



Involving people in creating a sustainable future through local efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle

Working towards Zero Waste at Earth Day: A good move with many challenges

By Lindsey Newkirk

One of my favorite Earth Day events in the Portland area is the City Repair Earth Day. Five years ago I participated as a volunteer at the event in their recycling efforts. It was an amazing experience, as the head recycling volunteer was a kind, older hippie that was dedicated (and had been for years) to sorting through every single bag of trash, recycling, and compost to remove contaminants and increase recovery of the materials generated at the event. Yes, I mean every single bag! So no matter the attendee disposal behavior, it was the back of house action that really made the waste reduction happen. Because of his patience, tenacity, recycling knowledge, and a handful of young and eager dumpster divers, we were able to accomplish a 97% landfill diversion rate. Wow!

As I attended this year's event simply as a citizen, I noticed the evolution of the event recycling this year that included the use of the City of Portland event recycling bins and signage for attendee use. As I spied on the set-up (because that is what true recycling die-hards do: check out the trash at events, much to the chagrin of our less than enthusiastic friends), I was curious if the kind old hippie would be sorting through all of the bags of material. Because, boy, did it need it.

Especially with the type of person that is drawn to

attend an Earth Day event, I'm generally of the notion that people want to do right with their waste, composting and recycling whenever possible. Unfortunately, and especially with the new trend in event composting, it's quite often that attendees don't actually know what is right.

Apparently, earlier in the day the public waste stations were manned with volunteers that directed the public to properly sort their materials into the correct bins. Later in the afternoon when I arrived at the event, the waste station monitors were no longer on duty and the result was not good. The recycling seemed to be in OK shape, but the compost bins were full to the brim with trash. It was hard to tell if the public really thought these items (a 711 soda cup, plastic lid and straw) were compostable or if the compost sign and bright green bin was meaningless to the trash-tossing passersby.

In short, it is first and foremost absolutely admirable for an event to implement public composting for its attendees. However, as this event proved, along with many other events starting on this new venture, it is nearly impossible to expect attendees to figure out this relatively new and complicated system on their own, and your well trained green team waste station monitor volunteers are absolutely crucial to the success of a zero waste event program.

Trashion Camp with Junk to Funk Trashion Collective

This summer Junk to Funk is partnering up with SCRAP to run our first summer camp program. Campers will embark on a weeklong trashion excursion where they will work with the Junk to Funk Trashion Collective, producers of Portland's Recycled Fashion Show, to transform reused materials from SCRAP into real fashion accessories and couture! Each day, campers will create and take home usable fashion accessories created from materials found at SCRAP. Additionally, throughout the week we will be creating trashion garments that will be displayed in a culminating friends and family fashion show at the end of the week. Junk to Funk camp is open to participants age 12-18 and will run August 9-13.

To get more info and/or download registration forms visit us at: junktofunk.org/youth_programs. We are still looking for volunteers, camp counselors, and donations to provide scholarships to campers in need. Email Lindsey Newkirk at Lindsey@junktofunk.org to find out how you can help.

OLCC bottle redemption center update

The April 16 meeting of the OLCC Commissioners included a historic vote: the commissioners voted to accept the first redemption center application. The application was brought forth by the Oregon Beverage Redemption Cooperative (OBRC) to establish a redemption center at 23345 NE Halsey in Wood Village.

The center would replace the redemption activities of three large redemption facilities: the Safeway at Cherry Lane; Fred Meyer in the Wood Village shopping center; and the Sandy Blvd Wal-Mart. The center would be financed by the three grocers and the beverage distributors. OBRC will operate the center 7 days a week, and is expected to be open between the hours of 9 am and 6 pm (may extend until 7 pm in the summer time).

There will be three options for returning the deposit containers:

1. Hand count, where cash is immediately returned to the customers;
2. Reverse Vending Machines – again, cash on site will be paid out;
3. A large bag system affiliated with a credit card type device to reimburse the customer.

The card system will have additional requirements; the cash will be available at in-store kiosks. Only the “credit card” system will have 24 hours availability for returns, all others presently are restricted to the hours of operation.

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It is projected the center will be open in the summer of 2010. There will be lots of details to be worked out in setting up the facility and in operation the first few months. OBRC did say that there will be greater opportunities for community groups to raise money in collections of returnables with the card system. The groups can just go to the site and establish an account, whereas today it is a bit more difficult to establish such an activity.

The Oregonian did have an article on the meeting, which you might wish to read by accessing Oregonlive.com at www.oregonlive.com/news/index.ssf/2010/04/

- Rick Paul

Want free admission to the Association of Oregon Recyclers June conference in Salem?

Recycling Advocates is offering conference scholarships to 10 lucky up-and-coming recyclers and activists to attend the Association of Oregon Recyclers annual conference in Salem June 17-19, 2010.

Recycling Advocates is a local grassroots, non-profit organization promoting waste reduction and recycling in Oregon and SW Washington; the scholarships are one of Recycling Advocates' efforts to motivate Master Recyclers and other newcomers to take their participation and awareness about recycling issues to the next level.

Association of Oregon Recyclers hosts Oregon's premier solid waste conference, attracting noted speakers and key players to discuss the nuts and bolts of successful recycling programs, upcoming policy issues, and trends in the solid waste field. The conference is a great opportunity for newcomers to do some networking, as it attracts hundreds of industry, government, and political representatives and offers several fun social networking events.

To apply for a full-conference registration scholarship, please fill out a short application by June 4, 2010. To get an application, contact Recycling Advocates at info@recyclingadvocates.org (or visit our web site at www.recyclingadvocates.org), or call and leave a message at 503-777-0909. All applications are due by June 4th; scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. To learn more about the conference schedule, visit Association of Oregon Recyclers' web site (www.aorr.org).

- Johnny Leuthold

Metro Recycling Information Center: Your one-stop resource for recycling and disposal information in the Portland metropolitan area. . . 503-234-3000

Metro’s Recycling Information Center (RIC) has been the place to go for reuse, recycling and disposal information for area residents for decades. This center has friendly, knowledgeable staff with helpful answers to your questions. Call them at 503-234-3000 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday (Spanish speakers available).

one of the first computers. Funding for the center ran out in 1973, but by then, nearly 14,000 calls had been answered. That year, the Oregon Legislature passed a \$60,000 appropriation for the recycling switchboard, as it was known then, and the staff took up residence at the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Developing a database system that was quick and

Valuable Metro Regional recycling information is also available on their website at www.oregonmetro.gov/recycling. You can sign up for their free Solid Waste and Recycling electronic newsletter with up-to-date information about recycling and waste reduction, household hazardous waste, natural gardening, and composting, to name just a few topics (at www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=163).

Metro Recycling Information can answer your questions about...

- How to recycle at home
- How to recycle at work
- Finding a recycling or disposal option beyond the curb
- Household hazardous waste disposal
- Alternatives to toxic household products
- Natural gardening and composting
- Construction site recycling
- Electronics recycling
- Waste prevention tips
- Reducing junk mail
- Recycling Christmas trees

easy to use was still a problem. A system combining index cards in a color-coded metal flip file was employed next.


Metro took over operations in 1981, guaranteeing stable funding for the Recycling Information Center. Metro sees it as an important and clearly visible part of the recycling promotion effort, as well as a vital part of Metro’s waste reduction plan. Even with Metro’s support, the system still didn’t enter the computer age until 1986 with a single

Established by the Oregon Environmental Council and initially staffed by volunteers, they have been answering consumers’ questions since 1971. With a \$20,000 federal grant they began operations on the second story of a Victorian house in Southwest Portland. Their first database was a single sheet of paper and a map with stick on dots marking recycling locations. Next, a knitting needle was placed through hand-punched index cards, truly

personal computer. Prior to that, staff was spending between five and eight minutes answering simple recycling questions. Now a centralized database, updated regularly, maintains information about the region’s many recycling locations and options.

- *Richard Lee-Berman*

Since taking over the switchboard in 1981, Metro has fielded over 2 million calls, handling more than 100,000 per year.

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|  | <p>RECYCLING ADVOCATES</p> <p>PO Box 6736, Portland, OR 97228 503-777-0909 www.recyclingadvocates.org info@recyclingadvocates.org</p> | <p>The Board</p> <p>Katy Daily • <i>Co-Pres.</i> Johnny Leuthold • <i>Co-Pres.</i> Rhett Lawrence • <i>Vice-Pres.</i> Betty Patton • <i>Secretary</i></p> | <p>Staff</p> <p>Rick Paul • <i>Treasurer</i> Wayne Rifer • <i>At Large</i> Lindsey Newkirk • <i>At Large</i> Rob Guttridge • <i>At Large</i></p> | <p>Richard Lee-Berman <i>Administrator, Editor, Webmaster</i></p> |
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Recycling Advocacy Calendar for May 2010

◆ **30th Annual WSRA Conference and Trade Show – Vancouver, WA**

Sunday-Thursday, May 23-26

The Washington State Recycling Association invites you to “Reflect, Recharge, Recycle” at the annual conference, being held at the Vancouver Hilton. Information at www.wsra.net.

◆ **Recycling Advocates board meeting**

Monday, May 24th, 7:00 p.m.

For location and information call 503-777-0909



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Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland OR 97228-6736 or visit www.RecyclingAdvocates.org/join.htm and pay by credit card or PayPal.

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