



RECYCLING ADVOCATES

November 2002

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

Household Hazardous Waste: Prevention, Education and Collection

By Tanya Schaefer

Ken Armstrong of King County spoke at the AOR conference in Seaside about his agency's innovative approach to prioritizing resources surrounding hazardous waste issues. The multi-jurisdictional, regional program dedicated to reduction and collection efforts recently evaluated which hazardous waste streams posed the greatest threat to public health and the environment.

The program's committee reviewed what other organizations and jurisdictions were doing and what materials and products on which they were focusing. They then settled on key factors to consider in determining which materials and products posed the greatest health and environmental threats. These factors included: acute toxicity, chronic toxicity, physical/chemical hazard, environmental impact, likelihood of occurrence, trends, relationship to other issues and public values.

The committee then went through several brainstorming and evaluation steps including discussion of whether King County and its partners could make a difference, whether they need to do it, i.e., whether others are or should be working on it, and what priority the program has assigned to the waste stream in the past.

A list of high priority materials emerged, and more research on those materials resulted in the elimination of some. For example, mercury was eliminated because it was decided there were other, more effective ways to address it than having the household hazardous waste education committee

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Buying Post-Consumer Office Paper

Metro offers guidance to consumers

In this information age, we are using more paper than ever before. Once, the talk was of the paperless office, but the trend has been to use more paper for some years now. In addition to reducing paper usage through the wise use of technology and good old-fashioned reuse of paper when possible, we can limit paper purchases to those with recycled content.

In the world of recycled papers, there are two types: pre-consumer and post-consumer. Pre-consumer paper includes mill scraps that are recycled into the paper manufacturing process. Post-consumer paper is produced with consumer-used paper that has been collected for the purpose of recycling.

By purchasing post-consumer recycled papers, you are creating an incentive for paper mills to buy post-consumer scrap paper for use in paper manufacturing. Additionally, you are helping to reduce air and water pollution, landfill waste, and logging for trees used in paper production.

Does post-consumer paper work well?

The U.S. Conference of Mayors commissioned a study on how well post-consumer copier paper works. The results: copier paper with 30% post-consumer fiber is no more likely to jam copier machines than virgin paper. In addition, many producers manufacture specialty papers with post-consumer content, that are unique and attractive for letterhead, reports, brochures, and other printed materials. Post-consumer papers not only copy well; they can

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Recycling Markets

By Tanya Schaefer

As members of the markets panel at this year's AOR conference confirmed, recycling markets for most commodities have been down or flat over the past year. A new addition to the panel, Glenn Zimmerman of Wood Waste Reclamation in Aumsville, discussed compost markets.

Zimmerman informally polled several composters and all reported that sales have held steady. He was encouraged that sales do not seem to have lessened due to the recent chlopyralid issue, and said that responsible composters conduct regular bioassays and lab testing to check the purity of their product. Unlike most other materials, compost sales are largely unaffected by global markets, because compost is too heavy to sell outside local markets.

As organics collection programs (food waste) come closer to implementation in the Metro region and in Marion County, there has been some talk about the market's ability to handle more compost. These organics collection programs could add over 100,000 tons of feed-stock a year. Zimmerman believes that Oregon has the capacity to accommodate more compost as most Oregon composters sell out by the end of the summer. Compost has a good name and it receives lots of free marketing. He said that like ice cream, compost sells itself once a person tries it!



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Paper, continued

make your company or organization stand out visually and environmentally.

Playing the pricing game

Suppliers typically charge more for post-consumer content papers, but if you are interested in buying in volume and can shop around, you can pay prices comparable to virgin-fiber papers. Companies and organizations can enter into cooperative buying arrangements with other firms in order to lower the price from suppliers. The Metro Regional Government's website (www.metro-region.org) notes that consumers and companies can buy large quantities of post-consumer copier paper from the Recycled Products Purchasing Cooperative (www.recycledproducts.org) and International Paper.

For smaller quantities, consumers in the Portland metro area can utilize Metro's list of post-consumer paper retailers and dealers, which is available at www.metro-region.org/rem/rwp/paper.html. Many of the sources are national chains that are located in other areas in Oregon. The list includes retailers who sell post-consumer recycled papers with more than the standard 30% post-consumer content. Some of the papers contain 100% post-consumer fiber. For those who plan on having a printer produce letterhead or other printed materials in significant volume, an effort at bargaining or haggling can pay off, especially if the order will be repeated in the future.

To learn more about paper

Recycling Advocates' newsletter from

June 2001 provides an excellent overview of papers. The Earth Island Institute offers an abundance of information on paper. Call (503) 668-5123 or visit www.rethinkingpaper.org. For information on paper choices for specific uses, visit Conservatree's web site at www.conservatree.com or call (415) 721-4230. The Paper Calculator at www.ofee.gov/recycled/cal-index.htm compares the environmental impacts of difference types of papers, based on life-cycle analysis.

Source: Metro's "Where to buy copy paper with post-consumer recycled content" can be found at www.metro-region.org/rem/rwp/paper.html.

Options for Unwanted Computers

Over the past two years, the Recycling Advocates newsletter has frequently provided new information on the electronics waste issue. Electronics waste is among the hottest topics in waste management. Unless reuse and recycling options expand dramatically, electronic products will continue to be one of the fastest growing segments in the waste system. The National Safety Council's *EPR2 Baseline Report* notes that a half billion computers are expected to enter the U.S. waste stream between 1998 and 2007.

Most of us own computer equipment that is obsolete or will soon be outdated. This past summer at RA's membership meeting presentation on obsolete computers, most in the audience raised their hands when asked if they had old, unwanted computers stored away.

Fortunately for computer owners, there are many opportunities in western Oregon and Washington for reuse, recycling and appropriate waste management of unwanted computers. Recycling Advocates' WEPSI web site (www.wepsi.org under "Recycle Your Computer") lists several for-profit and non-profit sites that accept used computers and electronics. Consumers can also call Metro Recycling Information at (503) 234-3000 to obtain a list of facilities accepting electronics for reuse or recycling. Some of the non-profits like Free Geek (www.freegeek.org) provide free or low cost training to

individuals. Others donate rebuilt computers to area schools. Companies may refurbish systems for resale or recycle components for other uses.

As computer technology advances, older systems are less marketable for organizations that refurbish or rebuild computers for reuse. Those interested in taking old computers to the locations listed on the WEPSI and Metro lists should call first to ask what systems are currently being accepted and to confirm that the sites are still in operation. You can also ask how they will process the items you bring in. Part of the consumer's role in the product stewardship world of shared responsibility is to ensure that items they no longer need are turned over to a subsequent party, that follows environmentally sound practices.

Computer Recycling: A Non-Profit Example

Located in northeast Portland, Students Recycling Used Technology (StRUT) accepts computer and other electronic equipment, working or not, for reuse and recycling. Intel and the Northwest Regional Education Service District founded the program in 1995. The non-profit refurbishes what it can and provides computers to member schools. StRUT incorporates computer refurbishing into participating schools where students repair and upgrade the systems for use in schools. Only K-12 public schools in Oregon and Washington can participate.

StRUT accepts computers, computer parts, keyboards, mice, printers, fax machines, monitors, copiers, and cell phones. A fee of \$10.00 is charged for monitors to be recycled. There is no charge or suggested fee for other unusable equipment. StRUT's web site lists local and regional recyclers it works with.

For more information on donating equipment or becoming a participating school, contact:

StRUT Center

13320 NE Jarrett Street
Portland, OR 97230

Phone: (503) 251-3771

E-mail: gregs@nwresd.k12.or.us

Web site: www.strut.org

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Contribute to Earthshare of Oregon at Your Workplace: It's so Easy

Contributions help Recycling Advocates further mission.

For thousands of Oregonians, the advent of fall means the changing of the leaves and cooler temperatures – and the arrival of charitable fundraising campaigns in the workplace. With the help of donors in the workplace, Earth Share of Oregon's (ESOR's) 70 non-profit conservation organizations receive funds to ensure clean drinking water, preserve ancient forests, protect wildlife, restore rivers and deserts, reduce traffic congestion and much, much more.

Recycling Advocates is a proud member of ESOR. What does this mean to you? You and your fellow employees can choose to have contributions sent automatically to your favorite Oregon conservation groups, including Recycling Advocates. Since your contribution is spread out over the course of a year, the amount deducted from your paycheck is minimal, and all gifts are fully tax deductible. You can really make a huge difference!

If your workplace is not currently involved in an ESOR giving program, establishing one is easy. ESOR will work with your employer to set up a program that meets your company's needs. Oregon's natural beauty and livability is legendary. With your contribution to ESOR, you can help ensure that it stays that way. For more information, please contact Ron Shoals at ESOR: (503) 223-9015 or rrs@earthshare-oregon.org; or visit www.earthshare-oregon.org.

Household, continued

take it on. Also, while PCBs are highly hazardous materials, their use in household products is minimal, e.g., old fluorescent light ballasts, and is diminishing.

The committee was then left with pesticides, solvents/oil-based paints/stains, strong cleaners and auto products (oil, antifreeze). This list and specific product categories were evaluated on the basis of whether the hazard involved use, storage and/or disposal, and whether it was primarily a health or

environmental hazard. The committee next looked at national data regarding accidental poisonings.

Finally, the committee agreed that the following material groups merited the most attention by the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program.

- pesticides
- solvents/oil-based paints and stains
- strong cleaners (those that pose the greatest human health/environmental risks, including: oven cleaners, drain cleaners, tub/tile cleaners, rust removers and chlorine bleaches)
- auto/boat products
- personal care products

In discussing how to effect change, the group identified the key audiences for each hazardous materials group in terms of those who are at greatest risk, the biggest users and most likely to help make changes.

King County has just begun to implement the results of this process, and many steps have been omitted here for brevity's sake. Armstrong stressed that hazardous waste is a constantly changing landscape, and they have not begun to scratch the surface on several products, especially personal care products.

Stay tuned for next month's issue and in-depth information about Metro's recycled paint.

(Editor's note: Metro just published a

revised guide titled "Green cleaners: Simple cleaning recipes for a safer home." For ordering information call (503) 234-3000.)

Reusing College Textbooks

Website saves students money by comparing vendors

Students and parents are often appalled at the price of college textbooks. At www.BestBookBuys.com students can search by author, title, and ISBN number from their required reading syllabuses and compare prices of new and used books among 25 reputable online stores (including Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and half.com).

The search process can save significant amounts of money on used books. For example, BestBookBuys.com found seven online bookstores selling "General Chemistry" by Kenneth Whitten, a standard textbook that lists for \$113.00. The search turned up prices (including shipping) that ranged from the full list price, to \$101.70 new from Booksamillion.com, to \$58.58 at textbookX.com (used) and \$6.19 at half.com (used). BestBookBuys.com also provides a listing of hot deals and updated discounts on shipping and book prices along with "coupon" codes to use when buying from the company online.

Source: Waste Prevention Forum



RECYCLING ADVOCATES Membership Application

\$25 Regular \$10-24 Living Lightly \$50 Sustainer \$_____ Other

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Day _____ Evening _____

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.

Buy Nothing Day is November 29. More info at www.adbusters.org

Upcoming Events and Workshops

Civic Engagement Breakfast Series: Sustainability Matters

Presenters will showcase three exemplar PSU-community sustainability projects.
 Date: November 5, 2002
 Time: 8:30am – 10:30am
 Location: Portland State University, 238 Smith Memorial Union
 For more information or to RSVP, call (503) 725-5642.

Sustainability Now! 2002 Workshops

The workshop series ends November 7
 November 6 “Popping the Population Question: The Issue No One Will Tackle”
 November 7 “Financing Sustainability: From Start-ups to Mature Businesses”
 Time of all workshops: 6:00pm - 9:00pm
 Location: Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center, 721 NW Ninth Avenue, Portland. For the complete schedule and more information go to

www.ecotrust.org/SustainabilityNow or call (503) 467-0773. Admission charged.

Off Grid Solar Energy Workshop

A three-day workshop sponsored by the Northwest Energy Education Institute/OOE
 Presenter: Johnny Weiss of Solar Energy International
 Date(s): November 6 - 8
 Time: 8:00am - 5:00pm each day
 Location: Eugene, Oregon
 For more information contact Roger Ebbage at (541) 463-3977, or go to <http://nweei.org>. Admission charged.

Fall Compost Demonstration Workshop

Date: November 10, 2002
 Time: 10:00-11:30am
 Location: Grass Roots Gardens, 1465 Coburg Road, Eugene
 For more information, call the City of Eugene’s Compost Specialist at (541) 682-5542.

Oregon Natural Step: “Citizen Consumer: Creating Demand for Sustainable Products”

Presenters: Stan Amy (President of New Villages Group – the main investor in New Seasons Market) and John Savage (Vice President of Green Mountain Energy)

Date: November 15, 2002
 Time: 7:30am - 9:00am
 Location: Portland, Multnomah Athletic Club, 1849 SW Salmon
 For more details go to www.ortns.org/events or call (503) 241-1140. Admission charged.

Sustainable Construction Practices: Concrete and Asphalt

Conference will provide information and a forum for discussion on sustainable construction best practices and emerging technologies in the construction process
 Date: December 3-4, 2002
 Time: 12/3, afternoon; 12/4, all day
 Location: Embassy Suites in downtown Portland
 Visit www.cwest.orst.edu/news/construction/index.htm or call (503) 279-9383. Admission charged.

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