

eco-cycle TIMES

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Eco-Cycle's Mission:

We believe in individual and community action to transform society's throw-away ethics into environmentally responsible stewardship.

Our mission is to provide publicly-accountable recycling, conservation and education services, and to identify, explore and demonstrate the emerging frontiers of sustainable resource management.

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle

A Wake-Up Call for Business Recycling

by Robin O. Burton

Congratulations, Boulder! The numbers have been tallied and the news is good – according to recent City of Boulder data, 90% of Boulder residences are recycling and the result is a stellar 49% of the residential waste stream is being diverted away from landfills.

You may be surprised, then, to learn that in stark contrast to Boulder's great residential recycling rate, the commercial sector is lagging behind at an estimated 16% – 20% diversion rate. This figure is even more alarming when you consider that the commercial sector generates approximately 55% of the waste stream.

It's clear that not just Boulder, but all of Boulder County residents are committed to recycling. And though no data is collected on business recycling rates from other towns in the county, anecdotally we know they are also lagging behind residential rates. How frustrating is it to go to work and find that your honed recycling skills are for naught because your employer doesn't provide a system for recycling on the job? The success achieved with Boulder residences needs to be duplicated with local businesses.



It's easier than ever for offices to recycle corrugated cardboard, office paper, newspaper, magazines, junk mail and phone books in a new program that allows you to mix them all together.

Recycling in the Workplace is Easier than Ever!

There's no excuse for Boulder businesses not to recycle when area haulers are offering programs that are so convenient, accessible and cost-effective. Within the last year, Eco-Cycle has simplified the material collection process by allowing business customers to mix all their paper types together in one bin. That means it's easier than ever to recycle corrugated cardboard, office paper, newspaper, magazines, junk mail and phone books. Mixing them in the same container reduces the number of containers that a business must house at their facility and keeps costs down with increased collection efficiency.

The Benefits of Recycling Go Beyond the Environment

Businesses that recycle do so, in part, because employees expect them to. Employees find pride in working for a company that embodies environmental values and focuses attention on its environmental impact and responsibilities. Customers also prefer to do business with stores, restaurants

Continued on page 7

Are You the Office Recycler? Eco-Cycle Has Tools to Support Your Efforts

Are you the person in your office who dives into the trash to fish out aluminum cans for recycling? Do you cringe every time you see colleagues sipping java from Styrofoam cups? We know there's at least one of you in every business, and we want you to know we're here for you. We've got the tools you need to establish collection systems in your workplace, encourage recycling habits among your officemates, create company-wide green purchasing policies and more.

Call today: 303-444-6634, or check out our web site: www.ecocycle.org.

The Gift of Styrofoam Recycling

by Marti Matsch

"Eco-Cycle, PLEASE take my blocks of Styrofoam!" If you're someone who has uttered this plea because you're drowning in "block" Styrofoam and you just can't bring yourself to toss it, we have a post-holiday gift for you. Next year, when the holidays wind down and you're left with more big blocks of Styrofoam than at any other time, Eco-Cycle will host two one-time events to help you recycle it all.

Louisville Collection: Saturday, January 10th

On Saturday, January 10th, take your block Styrofoam to the Louisville/Lafayette drop-off center (Highway 42 & Pine Street – see map in pullout section page C) between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. This is a ONE DAY ONLY event sponsored and staffed by McStain Neighborhoods. We are very grateful to McStain for generously providing all the funds required for this costly event. Eco-Cycle and McStain Neighborhoods plan to repeat the one day event at this drop-off center in August. Stay tuned for further details.

CHaRM Collection: January 12th – 17th

If that day or location doesn't work for you, pay us a visit at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder CHaRM, (Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials) at 5030 Pearl St. (please see the top of page D in the center pull-out section for a map). Eco-Cycle and the City of Boulder will be hosting a ONE WEEK collection for block Styrofoam at the CHaRM from Monday, January 12th through Saturday the 17th during our regular hours of 9am to 4pm.

Both events will only collect block polystyrene that is clean, dry, white, free of tape, and imprinted with the number 6 inside the "chasing arrows" recycling symbol. Styrofoam with no number or other numbers stamped on it will not be accepted. We are also unable to accept Styrofoam "peanuts" or plastic bubble wrap. These two items can be reused by local packing stores. (See our Guide to Hard-to-Recycle Materials at www.ecocycle.org for locations).

Eco-Cycle will be hauling the material to Colorado Springs, where it will be recycled into plastic resin beads that can be used



Been saving up Styrofoam for a while? Eco-Cycle can take it off your hands during our limited-time-only, special recycling events coming this January.

to make new packaging for consumer products.

Styrofoam is not something we're currently able to take on a regular basis. It is difficult to market and expensive to haul, and we prefer to focus our efforts on promoting the use of more sustainable packaging choices for manufacturers. But Styrofoam is the #1 material our faithful visitors to the CHaRM have asked us to start taking, so this is our holiday gift to all of you dedicated recyclers. Please don't get used to it, though! We won't be accepting it at any other time of year, so we hope to see you during one of these events!



Director's Corner



Eric Lombardi
Executive Director

Here's a sneak preview of our new seven-year Strategic Plan we'll be unveiling in our spring/fall 2004 newsletter.

Recycling Keeps Getting More Interesting...and Vital

Eco-Cycle's goal is to go where we are needed the most for better recycling and resource conservation. So the question we're always asking ourselves is, "Where do we go next?" This column is going to give you a sneak preview of our new seven-year Strategic Plan we'll be unveiling in our spring 2004 newsletter.

So where are we going next? First, let's briefly review the history of how Eco-Cycle has gone where we've been needed. Once upon a time, back in 1975, everything went into the landfill. Eco-Cycle was born in 1976 and created the first curbside recycling collection program in Colorado, and one of the first 20 in the U.S. As a result, households in the City of Boulder are now recycling 50% and landfilling 50%. After the success of recycling in our homes, Eco-Cycle stepped in to create the "Commercial Curbside Collection" program in 1991. All this progress created its own challenges, including the need for a new multi-million dollar recycling facility, which opened in 2001. We then turned our attention to all those other "hard-to-recycle" items and opened the new Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (aka the CHaRM) in November 2001. The CHaRM is the first public drop-off center in Colorado to recycle computers, TV's, printers, scanners, fax machines, printer cartridges, VCR's, copiers, books, plastic bags, athletic shoes and cell phones.

In the critical areas of education and community outreach, we have created a nationally-recognized and duplicated "Block Leader program" with nearly 800 volunteers, and a huge school recycling program that just set a record of doing over 1,000 presentations during the last school year in the Boulder Valley and Saint Vrain Valley School Districts. These and many other award-winning programs contribute to the success of recycling in Boulder County.

Twenty seven years later, we asked ourselves where we're most needed now. We identified the following three areas as "community needs," and where Eco-Cycle is headed next: (1) food composting (large-scale), (2) creative collections to increase business recycling rates above the current 20% and (3) the cre-

ation of new physical sites for the two programs to take place.

Food Composting: Eco-Cycle commissioned a recent study of the local ICI (Industrial, Commercial and Institutional) sector and we found that food scraps and soiled paper – like restroom hand towels – make up a large percentage of the waste going into local landfills. We surveyed people at various businesses and learned that there is a desire to do more with recycling and composting – if it's convenient. That's our challenge, and we're tackling it. Watch for a new program announcement next spring.

Creative Collections for Business Discards: If you look into some of the business trash dumpsters in town (which we do as obsessive compulsive recyclers) you'll see lots of paper, wood, shelves, fax machines, chairs, bottles...but very little "garbage." We believe that many businesses could achieve a 90% landfill diversion rate if offered some new creative collection systems. How to do that without sending the collection costs through the roof is our challenge, and we're working on it!

New Sites for Landfill Diversion: Did you know that Boulder County does not have a landfill? We export all our nasty, ground-water-polluting, methane-generating garbage to our neighbors in Weld County and Jefferson County. We have a responsibility to either build our own local landfill or try as hard as we can to get the amount we dump on them down to "zero." But we need land to do this great work – for CHaRM, composting, creative business recycling, and future discard recovery ideas not even thought of yet. Considering the scarcity of affordable industrial land in Boulder County, this will be a challenge for all of us.

The next few years can be exciting if we choose to make them so. Eco-Cycle's goal is to go where we're needed, and we need you to go there with us. The three challenging program areas I've described here are doable, important and will make a real difference today! Be looking for our spring/fall '04 *Eco-Cycle Times* to get the complete picture on our long-term strategies to make an even bigger difference tomorrow.



NATIONAL
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Information for All Seasons**

visit us at
www.ecocycle.org
for all the info on:

- Fall Leaf Collections •
- Holiday Waste Reduction Tips •
- Environmental Gift Ideas •
- Special Holiday Recycling Programs •
- Earth Day Events and Activities •



Eco-Cycle would like to acknowledge and thank **Lisa Morzel** for her many years of advocacy and support for Eco-Cycle as she steps down from the Boulder City Council. Through her positions on the Council, the County Recycling Authority Board, and the Resource Conservation Advisory Board, Lisa has worked hard to defend community-based recycling and Eco-Cycle. Though she will be missed from the Council, we know her legacy will remain, as will her leadership and commitment to resource conservation. Clearly reducing waste is an integral part of Lisa's life. She and her family are model recyclers at home. In fact, they received recognition from Eco-Cycle for producing just five bags of trash in all of 1991! Thank you for all you've done for environmental conservation, Lisa, and for all we're sure you'll continue to do.

Eco-Cycle Programs Honored Statewide with Two New Awards

Boulder County residents now have two more reasons to be proud of their community and its accomplishments in pollution prevention.

County-wide efforts to keep toxins and valuable resources out of the landfill have recently earned Eco-Cycle honors from two statewide organizations. These awards went to Eco-Cycle, but the reward is all of ours – a healthier and safer home, community, and environment.

Colorado Recycles, a non-profit dedicated to the promotion of recycling in

Colorado, awarded the Eco-Cycle/Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) with its "Don't Let It Go To Waste Award" for our extraordinary creativity and effort in providing recycling opportunities to the community. Since its opening in November, 2001, the CHaRM has recycled 14,756 computer monitors, 11,079 computers and laptops, 7,076 printers and other peripherals, 1,357 televisions, plus 242,920 pounds of paper from books and 13,500 pounds of plastic bags. We couldn't have done it without your participation!

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment honored Eco-Cycle with its Environmental Achievement Award for two of our programs – the CHaRM and the Mercury Thermometer Exchange Program run by our School Recycling and Environmental Education Department. They were selected for the impact they make in the area of pollution prevention. By recycling electronics, the CHaRM has prevented over 51,000 pounds of lead and over 100 pounds of toxins like mercury, arsenic, and cadmium from entering the landfill. By allowing parents to swap mercury thermometers for digital models, the Thermometer Exchange Program removed 301 toxic and potentially dangerous mercury thermometers from 209 homes around the county and disposed of them properly.



Eco-Cycle CHaRM Manager Dan Matsch (left) and Eco-Cycle School Recycling Coordinator Cyndra Dietz accept a joint award from Dan Benevento, Executive Director of the State of Colorado's Environmental Leadership Program.

Eco-Cycle Trucks Now Running on Soybeans

by Robin O. Burton

Did you know that the first diesel engine was designed to be fueled by vegetable oil? Well, we've come full circle and Eco-Cycle is proud to be among the first organizations in Colorado to fuel its commercial fleet with a diesel blend that contains 20% biodiesel, a cleaner-burning, domestically-produced alternative to petroleum-based diesel fuel. We are using Blue Sun Biodiesel's fuel blend, made in part from US-grown soybeans, although other vegetable oils, including used cooking oil, can also be used to produce biodiesel.

Biodiesel can be used in all compression-ignition engines designed to operate on diesel fuel (including your VW Rabbit!), with little or no modification to the engine. Since September, when Boulder's Bartkus Oil opened Colorado's first retail biodiesel pump at 3501 Pearl Street, Eco-Cycle has fueled two of our commercial recycling trucks with B20, a blend of 20% biodiesel and 80% traditional diesel fuel. We are very happy with how the trucks are performing during the trial period, and will continue fueling additional fleet trucks with B20.

Converting to a biodiesel blend for our commercial fleet keeps with Eco-Cycle's commitment to resource conservation and improving Boulder County's environmental health. The numerous benefits of biodiesel over petroleum-based diesel include domestic, even local, production, which reduces our dependence on foreign oil and the environmental impacts of drilling and transporting. Biodiesel burns cleaner than petroleum-based diesel fuel and reduces emissions of the most harmful air pollutants. Its added lubricity prolongs engine life and also decreases the frequency of oil changes. As a biodegradable and non-toxic fuel, biodiesel is also less harmful to the environment when produced and transported.



Eco-Cycle driver Rodger Keep fuels up the first Eco-Cycle truck to run on a biodiesel fuel blend. Biodiesel is made from soybeans and other vegetable oils and is a cleaner-burning, domestically-produced alternative to petroleum-based diesel fuel.

Eco-Cycle is in great company with other community organizations using biodiesel in their fleets. The City of Boulder, the University of Colorado, and RTD all attended the opening of Boulder's first commercial biodiesel pump, and are using the fuel in some of their vehicles. Eco-Cycle hopes to have converted the majority of our commercial fleet to B20 fuel by the end of 2003, and we are looking towards the future possibility of using 100% pure biodiesel.

To learn more about biodiesel and how it's being used in Boulder County check out these web sites:

Boulder Biodiesel:
www.boulderbiodiesel.com

Blue Sun Biodiesel:
www.gobluesun.com

CU Biodiesel:
www.cu-biodiesel.org

Grassolean:
www.grassolean.com

National Biodiesel Board:
www.biodiesel.org



Thank You for Making Plastic Bag Recycling at CHaRM a Success!

by Dan Matsch

After one year of accepting plastic bags for recycling, we are thrilled to tell you that your efforts have paid off (literally)! Our buyer recently told us that the bags we are shipping him are the cleanest bales of post-consumer plastic bags he has ever seen. They are so clean, in fact, that he is paying us almost twice the price that he quoted initially.

As you may remember from last year's fall/winter *Eco-Cycle Times*, we announced that at long last we would start recycling plastic bags. Local recyclers have been faithfully stockpiling #2 and #4 bags, taking care that they are clean, dry and empty, and bringing them down to the Eco-Cycle/Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) ever since. We knew we had some very dedicated recyclers out there, but the response to our plea to help maintain high standards for quality control has been even better than we expected.

How important is this early success? For starters, it means we can continue to accept plastic bags because the buyer is happy. It also means we have achieved three other significant environmental impacts: six tons of plastic bags diverted from the landfill are now headed for a long new life as plastic decking, many redwood trees have been spared that may otherwise have become decking themselves, and up to 100 cubic yards of landfill space was prevented from being used. Even more importantly, it means the CHaRM works.

Those of you who have visited the CHaRM (if you haven't,

please see the pull-out recycling guide for details and a map) know that what makes this unique drop-off center work is that you check in with us at a drive-through window before unloading your materials. This one-on-one contact allows us to make sure you are only bringing us items that meet the market requirements for these hard-to-recycle materials and to pass on to you the latest recycling information. In this way, the CHaRM is a model for introducing new recycling opportunities to the public for materials that have recycling standards traditionally more difficult to achieve.

As we mentioned a year ago, nothing fits the "hard-to-recycle" description more than plastic bags where the specifications require that bags must be clean, dry, and empty and must be marked with a #2 or #4. Even a little moisture in the bag can render the bag non-recyclable. But you've done it: thousands of you are bringing used bags that meet the standards that the market requires. That's really quite remarkable!

Our early success with all the different materials we have accepted in the first two years of CHaRM's existence proves that the CHaRM model works and is paving the way for us to accept more hard-to-recycle

items in the future as markets become available.

So thank you, recyclers, but please don't let this success go to your head. The price we receive doesn't pay for adequate screening on our end—we'll still rely on you to be in charge of quality control. Keep up the good work!



Remember to Reuse First!

While we're happy to have a market for #2 and #4 plastic bags, we'd rather have no plastic bags to recycle at all because everyone used reusable bags instead. So when they ask you, "paper or plastic?" the best answer is still, "Neither, thanks. I brought my own."

Photo: CHaRM manager Dan Matsch stands on top of a 1400 lb bale of plastic bags ready to go to market. The cooperation of thousands of recyclers has allowed us to meet high standards required by plastic bag buyers.



Make Room for Recycling: Two Communities Are the First to Take a Stand

by Eric Vozick

A new business moves into town and wants to recycle, but is prevented from doing so because the developer only planned space for trash containers and not for recycling bins. Can this really happen?

Unfortunately, we see it all the time—but no longer in Broomfield and Superior! These two cities are the first in the area to declare that planning for recycling is at least as important as planning for trash.

Businesses and residents of multi-family complexes (apartments and condominiums) typically participate in recycling programs at a lower rate than residents of single-family housing. A contributing factor to their lower participation rate is that their buildings are not usually constructed with adequate space for recycling bins. As Rachael Bray, an Eco-Cycle Block Leader and resident of an apartment complex in Broomfield, says, "I have seen how the lack of space acts as a hindrance for recycling where I live and in other existing complexes. This new act can only help increase recycling opportunities."

Paving the way for other local municipalities, Broomfield's and Superior's new ordinances require that new commercial and multi-family unit developments (as well as substantial remodels) allow equal space for recycling and trash containers, and that all

new commercial buildings and housing complexes be automatically equipped to recycle. No one thinks twice about the need for having space for trash containers, and now no one will think twice about having space for recycling containers, either. These changes not only address a very real barrier to recycling, they also integrate recycling into their cities' infrastructure.

Broomfield Forms Task Force to Advance Recycling Efforts

The Broomfield City Council has established a Solid Waste Task Force which will explore various options for improving trash and recycling services. The work of this task force could result in a city-wide curbside recycling program and a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) pricing system that creates a financial incentive for producing less trash.

If you live in Broomfield and are interested in serving on the Solid Waste Task Force, please contact your city council representative by visiting www.ci.broomfield.co.us/council. A few spots remain open, and the first meeting is scheduled for January. Meetings are open to the public, so if you can't serve

on the task force, you can show your support by attending meetings and speaking out in favor of recycling.



No one thinks twice about the need for having space for trash containers, and now, thanks to efforts in Broomfield and Superior, no one will think twice about having space for recycling containers, either.



Ireland: Commercial Packaging Targeted for Expanded Recycling

Drink a pint of Guinness in an Irish Bar and the bottle is sure to be recycled – by law! As of March 2003, all Irish businesses that supply packaging or packaged goods, including pubs, restaurants, clubs and hotels, must sort out and recycle all their packaging waste. This law essentially bans the landfilling of recyclable packaging materials and has set a goal of increasing commercial packaging recycling to 50% by 2005, in line with European legislation. This initiative will help boost Ireland's overall recycling rate by approximately 25%.

San Francisco Adopts Precautionary Principle: An Unprecedented Breakthrough in the Management of Environmental Issues in the United States

Remember the expression, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?" Well, it's the gist of the Precautionary Principle which is now city policy in San Francisco. All decisions undertaken in San Francisco must utilize the best available science so that "the alternative that presents the least potential threat to human health and the City's natural systems" are selected. This represents an unprecedented breakthrough in the management of environmental issues in the United States. "The Precautionary approach to decision-making will help San Francisco...by moving beyond finding cures for environmental ills to preventing the ills before they can do harm," states the City's ordinance. Following up on last year's goal of becoming a Zero Waste City, San Francisco is again leading the way toward an environmentally-sustainable future.

South African Bill Proposes Deposit System to Increase Reuse and Recycling

Tired of seeing tires, aluminum cans, plastic bags, and glass bottles ending up in the landfill or strewn across the Veld, the South African government has introduced a bill that would set a new tax on consumer goods designed to discourage trash dumping and promote recycling. The tax would amount to a compulsory deposit on a variety of common items such as cans, bottles, tires and plastic bags. The deposit could then be redeemed by taking the item to a recycling center or by returning it for reuse. "This is a very important amendment which brings economic incentives into the issue of waste," said Chippy Olver, Director-General of the South African Department of Environment Affairs and Tourism.

Seattle Mayor Wants Ban on Trashing Recyclables

With recycling rates falling to 38%, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels is proposing a ban against putting paper, glass, cans or yard waste in the garbage can. The ban would apply to both residential and commercial property owners in the hopes of raising the city's recycling rate to 60%. "Recycling is the right thing to do, both from an environmental and cost basis," said Mayor Nickels. "Steps like these help the City reduce disposal costs and keep a lid on rates." Another key element of the plan includes food waste collection for businesses and the promotion of backyard food waste composting for residents. This initiative is currently being studied by the Seattle City Council. If San Francisco can aim for Zero Waste and Seattle for 60% recycling, what should we be aiming for here in our community?

British Liberal Democrats Adopt Zero Waste Platform

The Liberal Democratic party, a major force in British politics, has adopted Zero Waste as an official plank in their party platform. Zero Waste targets set in the platform include 60% of all waste recycled and composted by 2010, 75% by 2015 and 100% by 2020 throughout the UK, where the current recycling rate is 13%. The platform calls for more curbside recycling, a ban on landfilling organic waste, a ban on incineration, and a limit on waste disposal contracts to ten years in order to create greater competition. "Zero waste is a visionary policy," says Councillor Roger Symonds. "It views waste as a resource – we've gotten into a habit of forgetting that. Zero waste adds 'redesign' as a fourth 'R' at the top of the chain – it should be: redesign, reduce, re-use, recycle."

California Passes Electronics Law

California has become the first state to pass a law requiring retailers to collect a fee on computer monitors and televisions with screens larger than four inches. The fees, ranging from \$6-\$10, will be used by the state to fund the collection and recycling of these materials. Additionally, this legislation will hold manufacturers of these products responsible for phasing out the use of hazardous materials, and is consistent with European laws of the same nature. Environmental watchdog groups, the Basel Action Network and the EPR Working Group, would have preferred to see the law go further. Specifically, they would advocate for a ban on the export of collected materials to unregulated recycling markets overseas, requiring producers to take back and recycle their own products, spurring green product design and placing more financial responsibility on producers for handling this waste stream.



Around the world, nations and communities are taking progressive action toward Zero Waste.

What's Jehovah Got to do with the Environment?

A priest, a monk and a rabbi walk into a bar. The rabbi says, "This place should be solar powered." The monk says, "Yes, and they should be using compact fluorescent bulbs." The priest says, "I wonder if this beer is produced from organic ingredients." It's no joke that the religious faithful from every tradition are addressing environmental issues as an expression of their religious beliefs. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists alike are discovering that acting to protect the Earth from environmental destruction is every bit a part of their religious practice as worship, prayer, and meditation. At the heart of these actions is a common belief in the sacredness of creation and the scriptural charge to care for it for future generations.

Take for example the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila's letter to attendees of the World Meeting of Families. In this letter he exhorts attendees to reduce, recycle and compost to meet the Zero Waste goal of the meeting. He wrote, "We affirm the role of the Family and the Church as stewards of His creation... By ensuring that nothing is wasted, we make it known that the Christian Family is an active participant in healing and restoring the beauty of our ravaged land." And the faithful responded. The meeting was attended by 300,000 people over five days and they were successful in diverting 90% of the waste from the landfill!

In keeping with the evangelical Christian tradition of finding guidance by asking, "What would Jesus do?" Congregational minister Dan Smith asked from his pulpit in Lexington, Massachusetts, "What would Jesus drive?" This question launched a religious-based environmental campaign against gas-guzzling sport-utility vehicles that included congregants demonstrating at car dealerships. The minister's intent was "to encourage faithful people to consider how their daily decisions were either contributing to healing God's creation or to the destruction of it."

Jews of the Earth are very active right here in Boulder County. They hold distinct eco-Seders for Passover and help heal the environ-

From Presbyterians cleaning up rivers, to Buddhist monks and nuns reforesting barren lands, to Jews installing solar panels on their temple roofs, adherents of every faith around the world are taking action to protect our one planet.



PHOTO: ERIK HOFFNER

by Linda Smith

ment in events such as stream cleanups on Mitzvah (good deed) Day and tree plantings for Tu B'Shevat, the ancient traditional day of caring for and enjoying the bounty of trees.

First Congregational Church in Longmont has adopted a New Whole-Earth Covenant in which they pledge to "...manage the resources required to operate our church and our homes with the intention of minimizing waste, reducing energy use, and striving to responsibly use the physical grounds of the church. We pledge to do regular environmental audits of our church buildings and grounds to measure the effectiveness of our actions." Indeed, the congregation has installed ground-source heat pumps in their new education building and uses fluorescent lighting.

Many congregations vying for environmental justice see no separation between concerns for the poor and concerns for the Earth itself. San Francisco Episcopal minister Sally Bingham notes, "Christians are commanded to love their neighbors, and you can't do that by polluting their air and water." Since impoverished neighborhoods lack the political and financial clout to combat industrial polluters, they often bear a greater burden than the rest of the population.

From Presbyterians cleaning up rivers, to Buddhist monks and nuns reforesting barren lands, to Jews installing solar panels on their temple roofs, adherents of every faith around the world are taking action. Inspired to act on your religious/environmental convictions? Eco-Cycle is here to help. We are always glad to make presentations or assist in the design of discussion group content to help you discover the environmental connections to your spiritual beliefs. We can locate opportunities for service projects, and we can provide tools and services to help your church or temple audit and improve their environmental practices.

Many congregations in Boulder County express their beliefs through environmental activities. Inquire at your place of worship or start a program of your own!

Recycling David Defeats Landfilling Goliath in Iowa

by Linda Smith

The threat of yard trimmings returning to the Des Moines landfill is over thanks to Eco-Cycle and the Coalition to Oppose Attacks on Recycling in America, who together stopped the repeal of an Iowa law that keeps grass clippings and leaves out of the landfill. What's the big deal about a little green matter in the landfill and what does Eco-Cycle care about it ending up in a landfill in Des Moines?

It's an important victory for the environment. Landfilling organics puts methane, a potent greenhouse gas, into our air. Unlike in a compost pile, organic matter in a landfill decomposes anaerobically (without air). Anaerobic decomposition produces methane which is 21 times more effective than carbon dioxide at trapping the sun's heat in our atmosphere, and landfills are the number one source of human-produced methane. Burying organic material in a landfill also deprives soils of essential nutrients, which can be introduced with compost made from those organic materials. For these reasons, 21 U.S. states currently ban the landfilling of yard trimmings.

This victory represents an important step for environmentalists in their battle against the landfill industry. The effort to repeal the law in Iowa was headed by Waste Management, owner of the largest number of landfills in the nation and initiator of a similar failed effort in Peoria, Illinois last year. Their agenda is to increase the amount of materials – any materials – going to their landfills. As a result of the recycling movement's success, Americans currently recycle and compost an average of 30% of their waste stream. Consequently, landfill owners find

To regain revenues lost to recycling and composting, the landfill industry is promoting and investing hundreds of millions in bioreactor technology – a technology that would send more and more organics to landfills.



A victory for the environment! The Coalition to Oppose Attacks on Recycling in America thwarted an effort by the landfill industry to repeal an Iowa law that keeps methane-producing grass clippings and leaves out of the landfill.

nearly a third of their materials and accompanying fees are going elsewhere. To regain these lost revenues, the landfill industry is promoting and investing hundreds of millions of dollars in bioreactor technology – a technology that would send more and more organics to landfills.

Bioreactors are specially equipped landfills that capture the methane produced by the decomposing organics buried within. At first glance this seems like a step in the right direction – they've solved the methane problem! But remember, we've already established that burying organics in the landfill removes them from their important role of replenishing soil. Even though the landfill industry would have us believe that bioreactors are environmentally safer than traditional landfills and capture 75% of methane output, these claims are unsubstantiated. In fact, Peter Anderson, of RecycleWorlds Consulting, has written a thoroughly detailed study that suggests the methane capture rate is less than 25%.

In the Zero Waste future that Eco-Cycle is working towards, all food scraps and yard waste are composted along with new-fangled products made from vegetable starches, created to replace disposable products made from plastic. All other products are designed to be repaired, reused and recycled. To encourage composting organics rather than creating global warming gases by landfilling them, Eco-Cycle will continue to work with other Zero Waste advocates nationally and internationally to support existing yard waste landfill bans and to push for new ones, until the notion of landfilling this material becomes archaic.



Recycling Rebounds in the Big Apple

by Kate Mangione

In July 2002, the Mayor of New York City slashed the City's plastics and glass collections, arguing that landfilling was more cost effective. As one of the most influential cities in the world, NYC's decision propelled a frenzy of media reports that foreshadowed the demise of recycling. Cities



worldwide responded by questioning and even suspending their own recycling programs. Now one year later, after the anti-recycling media coverage has died down, the reports coming out of NYC show that in fact, the Mayor was wrong: recycling is more cost effective than landfilling

and ending the recycling program was an economic mistake!

By suspending its residential collection of plastic bottles and beverage cartons through July 2003, and glass containers until April 2004, NYC had estimated a program savings of nearly \$40 million. Since December 2002, NYC Comptroller reports have refuted the City's estimate: "The Department of Sanitation (DOS) had achieved only a fraction of the savings anticipated from suspending plastic and glass recycling. It is now abundantly clear that merely recycling

"There appears to be no fiscal justification for not reinstating a full-scale recycling program ... Recycling would be \$48 per ton less expensive than to collect and dispose of refuse." –NYC Comptroller William C. Thompson Jr., May 2003

metal and exporting plastic and glass as waste is more expensive than recycling all these materials."

Among other flawed assumptions, the City failed to consider the impact on the collections of other recyclables. NYC residents adjusted to the reduction in service by recycling less of other materials. According to the Comptroller's estimates, the decline in paper and metal recycling "represents a loss of nearly \$614,000 in revenue and an increase of \$7.6 million in costs in FY 2003."

As for FY 2004 residential collections, the Comptroller concludes, "There appears to be no fiscal justification for not reinstating a full-scale recycling program. Operating a full-scale recycling program that meets the diversion rates achieved in FY 2002 will save the City \$16.7 million per year... Recycling would be \$48 per ton less expensive than to collect and dispose of refuse."

Despite the financial benefits, New York City continues to target its recycling services, having shifted from weekly to alternate week collections. NYC might take a financial lesson from the successful waste management approaches of West Coast cities. In 2002, San Francisco adopted a goal of 75% waste diversion by 2010, with a goal of Zero Waste by 2020. As the data continue to reveal, the cost effectiveness of recycling can be a bright light for communities treading through the dark abyss of budget cuts.



Bucks for Bottles

by Caroline Mitchell

National Bottle Bill Proposed in the US Senate

In 2001, Americans trashed 120,000,000,000 bottles and cans. They were either buried underground or burned in an incinerator. Is that what we should be doing with 120 BILLION beverage containers? That's not what they do in Michigan, where they recycle 95% of their bottles and cans, or in nine other "bottle bill" states that require consumers to pay a refundable deposit on all beverage bottles and cans. Together, the ten states that have bottle bills recycle more beverage containers than the other 40 states combined! But in the forty other states, the recycling rate is a dismal 28%, and getting worse.

Seeking to apply the effectiveness of a bottle bill to a national level, U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords (I-VT) will reintroduce a bill called the National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act, which failed to pass in 2002. At press time, Jeffords was about to introduce the bill on the Senate floor. Your support can help make this bill's second attempt a success. Check out www.bottlebill.org for the latest developments. This bill would require a 10 cent deposit on all beverage containers, redeemable to the consumer upon recycling. Beverage producers would be held to a performance standard of an 80% recycling rate for glass, aluminum and plastic beverage containers, and would have the freedom to design and operate the collection system.

State and federal legislation is needed to help reverse a disturbing trend of decreased beverage container recycling across the country. Analysts believe this trend will continue until producers and



The ten states that currently have bottle bills recycle more beverage containers than the other 40 states combined. A proposed national bottle bill aimed at raising the national recycling rate to equal that of bottle bill states would require a 10 cent deposit on all beverage containers.

consumers have an incentive to recycle. The deposit system provides this incentive.

One positive step you can take is to call your U.S. Senators (Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell 202-224-5852 or 303-843-4100 and Senator Wayne Allard 202-224-5941 or 303-220-7414) and ask them to support the National Beverage Producer Responsibility Act of 2003! To learn more about how this bill could save us money, decrease pollution, create jobs, and save resources, check out www.grn.org or www.bottlebill.org.



Composting for Poets

by Marti Matsch

If you've been wanting to get a compost pile going, but don't really know where to start, this article is for you. At first blush, composting may seem like an activity reserved for the scientifically advantaged—those who know their Xylem from their Phloem and the optimal temperature for biodegradation. But worry not, poetry majors, there is a non-scientific and trouble-free approach that leaves you plenty of time for life's other activities.

According to Eco-Cycle's compost/organic farming expert Dan Matsch, there are basically two approaches to composting. If you are an active gardener, you might want to go the "Active Composter" route, which

involves a multiple pile system, paying attention to the ratios of nitrogens and carbons, and active watering and turning—the fastest approach to creating finished compost. The simpler, yet slower approach is "Passive Composting." By following the basic steps in this method, you can create a healthy soil amendment for your garden, lawn and house plants, save money on fertilizer and trash costs, and keep organic materials out of the landfill, preventing global warming methane emissions.

Here is the basic Composting for Non-Science Majors approach Dan recommends for all of us Passive Composter types:

1. Buy a bin or build one with four pallets placed on end and wired together. A bin is key to passive composting. If you just use a pile instead, you'll get weeds growing in it and therefore weed seeds when you add it to your garden. You don't want that.
2. If possible, place the bin in the shade and where the compost will have direct contact with the ground. This will help keep the moisture level higher and you may be surprised to find that red compost worms have moved in when you dig into it—an added bonus. If the bin is going to be on concrete, you might want to buy or borrow some finished compost to get a little microbial activity going.
3. Collect food waste in a lidded bucket or large food container, chopping up any large fruit and veggie pieces. The more surface area you create within your pile, the faster the material will decompose because smaller pieces have more surface area and break down more quickly. Empty the bucket into the compost bin. If you're concerned about attracting furry night visitors, keep dairy and meat products out. Egg shells are okay. Don't forget the coffee grounds; these are great for your soil. If you're applying any finished compost to a vegetable or fruit garden, exclude any excrement from Fido and Fluffy.
4. Let it rot and go about your life.
5. Water your compost from time to time if it dries out. Smelly compost is a cry for air. Using a pitchfork to turn the compost remedies odiferousness.
6. In the fall, when you have lots of leaves and twiggy yard waste, you might want to make a separate pile that's even more passive and will take about two years to mature. Adding this material to your food waste pile will slow down the process significantly. After a couple of years, your yard waste pile will become mulch or a finished compost, depending on your moisture conditions.
7. Use it! Passive composting may take a while, but it will happen. Ready-to-use compost looks and smells like rich soil. In this system, harvest your compost by skimming the unrotted stuff off the top and use the rest in your garden or with potted plants, house plants, etc. This year, given our current drought conditions, using your compost is more helpful than ever, since it increases your soil's ability to hold moisture.

To learn more about composting, buying a bin, and how to use finished compost, visit our web site at www.ecocycle.org. If you're more the Active Composter type, sign up for a Master Composter training provided by the Center for Resource Conservation (CRC) and the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension office. Contact CRC at 303-441-3278. Check out Worms Eat My Garbage by Mary Appelhof for more information on composting with worms or visit Mary's web site at www.wormwoman.com.



Composting may seem like an activity reserved for the scientifically inclined, but worry not, poetry majors; there is a non-scientific approach that leaves you plenty of time for life's other activities.



Dear Rosie,

I have always put broken drinking glasses or vases in with the recyclables, but my roommate just told me that's not okay. Is she right?

Signed, Suze

Dear Suze,

Listen to your roommate. Although she may have annoying habits such as eating your food, not doing the dishes, or leaving dirty laundry around, in this case she's proving herself to be a good roomie. It may seem that vases and drinking glasses are made from the same glass as any other glass bottle (and I'll confess, before I worked at Eco-Cycle I tossed them in the recycling bin as well...don't tell anyone, I'd HATE to have that get out). Though they look similar to glass bottles and jars, "non-container glass" such as drinking glasses, vases, mirrors, ceramic mugs, light bulbs, window panes, etc., melt at different temperatures compared to glass bottles and jars. When non-container glass is mixed in with bottles and jars, they create an inconsistency in the new recycled glass, making the new product useless. These materials raise such a red flag at the glass plant that if there is so much as one ceramic mug spotted in the load, they may refuse the entire batch.

Eco-Cycle staff recently took a tour of the local bottle recycling plant (a Disneyland for recycling professionals). They reiterated that non-container glass was the biggest contamination problem they face, and that mugs were the absolute worst. To make sure our loads don't get the "reject" button pushed on them, our workers pull contaminants like these out by hand, but the number one best way to prevent load rejection is to get caring recyclers like you keep it out in the first place...and to listen to their learned roommates.

Dear Rosie,

I'm from California and we were able to recycle a lot more types of plastic out there. Why don't you take more types? Why aren't plastic tubs accepted at the curb?

Signed, S.A. from C.A.

Dear S.A.,

You're right. You can recycle more plastics on the West Coast because most of the "low grade" plastics markets (such as the market for tubs or plastics) are in Asia, and those living on the Pacific Rim have more direct access to these markets without the added expense of shipping them all the way west.

We can take bottles with a #1 or #2 on the bottom without any problem because those are the only plastic types for which there is a relatively stable, domestic market. The market for the tubs with a #2 or #5 is not only unstable, it is a money loser. We have to pay the markets to take the material, not the other way around. For this reason, we only take a limited volume of #2 and #5 tubs—the amount that comes in through the drop-off center—so that we have enough material to test potentially developing markets, but not so much that we go broke. We do not accept tubs from the curb because the volume we would get with curbside collection could bankrupt the program. The market for other types of plastics is even more dismal, so we do not accept those resin types at all.

Since moving Colorado to the West Coast to get easier access to markets is proving logistically challenging, Eco-Cycle is working on different opportunities to create local markets for these difficult plastics. Keep your fingers crossed and maybe we'll be using better, more environmentally and economically friendly markets than California.

For more answers to your recycling and environmental questions, see our Ask Eco-Cycle column in the Daily Camera every other Friday in the Portraits section.

Send your recycling questions to:
Ask Rosie, c/o Eco-Cycle, PO Box 19006, Boulder, CO 80308.
Or email Rosie at recycle@ecocycle.org.



High Marks for Low Waste Event

Charlie Bicknell of Skumatz Economic Research Associates (left) and CU Recycling director Jack DeBell sort, weigh, and record compostables at the recent Sustainable Resources Conference at CU. In the best effort ever at the University, 85.3 percent of all materials were diverted from the landfill. Perhaps more importantly, their analysis revealed only .56 pounds of total materials were generated per person, per day. The conference drew over 750 people from more than 50 countries and had almost perfect participation in the waste minimization effort.

Environmental Choices

Businesses, Products & Services That Offer Better Choices For The Environment

CuddleBuns: Good for the Environment and Your Baby's Posterior

Everyone's buns deserve the very best, especially if those buns are in diapers. For natural, reusable, washable diapers made with love right here in Boulder County, check out the choices at www.righteousbaby.com. Everything from basic CuddleBuns for the newborn to Woolly-Pullies for the rough-and-tumble toddlers is made with hemp, cotton and other natural materials. Infants and parents alike will enjoy the functionality, style, ease of use, and fashion of these nappies and their embroidered custom designs. You can buy them online. It's worth visiting the web site just to see the photos of adorable kids sporting these creative designs.



Got Milk Jugs?

Whether for indoor or outdoor use, Krasco Basket Factory Outlet has your basket. Hand-woven, durable, UV resistant and made from recycled plastic, Krasco has a basket for every use imaginable. From umbrella baskets, step baskets, and door-knob baskets, to hampers and recycling baskets, you'll find them at www.basketsleeves.com. With a feedstock of recycled milk jugs and the philosophy "Good for you! Good for us! Good for your world!" Krasco has the answer to your every basket need. Use them on a porch, patio, or deck, around the pool, yard, or flower bed, as a base for a mailbox, flagpole, or bird feeder. Or, move them indoors for one of the most popular uses...a holder for the Christmas tree!



Flip-Flops Reincarnated

Flip-flops with good karma are coming back for a second go around. Creative hands have turned colorful, recycled sandals into fun and functional products like doormats and baskets. Give them as gifts or use them to give a colorful, recycled welcome to visitors to your door. They're sure to be a conversation piece! You can buy them locally at Willow Tree, 805 Pearl Street.



Buy a Green Gift and Support a Green Cause

Want to shop for beautiful treasures and support environmental activism at the same time? From now until the end of the year, shop at one of Nature's Own stores (visit their web site at naturesown.com for Boulder County locations) and choose from an incredible collection of stoneworks, fossils, geodes, jewelry, wall hangings, gifts for kids and more, then head to the cashier armed with a coupon you've printed from Global Response's web site. Nature's Own will donate 100% of the sale to Global Response, an international network for environmental action and education based in Boulder. Download your coupon today at www.globalresponse.org.



Transportation for the 21st Century

Looking for a powerful yet flexible mode of transportation that meets both your mobility and environmental needs? Graham Hill is your man. His company, 21 Wheels, sells electric bikes that can be powered by electricity, pedal-power or a mix of the two. They also sell conversion kits so you can turn your bicycle into a human-electric hybrid. A north Boulder neighborhood association just received a neighborhood grant for one of Graham's electric bikes and a solar-powered shed to charge it. Neighbors sign up online to take the bike on errands or just to take a spin around town. Wouldn't you like one for your neighborhood or personal use? Visit www.21wheels.com for more information on the bikes and how to order.



Kudos to Kinko's

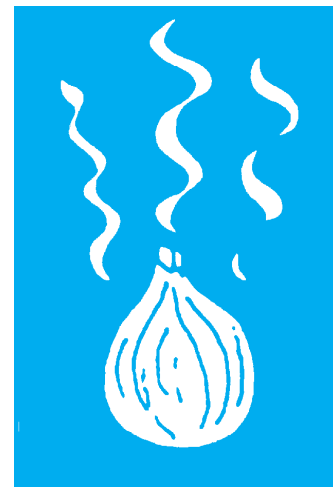
Kinko's recently took a step in a greener direction by converting seven of its paper stock lines to 30% post-consumer recycled fibers. Using post-consumer fibers is truly "closing the loop" because the paper has already been used and recycled by someone like you. Now you can purchase resume, executive, cardstock and designer paper with a clearer conscience. This step helps Kinko's fulfill their mission statement, which includes a commitment to the environment and recycling. Kinko's also works to recycle paper and to reduce paper usage in the first place. Call Kinko's at 1-800-2-KINKOS to tell them you appreciate more post-consumer recycled content options, and encourage them to upgrade to 100% post-consumer recycled content papers. They're one of the largest copier chains in the country, so encouraging them to use post-consumer content means a significant boost for the recycled paper folks, for a cleaner environment, and for recyclers like Eco-Cycle, 'cuz if you're not buying recycled, you're not recycling.



ONION

Mass Mailings Go Plastic

GM's latest mass mailing gimmick is not just annoying, it's not recyclable. They've adopted the completely wasteful strategy of mailing useless, non-recyclable plastic tubes containing useless, non-recyclable plastic car remotes (only the winning remote will open the new Trailblazer - waiting nearby in a showroom just for you)! If you receive one of these in the mail, we suggest you call and give the dealership an earful. It won't be hard to find the phone number; it's printed big, bold, and red all over the mailing!



A Wake-Up Call for Business Recycling, cont'd from page 1

and companies that behave in an environmentally-friendly way. Engaging in "green" business practices and publicizing those practices can do wonders for a company's image and can attract both employees and customers in an environmentally-conscious community like ours.

Providing Economic Incentives

The impressive increase in residential recycling rates in Boulder over the past year can be attributed to the implementation of a Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) system, which gives residents an economic incentive to reduce the amount of waste they produce. While it's true that the current pricing system for commercial dumpsters is a form of PAYT (more dumpsters cost more money), it is also clear that more needs to be done, and California provides some useful models for what can be achieved. When California passed the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, state and local governments worked together to achieve the required 50% waste diversion rate by 2000. The state's Integrated Waste Management Board has documented this success story, and it shows that the most effective tools for achieving waste reduction in the commercial sector included incorporating various recycling requirements in land use permits, requiring businesses to submit recycling plans with their annual business tax reports, and banning from the landfill materials such as yard waste, automobile tires, construction waste and mixed fiber products.

In Boulder County, we don't have any public sector involvement in commercial recycling except to encourage recycling through voluntary participation programs. For example, the Boulder City Office of Environmental Affairs is offering coupons to cover the cost of the first three months of recycling service for businesses that haven't recycled before and agree to sign up for at least one year of service with an approved service provider. To learn more about the program, contact Elizabeth Vasatka at the Boulder City Office of Environmental Affairs at 303-441-1964. The Boulder County Resource Conservation Division plans to offer a similar incentive program in 2004. In the absence of more stringent mandates for commercial sector recycling, these programs are a step in the right direction.

If you're looking for ideas to begin, increase or improve recycling at your workplace, call Eco-Cycle's business recycling department at 303-444-6640 x125. Let's work together to bring Boulder County's commercial recycling rate up to the same exceptional levels achieved by the residential sector.



Thank You

Many thanks to the following businesses who have helped support Eco-Cycle events and programs:

LIQUOR MART for donating drinks for the Eco-Cycle community event on Flagstaff Mountain and company picnic;

THE BOULDER CORK and **CHAUTAUQUA DINING HALL** for their generous donations of gift certificates to be distributed to Boulder Valley School District staff involved in the Eco-Cycle School Recycling and Environmental Education Program;

KING SOOPERS, SAFEWAY and **ALBERTSON'S** for their financial support of the Eco-Cycle Broomfield annual pumpkin smash; and

ERIK HOFFNER, GEORGE BLEVINS, and **JEFF MACLACHLAN** for donating their artwork for this issue of the *Eco-Cycle Times*.



Why do we support Eco-Cycle? - Members and Volunteers Eric and Patti Tussuy

"We are happy to support Eco-Cycle financially as well as through volunteer efforts. We've been involved with Eco-Cycle in various ways for more than ten years. We've always been impressed with the leadership role they take in recycling education and program development both in the local community and on the national scene. Thank you, Eco-Cycle, for helping thousands of Boulder County folks work toward the goal of zero waste."

Join the solution: be an Eco-Cycle member!

Enclosed is my contribution for:

- \$15 Student/Senior*
- \$25 Individual*
- \$50 Supporting*
- \$100 Contributing* (\$100 members receive an Eco-Cycle T-shirt.)
- \$500 Contributing* (\$500 members receive an Eco-Cycle T-shirt and a tote bag.)
- Other: \$_____*

*All members will receive a bumper sticker and a subscription to the *Eco-Cycle Times*.

Thank you, but I do not wish to receive a premium for my membership contribution.

Payment Method: Visa Mastercard Check enclosed

Card no. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

I would like to invest in the future of recycling by remembering Eco-Cycle in my will. Please call me.

Please send me more information about:

- Becoming an Eco-Cycle volunteer at the Drop-off Center or a Block Leader for my neighborhood.
 - Having my business join Eco-Cycle's Waste Reduction Program for businesses.
 - I would like to contribute through payroll deduction. My workplace is _____.
- Eco-Cycle is a Community Shares Agency. If your office does not have a Community Shares program, but does have a United Way program, ask for the form for **non-United Way** agencies and write in "Eco-Cycle."

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Evening) _____

Email _____

Thank you for your support. All contributions are tax-deductible, minus the value of premiums received. Eco-Cycle does not give or sell member names and addresses to other organizations. Please make your check payable to *Eco-Cycle* and return it with this form to: Eco-Cycle, P.O. Box 19006, Boulder, CO 80308.

eco-cycle

Community-Based Recycling
P.O. Box 19006 (5030 Pearl Street)
Boulder, CO 80308

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Boulder, CO

Styrofoam Collection Events • Plastic Bag Recycling a Success • Religion and the Environment • Local Recycling Ordinances

eco-cycle TIMES
FALL 2003 - SPRING 2004 COMMUNITY-BASED RECYCLING SINCE 1976

STOP! Don't Let it Go to Waste!



Are you a committed recycler whose employer is throwing it all away?

Recent City of Boulder data show businesses recycle a mere 16%-20% of their garbage compared to 49% recovered from recyclers at home. It's time for businesses to leap into action!



See Center Pull-Out for RECYCLING GUIDELINES