would have gone to a landfill. The higher the post-consumer percentage, the better.

Don't Forget Reduce and Reuse!

REDUCE:

- Make a list before you go; it will remind you of what you set out to purchase and minimize impulse buying.
- Reuse items like refillable pens, rechargeable batteries, and scrap paper for notes.
- Make a waste-free lunch – use sandwich containers instead of plastic wrap, and re-useable juice containers instead of juice boxes.

REUSE:

- Sort through your old supplies. Many of last year's supplies can be reused.
- Buy used wares from resale shops. This is an inexpensive way to get assorted goods, and retro fashions are always coming back into style!

Products to Avoid

When shopping for school supplies, here are some environmentally *unfriendly* products to avoid if possible.

- Magic markers (if you must buy markers, look for brands with low toxin levels)
- Disposable pens
- Plastic folders, notebooks
- Acrylic paints and scented art products
- Epoxy or instant bonding glues
- Artists' pastel crayons (some may contain asbestos)
- Dyes made of fiber reactive or commercial dyes
- Glossy paper used for art projects

Why Buy Recycled-Content Products

- Conserves resources
- Saves energy
- Reduces solid waste
- Reduces air and water pollutants
- Reduces greenhouse gases
- Creates new jobs

SUPPORT YOUR SCHOOL RECYCLING PROGRAM!

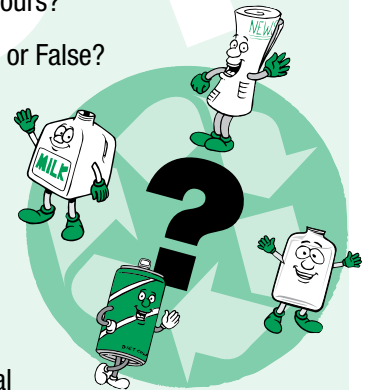
Look for the green and yellow Paper Retriever™ recycling bins on school lots. You can drop off paper items including newspapers, magazines, junk mail, envelopes, catalogs, and office paper. Schools earn money based on the amount of paper collected. Some schools also have blue “Recycle Challenge” bins for aluminum cans; these are also fundraisers for the school.



KIDS' KORNER: RECYCLING QUIZ

Take this fun test to find out how much you really know about recycling!

- A. You can feed garbage to worms. True or False?
- B. An aluminum can you recycle today could be back in your house as a new can in just 2, 6 or 10 months?
- C. Recycling one aluminum can saves enough electricity to run your TV for 1 hour, 3 hours or 5 hours?
- D. Americans use 2,500,000 plastic bottles every hour and most of them are thrown away! True or False?
- E. Recycling a stack of newspapers just 3 feet high can save one tree. True or False?
- F. If the pilgrims had six-packs, we'd still have the plastic rings from them today. True or False?
- G. Recycling helps keep the air clean. True or False?
- H. Plastic soda bottles can be recycled into clothing. True or False?
- I. Throwing computers in the trash is OK. True or False?
- J. Close-the-Loop means:
 - a. tying your own shoes
 - b. buying products made of recycled material
 - c. a dangerous skate board stunt



Answers: A. True – worms can help break down food in a compost bin. B. 2, C. 3 hours. D. True. E. True. F. True. G. True. H. True. I. False. J. b - look for recycled content when you buy your back to school supplies!

INFORMATION BOX

For information on recycling, upcoming events and proper waste management, visit our Web site at www.stlouisco.com/doh (Click on “Waste Management” under Community Services) or call the Recycling Hotline at 314-286-9200.

This newsletter and programs described herein are made possible by the voter-approved 5% surcharge on waste disposed in Saint Louis County landfills. The Health Department utilizes these funds for the benefit of Saint Louis County residents. This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.