



# RECYCLING ADVOCATES

December 2004

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

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## **Portland researching residential roll carts**

*Decision hinges on impact on residual rates*

*By Jennifer Porter*

The City of Portland's Office of Sustainable Development (OSD) has begun researching the possibility of using roll carts for residential recycling collection. With other jurisdictions around the region and country moving to roll carts, OSD's research centered on whether roll carts are a good idea for Portland.

OSD conducted phone interviews with over a dozen jurisdictions that have moved to roll cart programs both regionally and nationally. Questions were asked regarding sort, schedule, automation level, pre/post roll carts recycling tonnage, and residual rates. [Ed. note: Residual is that portion of the recycling stream that can't be recycled, either because it's non-recyclable materials that shouldn't have been there to start with, or because it's a recyclable material that got incorrectly sorted into the wrong stream at the MRF (material recovery facility) and is therefore viewed as a contaminant by the subsequent processor of the commodity.] The results show that some programs maintain a dual-stream system, with glass in a 14-gallon container and all other materials in the roll cart, while other programs use single stream sorts. To maintain Portland's already high recycling rate and low residual percentage, a potential roll cart program in Portland would keep glass separate from other materials.

To move ahead with a residential cart program, OSD would need to see convincing

*- Continued on page 2, column 1*

## **Seattle Approves New Waste Policies**

*Organics added to recycling program*

The Seattle City Council unanimously approved in early October several new recycling policies that will ban recyclables in waste containers. Starting January 1, 2005, haulers will place notification tags on commercial and residential garbage roll carts and cans that contain recyclables. According to David Marshal of Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), inspectors will monitor and enforce commercial compliance starting in 2006. At the same time, haulers will also monitor residential compliance and refuse pick up of waste containers after two infractions of the new ban, said Marshal.

*The Seattle Times* reported residents will now be able to put vegetable waste and compostable paper, such as pizza boxes, out with yard debris for composting. Marshal of the SPU added that the health department is reviewing the residential organic composting and will rule on this aspect of the policy in February. Yard debris collection will now occur every two weeks, instead of once per month.

Restaurants can have meat and vegetable waste hauled away for composting.

Small businesses will also now be able to put out paper for curbside recycling just like residential customers.

Haulers will set up 300 recycling receptacles as a symbolic gesture aimed at promoting recycling and waste prevention.

*The Seattle Times* notes that food waste currently accounts for nearly a third of the city's garbage collection. The Seattle Public Utilities maintains that the new measures would boost the city's recycling rate by 6.2 percent. The city's recycling goal for 2010 is a 60 percent. Seattle's rate was 48.5 percent in the third quarter of 2004, according to Marshal of the SPU.

## **The Holiday List**

*Things to do for the holiday season*

'Tis the season when Americans spend a significant amount of their income on gifts, many of which come in wasteful packaging and may be difficult to recycle or reuse. According to a poll by the Center for the New American Dream ([www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org)), 54% of Americans feel that spending less money on gifts will actually allow them to focus more on the true meaning of the holidays. Over 75% of Americans surveyed said that they would like to have a simplified holiday this year. As you consider ways to celebrate the holidays in a more sustainable manner, take a look at the RA Newsletter's list of ideas for the season.

*Cleaning up for and after the holidays*

Make your own cleaners (see Metro's web site at [www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?articleid=1400](http://www.metro-region.org/article.cfm?articleid=1400)).

*Decorating the house*

Use real scents such as herbs, flowers, and spices.

Rent a living Christmas tree (see [www.livingchristmastrees.org](http://www.livingchristmastrees.org) for details).

Use reusable placesettings (e.g., use linen napkins during the holidays and everyday).

Decorate with real decorations (popcorn, cranberries, evergreen boughs, squash, fruit, etc.).

*Giving holiday cards*

Choose recycled cards.

Reuse old cards by cutting and pasting to make new creations.

*Giving with ecology in mind*

Give books that support sustainability (for example, books about ecology, books that help readers live more sustainably, books that celebrate the natural world around us.)

*Continued on page 2*

### **Roll carts, continued**

data indicating that an increase in tonnage would be realized, without an unacceptable increase in residual rates. Despite a lack of comprehensive data from other jurisdictions, it appears that collection tonnage gains also accompany a rise in residual rates with a roll cart system. For example, Eugene saw a 25% increase in recycling tonnage, and a 200% increase in residual levels (from 1 to 3%) after moving to dual-stream cart collection. In the case of San Jose<sup>1</sup>, CA, recycling tonnage increased 10%, while residual levels went from 7 to 12%, or a 71% increase, after moving to single stream cart collection.

At this point, OSD has listed the following potential benefits and drawbacks of using a roll cart system for the collection of residential recycling.

#### *Potential Benefits:*

- Increased tonnage
- Efficiency gains in collection
- Customer ease
- Reduced worker's compensation claims
- Drier material
- Less litter

#### *Potential Drawbacks:*

- Collection costs
- Customer storage
- Curbside and MRF contamination
- Lack of regulatory control over MRF's
- MRF residual

- Equipment cost

OSD has convened local government recycling program managers to further discuss the issues surrounding the use of roll cart collection for residential recycling. Through this group, OSD is working to compile a cost benefit model to determine the impacts of roll cart collection. To comment on this effort, please call Jennifer Porter from the City of Portland at 503-823-6110 or [jporter@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:jporter@ci.portland.or.us).

<sup>1</sup> San Jose had a contract with the MRFs that capped the residual at 12%.

*Editor's note: Jennifer Porter works is a research and development specialist with Portland's Office of Sustainable Development.*

### **Become a Master Recycler**

*Learn from experts and then share your knowledge*

Start off the New Year by becoming a recycling expert. The next Master Recycler sessions will be offered in Portland during January and February and in Clackamas during April and May.

The popular eight-week course meets once a week for eight sessions and includes two half-day weekend field trips. Over 400 people have participated in the program that provides instruction in topics such as waste reduction, recycling processes, alternatives to hazardous household products, composting and green building.

Course graduates agree to donate 30 hours putting their skills to work to help others learn the three R's: to reduce the amount of solid waste generated, reuse material for the purpose for which it was intended and recycle material that cannot be reused. Master Recyclers volunteer to staff information booths at community events, make presentations and work on special projects.

A \$50 course fee includes all materials. Applications will soon be available online. For more information call (503) 823-7530 or e-mail your request to [masterrecycler@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:masterrecycler@ci.portland.or.us).

*Source: Master Recycler Program*

### **Holidays, continued**

Give gifts that help people develop more sustainable habits (A thermos bottle or travel mug can go a long way reducing waste. Cloth napkins, rechargeable batteries, or cloth grocery bags will help keep waste out of landfills and chemicals out of the environment.

Reuse materials and make your own gifts (see [www.recyclenow.org/o\\_wastereduction\\_xmas02.html](http://www.recyclenow.org/o_wastereduction_xmas02.html) for some gift ideas).

Give experiences such as tickets to a local arts event or the Illahee Lecture Series (see story on page 4), a meal, or a massage.

Give memberships in charitable organizations such as Recycling Advocates (see member form on next page).

Give organic clothes or clothing made from hemp.

Give gifts that come in minimal or no packaging.

Re-gift items this season, or donate them to Goodwill or other nonprofit second-hand shop so others can purchase them as gifts.

When purchasing gifts, carpool or take mass transit...and don't forget your cloth or reused paper bags.

#### *Wrapping it up*

If wrapping gifts in paper, reuse old paper or buy chlorine-free and recycled paper. Avoid mylar and metallic papers that can't be recycled.

Make your own wrapping paper.

Just don't use wrapping paper. Place gifts in baskets or cloth bags, or use scarves or other fabric to cover gifts.

Reuse ribbons and decorations.

#### *Holiday meals and entertaining*

Use linens and reusable dinnerware.

Buy and cook organic.

Buy bulk items.

Compost vegetable waste and leftovers.

#### *...and after its over*

Save any reusable paper, ribbons, decorations, and cards for the future.

Capture your ideas on how to simplify the holidays for next year.

## **RECYCLING ADVOCATES**

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## Bring Earth Share into your workplace

...and support RA and other environmental groups

Oregonians care. They care about forests and fish, about clean water and air, about taking care of their communities. Every year, more working people in Oregon have chosen to show this commitment by donating to Earth Share of Oregon's 68 local and national member groups through workplace giving campaigns.

Here's how it happens: Earth Share works with employers to offer a payroll deduction program through which employees can either donate to Earth Share of Oregon (ESOR) as a whole or designate a gift for one or more ESOR members.

In campaigns at over 80 businesses and public agencies, ESOR annually generates almost \$700,000 to support environmental nonprofits that work to protect human health, preserve wildlife habitat and reduce the causes and effects of global warming.

Recycling Advocates is a member of ESOR and receives a steady source of income from Earth Share, as well as designated gifts from donors that support RA's mission. ESOR's campaign also offers a great opportunity for RA to reach out to new audiences and potential supporters.

Is there an Earth Share campaign where you work?

First, find out if your workplace allows employees to donate to Earth Share of Oregon. If you aren't sure, check the list of Earth Share's Workplace Partners at [www.earthshare-oregon.org](http://www.earthshare-oregon.org).

Next, if you don't have an Earth Share campaign, ask your company president or other top leaders if they would consider starting one. Ron Shoals, Earth Share of Oregon's business development manager, can help you approach your company's leaders and provide materials for them to review. If you are an owner or leader in your company, it makes adding an Earth Share campaign that much easier!

To learn more about bringing Earth Share to your workplace, call Ron at (503) 223-9015 or e-mail him at [ron@earthshare-oregon.org](mailto:ron@earthshare-oregon.org).

## Question of the Month

*Out with the old and in with the new year*

The 2004 calendar year is quickly winding down and New Year's Day is around the corner.

*What steps did you take in 2004 to reduce waste and increase recycling?  
Do you have a New Year's resolution for waste reduction and recycling in 2005?*

Share your ideas by e-mailing responses to [info@recyclingadvocates.org](mailto:info@recyclingadvocates.org), or call us at (503) 777-0909 and leave a message by December 20.

Last month we asked, "What steps are you taking to reduce holiday-related waste in your family?" Jan Rankin wrote in to tell us what she is giving her children and grandchildren.

"In response to your question regarding waste reduction during the holidays...my daughter and her husband and my two little grandsons (two years and six months) are living in upper state New York this winter. To reduce both waste and cost of mailing at Christmas, for gifts we are sending them family memberships to the Oregon Zoo and the Portland Children's Museum that can be activated when they return to Portland next spring. (Of course, I'll include two small stuffed animals that I purchased at the zoo gift shop and two wooden toys from the museum for the boys so they'll have something to open!) I know they'll love these gifts that keep on giving throughout the summer months and I feel good about supporting two wonderful organizations and creating very little waste at the same time!" Thank you Jan for taking time to respond to our Question of the Month!

## Troutdale Rolls Out Pilot Project

*Are roll carts a solution to litter problem?*

According to Environmental Specialist Amy Pepper, Troutdale is notorious for high winds in the winter time that cause recyclables from curbside bins and unbagged garbage to litter city streets. The City Council directed staff to contact Waste Management for a solution to this problem. Waste Management presented the idea of going to a three roll-cart system (one each for yard debris, recycling and garbage) with a curbside bin for glass recycling.

The City and Waste Management are in the process of initiating a pilot study to see how the system works and how residents respond.

For more information, contact Amy Pepper, Environmental Specialist with the City of Troutdale, at (503) 674-7241.



## RECYCLING ADVOCATES Membership Application

\$25 Advocate    \$50 Friend    \$100 Sustainer    \$10-24 Living Lightly

*I'm giving a gift membership to the recipient below.\**

*Sign me up for Action Alerts*    *Contact me about volunteering for RA*

Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland, OR 97228-6736

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_\_ Evening \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  Send my newsletter by e-mail

\*Your name, if this is a gift membership: \_\_\_\_\_

*Your membership contribution to RA is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.*

**Aha! The ease of giving an RA membership as an alternative gift!**

**Upcoming Events and Workshops**

**Illahee's 2005 Lecture Series**

**How Cities Learn: Portland's Place on Earth**

This year the Illahee Lecture Series will peer into Portland's future by exploring the evolution of its culture, commerce and environment. Presenters will also consider other regions around the world for lessons about how cities can become enduring places.

January 18th, 2005

William Cronon: "Landscape Legacies: Learning from Our History"

February 16th, 2005

Steward Brand: "The Future of Cities as if the Past Mattered"

March 9th, 2005

Lucy Lippard: "Art and Place: Traveling to Here"

March 30th, 2005

Jane Holtz Kay: "Last Chance Landscape: De-paving & Re-planning Cities"

April 19th, 2005

Bill McKibben: "Beyond Natural Resources: Creating a Truly Livable City"

May 18th, 2005

Gary Snyder: "Portland in Context: Reflecting on Mt. Saint Helens"

All lectures begin at 7:30 pm at First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park in Portland. Visit [www.illahee.org](http://www.illahee.org) or call (503) 222-2719 for more information and to order tickets.

**Have an event to promote?**  
 Send your recycling or waste prevention event information to [info@recyclingadvocates.org](mailto:info@recyclingadvocates.org).  
 Deadline is the 10th of each month.

**Recycling Advocates is proud to be...**



**MetroPaint Move**

The confusion will end on February 1, 2005. Sales of Metro recycled paint will move from the difficult to navigate Oregon City garbage transfer station to a stand alone facility on Swan Island. Parking will be plentiful at the new 4825 N. Basin sales office.

The new facility more than doubles the space of MetroPaint but is not set-up to receive household hazardous waste. Household hazardous waste can still be brought year-round to Metro's permanent household hazardous waste facilities in Oregon City and Northwest Portland.

For more information on Metro paint, 100% post-consumer re-blended latex paint, call Metro Recycling Information at (503) 234-3000 or log onto [www.metro-region.org/paint](http://www.metro-region.org/paint).

Available in over a dozen colors, in one-gallon cans and five-gallon pails, Metro paint produces a low-sheen finish on wood, masonry, concrete, vinyl and metal siding.

Source: MetroPaint

*Copied on 100% post-consumer content recycled paper.*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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RECYCLING ADVOCATES

