

THE CLOSED-LOOP SCOOP



WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY, WASTE 2 RESOURCES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

SAN JUAN COUNTY'S MOVE TO RECYCLED PAPER HAS A RIPPLE EFFECT

ADAPTED AND PUBLISHED WITH PERMISSION FROM SAN JUAN COUNTY

This month San Juan County's general offices received its first shipment of printer and copier paper with 40% recycled content, as did the town of Friday Harbor and dozens of other businesses. The County has recently switched from virgin paper to recycled paper. This has had a ripple affect as its vendor, Island Paper & Supply, is now providing the paper at reduced cost to all of its customers countywide.

Until San Juan County Pollution Prevention Specialist Brian Rader met with Gerard Post van der Burg of Lopez Island-based Island Paper & Supply owner last year, the County was stuck in a familiar dilemma. It wanted to do the environmentally correct thing, but with budgets shaved to the bone, the County couldn't justify the additional cost of up to \$6 per case to purchase high quality recycled paper for all departments to use.

The supplier, Post van der Burg, was already enthusiastic about providing environmentally friendly products. Two years ago he worked with the previous County Facilities Manager, Bud Sears, to switch the county to "Green Seal" certified cleaning supplies, paper towels, and toilet paper with high recycled paper content. And now he is selling those products to clients countywide.

After talking with Rader, Post van der Burg worked with his office paper wholesaler to get reduced prices based on the prospect of a larger market, and

he also reduced his own profit margin to totally eliminate the cost gap between virgin and recycled content paper. He then extended the same offer to all of his clients countywide. Altogether about 50 businesses have made the switch.

As to quality, Post van der Burg says, "So far I have not had any complaints about problems with the paper - jams in printers or copiers, or concerns about quality."

San Juan County uses about 60 cases of paper per month and other clients of Island Paper & Supplies are now buying another 20 cases per month. Post van der Burg adds that he is finding an increasing level of interest in switching to recycled-content paper from businesses that are not currently his clients.

"It's a really good deal all around," Rader said. He described the economic and environmental benefits as important, including:

- The resources that are preserved by switching from 100% virgin paper to a paper with 40% recycled content are substantial. According to the Environmental Defense Fund's on-line 'paper calculator,' the switch of approximately 80 cases of paper per month (countywide) will produce these savings over the course of a year:

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SAN JUAN COUNTY (CONTINUED.)

- 53 tons less wood (the equivalent of about 370 trees)
- 639 million less BTUs of energy
- 117,556 pounds less CO2 equivalents ("Greenhouse gases")
- 419,520 gallons less wastewater
- 38,904 pounds less solid waste

- We are supporting the recycled products market, which is important because we need profitable uses for all that recycled stuff that we drop off at the transfer stations.
- In addition to purchasing from our island-local supplier, which helps keep dollars local, we are buying from a Washington manufacturer. This helps to preserve jobs in our state. Grays Harbor currently employs over 200 Washingtonians.
- Grays Harbor's paper mill of Hoquiam, Washington is arguably the most environmentally responsible and sustainably managed paper mill in North America. Supporting businesses that conserve resources and work hard to improve energy efficiency is good for the economy and good for the environment.
- By purchasing from a Washington paper mill, less energy and fuel is used to transport the paper from the mill to the island.

Brian Rader's position with the County is funded by a Department of Ecology grant. Its primary goal is to assist local businesses and government facilities in finding ways to reduce waste and pollution in the state.



Brian Rader (San Juan County Pollution Prevention Specialist) and Gerard Post van der Burg (Islands Paper & Supply Company) received their first shipment of printer and copier paper with 40% recycled content.

KITSAP COUNTY INDUCTED INTO THE WASTE WISE HALL OF FAME

ADAPTED AND PUBLISHED WITH PERMISSION FROM VICKI BUSHNELL, KITSAP COUNTY

The US Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery has selected Kitsap County for induction into the Waste Wise Hall of Fame. The award is given to two organizations each year for their outstanding achievements in waste reduction. On April 26, a representative from the USEPA Region 10 office in Seattle presented the award to the Board of County Commissioners.

"We're very proud of this award," says Waste Wise Kitsap Coordinator, Vicki Bushnell, adding that joining the USEPA Waste Wise program inspired the County to refine its efforts, such as implementing an employee training program and tracking the progress of the departmental efforts.

Waste Wise Kitsap's framework includes designating a coordinator in every department who oversees their waste reduction and recycling efforts, and serves as a liaison between the program coordinator and department director or elected official. They also help identify activities that are specific to their own departments and report on their progress each year.

The program's objectives are to reduce waste at its source, recycle more, use less toxic products, and purchase more environmentally preferred products. Those activities include such waste reduction strategies as revising forms to use less paper, going electronic with timecards and pay stubs, making

(Continued on next page.)

KITSAP COUNTY (CONTINUED.)

double-sided copies, and performing more operations electronically instead of with paper, such as offering online applications and using laptops when performing fieldwork.

A challenge from the start was tracking the progress of the program, which involved coordinating invoices for garbage and office recycling, as well as the many other items recycled from road shops, parks, and sewage treatment plants.

"We're still a work in progress, but we've definitely made great strides," said Bushnell.

Last year Kitsap County saved over \$700,000 by recycling tires, asphalt, food and beverage containers, and paper products; and reusing such items as road sand, office products and street waste. They also sent biosolids to a farm for land application and recycled electronics and mercury-bearing products such as fluorescent lights, thermostats, and batteries.

Bushnell said recycling became easier over time, because when technology evolved, more items were

acceptable. She notes that one of the changes over the years included "going single stream", which means all the office and break room recyclables can go into the same cart without separating.

"It's how you recycle at home. Cans, bottles, and plastic bottles, jugs, and dairy tubs go right in with the paper."

Since the recycling program began in the early 1990s, other advancements included accepting all office paper types, such as manila envelopes, tablet backings, and the paperboard boxes supplies come in, instead of "white paper only".

There are 2,700 members in the USEPA Waste Wise program, which is a free, voluntary program open to organizations, businesses, public agencies, and non-profits. According to the USEPA, Partners have prevented and recycled more than 160 million tons of solid waste since the program's inception in 1994.

Businesses can register for Waste Wise online www.epa.gov/epawaste/partnerships/wastewise/about.htm.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

-August 8-11, 2010, 34th Annual California Resource Recovery Association Conference & Trade Show will be held in Sacramento, CA. To learn more, visit the website at www.crra.com.

-August 14-18, 2010, WASTECON 2010 will be held in Boston, MA. To learn more, visit the website at <http://wastecon.swana.org>.

-August 22-25, 2010, 19th Annual Georgia Recycling Coalition Conference & Trade Show will be held in St. Simons Island, GA. To learn more, or visit the website at www.georgiarecycles.org.

-September 13-15, 2010, 20th Annual Arkansas Recycling Coalition Conference & Trade Show will be held in Little Rock, AR. To learn more, visit the website at www.recycleark.org.

-September 29-30, 2010, E-Scrap 2010: The North American Electronics Recycling Conference will be held in New Orleans, LA. To learn more, visit the website at www.e-scrapconference.com.

-October 3-6, 2010, 2nd Annual Global Waste Management Symposium will be held in San Antonio, TX. To learn more, visit their website at www.wastesymposium.com.

-October 12, 2010, Hazardous Waste Management Training & Certification Seminar, will be held in Seattle, WA. To learn more, visit the website at www.ashland.com.

-October 4-6, 2010, Iowa Recycling & Solid Waste Management Conference will be held in Bettendorf, IA. To learn more, visit the website at www.iraisswoconference.org.

FOOD SERVICEWARE CHOICES FOR CAFETERIAS AND MEETINGS

Many private and government sector organizations are thinking about ways to prevent waste while saving dollars too. A great way to accomplish this goal is to examine agency food “serviceware” practices.

Ceramic and glass cups, plates, bowls and reusable cutlery are the best choice for facilities that can provide dishwashing. The EPA states that the most cost-effective strategy is to purchase durable serviceware, even when extra staff time to load dishwashers is included.

A great example is Bowling Green State University’s shift to durable glasses from throwaways which diverted 26,450 pounds of waste from the landfill and saved \$32,000 in waste fees in one year, according to the Responsible Purchasing Network.

Compostable food serviceware, often made from sugarcane, potato starch, paper, or corn-based plastic, can be a good choice in situations where washing durables is not possible. Ask a few key questions before purchasing compostables:

- 1) Do the compostable products perform well? Request samples and conduct product tests.
- 2) Is there a composting facility that will accept the compostable products? Make sure that the compost facility will approve the addition of the product to their feedstocks.
- 3) Will the compostable products actually be

composted? Make sure that compostables don’t land in the recycling bin as they contaminate the recycling stream. And of course you do not want the compostables to end up in the garbage!



Compostable food serviceware is the preferable choice compared to polystyrene (Styrofoam) items. Polystyrene takes several decades to hundreds of years to deteriorate in the environment or landfill. Research shows that 60-80% of all marine debris and 90% of floating marine debris is plastic. New studies show that hazardous chemicals used during plastics manufacturing may be released by plastic debris, potentially harming wildlife and

humans.

The City of Seattle has banned expanded polystyrene food service containers and packaging starting July 1, 2010. The City has also required that food serviceware and packaging must be made of materials that can be recycled or composted.

If you are interested in learning more about green purchasing, go to www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/epp.html or contact Tina Simcich at (360) 407-7517. You can also use the NYC *Wasteless Calculator* to estimate potential cost savings from switching to reusable cups and bowls from disposables at www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/in_business/measurement_tools_cupsbowls.shtml.

SOLID WASTE IN WASHINGTON STATE

The 18th Annual Solid Waste Status Report for 2008 is now available on line at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata/report.asp. To request a printed version please contact Millie White at miwh461@ecy.wa.gov.

PORT PROGRAM CONTINUES FOR AT-BERTH SHIPS TO BURN LOW-SULFUR DIESEL

ADAPTED AND PUBLISHED WITH PERMISSION FROM PORT OF SEATTLE

The Port of Seattle Commission received an update on one of its most successful environmental initiatives, the At-Berth Clean (ABC) Fuels program. The program encourages shipping and cruise lines to burn cleaner fuels while at berth.

Since 2009, ABC Fuels has eliminated 105 metric tons of pollutants from the environment.

In 2007, Puget Sound Clean Air Strategy established goals to improve air quality in the region. Through ABC Fuels, the port provides an incentive of \$2,250 to use low sulfur fuel in vessels' auxiliary engines for each call.

Implementation of the ABC Fuels program began in 2009 and to date has eliminated more than 105 metric tons of sulfur dioxide emissions. The low-sulfur fuel (0.5% sulfur) reduces sulfur dioxide emissions by 80 percent and diesel particulate matter by 60 percent.

ABC Fuels is a partnership that includes some of the Port's ocean carriers and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency. More than 60 vessels from nine carriers have participated in the program. Participating carriers have included Hapag Lloyd, APL, China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), Evergreen Line, Hamburg

Süd, Maersk Line, Matson Navigation, Norwegian Cruise Line and Princess Cruise Line.

This year has seen a steady increase in participation, with 33 qualifying vessels signing up in April, and 40 in May, the most of any months since the program began. In light of the program's success, Commissioners voted today to invest an additional \$541,000 to fund the program through 2010.



Photo Courtesy of Port of Seattle

PUGET SOUND ENERGY'S EXPANDED RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANT PROGRAM

ADAPTED AND PUBLISHED WITH PERMISSION FROM MACKENZIE MCDOWELL, PSE

Puget Sound Energy's (PSE) Renewable Energy Education Program (formerly the Solar Schools Program) and voluntary Green Power Program have funded 23 educational solar power projects in the Puget Sound region in the last six years. The program promotes understanding and acceptance of renewable energy technologies and expands the range of options available to local educators, students, families and communities in PSE's nine county electric service area.

The Renewable Energy Education Program grant provides funds from \$5,000 to \$20,000 for solar or wind power generation systems. The majority of these are grid connected solar systems. Some schools have positioned themselves for a grant by contributing their own funds or installing a system which is not yet monitored. In addition, the program also provides:

- Science teacher-training.
- Classroom activity guides, an extensive renewable energy science kit and lesson plans developed by

the Bonneville Environmental Foundation.

- Web based monitoring software that allows students and interested community members to track how much energy is being generated as the weather changes.

Small-scale renewable energy demonstration systems require no fuel and minimal maintenance for 20 years or longer, while generating enough power on average to operate 10 notebook computers for eight hours a day.

Previously, grant applicants were only open to schools. This year select educational institutions that educate the public about renewable energy and the environment were eligible. The following educational institutions were selected this year by the utility to receive funding:

- Griffin Elementary School in West Olympia
- Tahoma Senior High School in Covington
- Vashon Island High School on Vashon Island

(Continued on next page.)

PUGET SOUND ENERGY (CONTINUED.)

- Vashon Island High School on Vashon Island
- Sunrise Elementary School in Redmond
- Echo Glen Children's Center in Snoqualmie
- 21 Acres Center for Local Food & Sustainable Living in Woodinville partnered with Cascadia Community College and Northshore School District
- La Conner Wastewater Treatment Plant partnered with La Conner School District

Since 2004, PSE's Renewable Energy Education Program and voluntary Green Power Program have provided grants totaling \$454,643 to fund the installation of 23 educational solar power projects at: Redmond High School, Port Townsend High School, the Bellingham Environmental Learning Center, Depot Market Square in Bellingham, the Puget Sound Electrical Joint Appren-

ticeship and Training Committee's Training Center in Renton, the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery, Western Washington University in Bellingham, the Institute for Environmental Research and Education, JG Commons Building and Vashon Household building on Vashon Island, Thomas Jefferson High School in Federal Way, Marshall and Washington middle schools in Olympia, Interlake High School in Bellevue, South Whidbey High School, Sakai Intermediate School on Bainbridge Island, Anacortes High School, Mercer Island High School, Coupeville Middle and High School on Whidbey Island, Hazen and Liberty high schools in Renton and Green River Community College in Auburn.

For further information contact MacKenzie McDowell with PSE at (888) 831-7250.

THURSTON COUNTY RECYCLING AND WASTE REDUCTION WINS NATIONAL AWARD

A robust organic recycling and waste reduction program at Thurston County government facilities as well as in the community has earned the county a top national award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) WasteWise Program. The USEPA recognized Thurston County as a national leader by selecting the county for the 2009 WasteWise Gold Achievement Award for Organic Material Reduction.

In August of 2008, county offices began recycling organic material such as food scraps, paper towels, paper cups and plates, pizza boxes, grass clippings and more through the Food Plus Organics Recycling program. Organic materials collected from lunch rooms, coffee stands, jury rooms, break rooms, and multiple locations within the jail are taken to Silver Springs Organics where the material is converted to nutrient-rich compost. County employees responded to an energetic, in-house education and information campaign by recycling more than 165 tons of organic material in 2009.

Environmental Educator Amber Smith points out that the program not only helps the environment, but saves money for the county and its taxpayers. Disposal costs at Silver Springs are about \$29 per ton, almost a quarter of the regular garbage tip fees of \$110 per ton. This is also a great savings in energy use as regular garbage is hauled to the Roosevelt Regional Landfill, about 250 miles away in eastern Washington, while the Silver Springs site is less than 20 miles away, says Smith. She adds that disposed

trash from the Courthouse Campus declined by an additional 36,000 pounds over the last year.

The in-house success of the county's recycling program is complemented by great strides in recycling by the local community. Thurston County Solid Waste staff planned, implemented, and promoted the curbside organics collection program. Currently 99 schools and businesses are active participants in the program.

The county's Food to Flowers program has helped local schools launch composting programs with organizational set up, presentations and training. Smith reports that participating schools have seen an approximate 80 to 90 percent reduction in kitchen and cafeteria waste.

The USEPA honored Thurston County at its annual awards ceremony on March 22 in Arlington, Virginia. The USEPA award is the third major award the Solid Waste Program has won in the past three years. In 2007, the solid waste educators received the Recycler of the Year award from the Washington State Recycling Association. Thurston County Public Works educator Colleen Uereb received the Outstanding Non-formal Environmental Educator Award for 2009 from the Environmental Education Association of Washington.

A list of free environmental education programs is available at www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org. For more information, contact Amber Smith with Thurston County Public Works' Solid Waste Program at (360) 754-3355 ext. 7669.



BEYOND THE CURB—

A NEW REPORT DETAILS WHAT HAPPENS TO THE COMMINGLED MATERIALS COLLECTED IN SOUTHWEST WA

In March 2009 Washington Department of Ecology hosted a statewide kickoff meeting for the WA Commingled Recycling Improvements Project to follow-up EPA Region 10's Contamination in Commingled Recycling Initiative. The kickoff meeting resulted in all local governments present agreeing to collaborate regionally to address reducing contamination in commingled recycling systems in Washington State. Each regional workgroup (Southwest, Northwest, and Eastern/Central) agreed to involve all stakeholders, including local governments, material recovery facilities, haulers, and end-users, and decide regionally on their approach and objectives.



This article is an update on the work accomplished by the Southwest Region Workgroup (Workgroup) over the course of approximately one year.

The Workgroup convened in April 2009 and began the process with a shared understanding of the similarities and differences of the commingled collection programs in the region, identified which processors were receiving material flow from each jurisdiction, and determined their overall objective – to address contamination and material loss in single-family residential commingled curbside recycling programs in the counties of Clark, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Mason, Pierce, and Thurston, and the cities of Longview and Port Angeles. A fact-finding mission was the first step for the Workgroup in order to meet their agreed upon goals:

- 1) Obtain the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions on programs
- 2) Provide data and context to elected officials
- 3) Provide consistency in public education messages (including dangerous items like sharps)
- 4) Reduce problems in sorting at material recovery facilities (MRFs)
- 5) Create feedback loops, both positive and negative, for the system as a whole

- 6) Identify possible funding mechanisms for increased public education

Monthly, half-day meetings were held where all stakeholders shared their perspective on the issues they face with each material. Based on the information presented over the course of a year, the Workgroup identified seven key issues that contribute to contamination in the commingled system in Southwest WA:

- 1) Consumer awareness and level of responsibility – Their reasonable expectation that if it goes in the cart, it's recycled
- 2) Glass is a contaminant in the commingled stream and very little is going back to glass
- 3) Plastic film has significant processing issues and the result is very dirty ('MRF film')
- 4) MRF employee safety regarding sharps, other medical waste, and explosives
- 5) Lack of consistency in our programs and messages across the region
- 6) Lack of product stewardship/producer responsibility for materials
- 7) State and federal goals are driving local diversion goals

Recommendations based on the above key issues, as well as detailed summaries for each material, are available in a 50-page report titled, *Beyond the Curb – Tracking the Commingled Residential Recyclables from Southwest WA*

(www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/1007009.html).

The Workgroup will resume meeting in mid-September of this year to prioritize its recommendations and discuss an implementation strategy. Other jurisdictions and industry representatives who support the key issues and recommendations identified by the Workgroup are welcome to join the process as we move forward. For questions about the report or the WA Commingled Improvements Project, please contact Shannon McClelland at (360) 407-6398 or

Shannon.McClelland@ecy.wa.gov.

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