



# WATER Conservation

FALL 2011



# RECYCLING

## Waste Reduction NEWS

### Recycling means Wisconsin JOBS

More jobs and the value of materials are great economic reasons to recycle, in addition to the usual environmental benefits like energy savings and reduced pollution.

Despite the economic downturn, the scrap recycling industry added 10,000 jobs to the national economy since the beginning of 2010 and employs more than 130,000 people, according to a recent study commissioned by the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI). The study also found that total economic activity generated by scrap recycling in the United States is more than \$90.6 billion, making the industry similar in size to the nation's forestry and fishing industries combined.

There are many Wisconsin industries that depend on businesses and residents participating in recycling programs in order to manufacture their products.

• Georgia-Pacific uses 400,000 tons of recycled paper per year and employs 2,400 workers at its Green Bay plant to produce paper products.

• Placon Industries, located in Madison, recently constructed a new \$16 million plastic processing facility that uses recycled PET bottles to manufacture plastic sheet and containers.

• Strategic Materials Inc. located in East Troy recently invested \$10 million to expand and upgrade processing capacity for recycled glass containers.

*Continued on page 4*



*SCA Tissue in Neenah employs 1,000 people to produce tissue products made from 100% recycled fiber.*

Department of Parks and Land Use  
Recycling and Solid Waste Office  
515 W. Moreland Blvd-AC260  
Waukesha, WI 53188

PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Waupaca, WI  
Permit No. 47

ECRWSS  
RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER

### GET THE MEDS OUT! New Mail-Back Disposal Program

Wondering what to do with those old medicines taking up space in the medicine cabinet? Now there is a convenient mail-back option available. Residents can pick up free mail-back envelopes at participating pharmacies, senior centers and county health departments in 36 counties in the Great Lakes watershed, including Waukesha County. Customers take the envelope home, fill it with unwanted medicines and deposit it in the mail. All envelopes are pre-addressed and shipped to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency for safe disposal.



Unused medicines can be a danger to children, pets or other household members. They also have a negative impact on lakes and streams, as well as drinking water. Flushing medications down the toilet, which was once common practice, is no longer recommended by the medical community. "Get the Meds Out!" provides a free, convenient and environmentally safe way to clean out the medicine cabinet.

This program is coordinated by the UW-Extension and funded by a U.S. EPA grant through September 2012. According to Steve Brachman, Waste Reduction Specialist with the UW- Extension, "Evidence of potential pharmaceutical contamination of the Great Lakes, plus Wisconsin's rising incidence of prescription drug abuse, points to the need for a more comprehensive approach to medicine disposal, including a mail-back option." For a list of locations with free envelopes, visit [www4.uwm.edu/shwec/meds/index.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec/meds/index.cfm) or contact your pharmacist or clinic.



# E-CYCLE Wisconsin Program a Success

Wisconsin's state law requiring manufacturers of electronic products to provide recycling programs is resulting in better management of old electronics. Statewide, more than 32 million pounds (16,000 tons) of old electronics - including computers, printers, TVs, DVD/VCR players and more - have been collected and processed properly in one year. In addition to saving landfill space and disposal costs, businesses that collect and process electronics have added jobs and recovered materials such as precious metals that add to the economy.

According to Sarah Murray, WDNR E-Cycle Wisconsin Coordinator, "Increased collection and responsible recycling reduces environmental risks and ensures that valuable materials in electronics are not lost to landfills, but will be used by industries

in Wisconsin and elsewhere to manufacture new products."

In Waukesha County, there are now 22 stores, non-profits and local government sites that collect old electronics under the program. Visit [www.waukeshacounty.gov/electronicrecycling](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/electronicrecycling) for a list of locations. At the municipal recycling sites alone, over 713,000 pounds (356 tons) of electronics were collected for recycling in the past twelve months - more than 2 1/2 times the amount recycled before the law went into effect - at a cost savings of more than \$100,000/year.

Under E-Cycle Wisconsin, more electronics are recycled responsibly, collection programs are more convenient, business opportunities are being created, and municipalities are seeing significant cost savings. *NOW THAT'S SUCCESS!*



Resident recycles old computer at Waukesha drop-off site

**T**he electronics recycling law is based on a product stewardship approach, which assigns primary responsibility for collection and recycling to the manufacturer.

**R**equirements for manufacturers, recyclers and collectors ensure that recycling is done in an environmentally sound manner and can be tracked. Manufacturers must meet recycling goals each year so they have an incentive to form partnerships and contracts with recyclers to collect and process electronics.

## Reduce Your Waste Stream CHALLENGE Targets Schools

"Back to School" has a new meaning this fall for Waukesha STEM Academy students. Their families signed up to participate in the *Reduce Your Waste Stream Challenge* sponsored by Waukesha County Recycling to see how much they can reduce trash and increase recycling in one month. They weighed their trash and recycling at the beginning of the Challenge. Now they are challenging themselves to reduce and recycle as much as possible for one month. The school is eligible for a grant if 25% of the families in the school complete the Challenge.

*The Baas Family from Brookfield reduced their weekly trash from 20.8 to 2.1 lbs. over a month...to win the Challenge!*



"This is a great opportunity for our students to practice their science, math, and problem-solving skills, while learning about their impact on the environment", said Principal Ryan Krohn.

Last fall, during a pilot Challenge program, 33 families reduced the average weekly amount of trash they created by 49% and increased recycling by 66%. They changed their purchasing to select products in recyclable or reusable containers, reduced use of disposable tableware, and started composting fruit and vegetable scraps.

Participants stated that the Challenge increased their awareness of how wasteful they had been and how much of a difference individual changes can make. To follow the Challenge participants or try the Challenge on your own, visit [www.ReduceYourWasteStream.org](http://www.ReduceYourWasteStream.org)

School administrators, parent-teacher organizations, or teachers interested in participating in the challenge during the 2011-12 school year should contact the Waukesha County Recycling Office at 262-896-8300.

2010 Challenge participants blog about their experiences

### POSER FAMILY...

"Well even though it's over, we are still working hard at trying to keep our numbers low and recycle big. There is always a daily trip out to the compost bin with scraps and peels. It was only 5 weeks, but it has instilled a change for a lifetime."

### MOLTEN FAMILY...

"Our household has been actively involved in recycling and reducing our waste for years, but it is not until you are actually measuring your waste stream, that you start to look at things a little different and perspectives change."

### BOYER FAMILY...

"We have loved doing this challenge. Our kids have been a driving force and we have loved watching our kids make a difference. They are so proud of their participation and tell everyone about what we are doing. Kids can be a great example of how we should be."

## RAIN GARDENS

A beautiful solution to water pollution

We can all help reduce pollution in area lakes and streams. Reducing runoff by using rain gardens and rain barrels is an easy way to start.



Order rain garden plants at half-price by May 1, 2012  
[www.waukeshacounty.gov/cleanwater](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/cleanwater)

## Materials Recycling Facility Open House

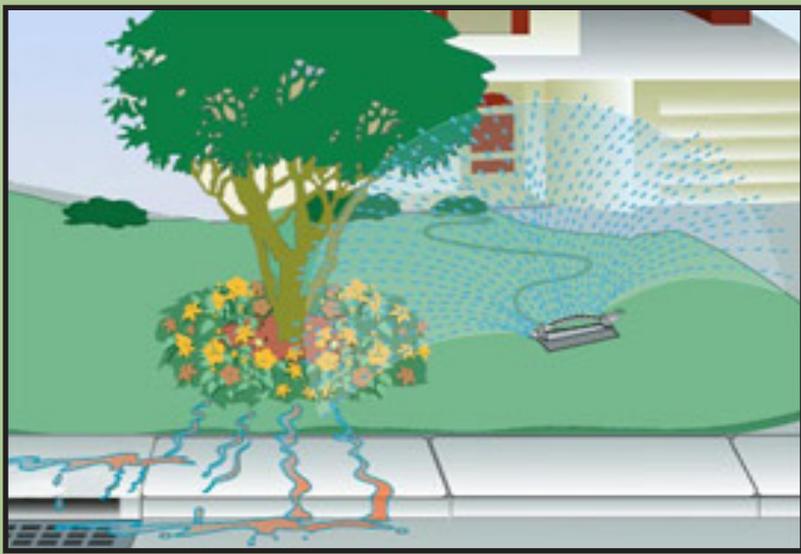


Family-friendly fun for all ages  
10 AM to Noon  
Saturday, Nov. 12, 2011  
Saturday, Apr. 14, 2012

County Materials Recycling Facility  
220 S. Prairie Avenue, Waukesha

For details, call 896-8300 or visit [www.waukeshacounty.gov/recycling](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/recycling)

## BROWN --- THE NEW GREEN



If your water bill from this summer sent you into a state of shock over the amount of green it would take to pay it, consider letting your lawn go dormant, or brown, for the summer. Brown is the new standard in “green” lawn care.

Most lawns are planted in cool season grasses which grow best in the cool, wet months of spring and fall. When the weather gets hot and dry, their natural response is to go dormant and turn brown until cooler, wetter weather returns. Many people are inclined to battle this natural response and water their lawns to keep them green.

### WATERING TIPS

Rather than using large quantities of water which can actually harm your lawn if not done properly, try these tips:

- Water thoroughly and less frequently to encourage deeper roots.
- Water early mornings or late evenings to ensure reaching the roots.
- Use a can to measure the amount of water applied with sprinklers.

Turf grass needs about one inch of water per week. Be sure to subtract any rainfall amounts from what you apply and check with your municipality for watering ordinances.

To simplify and “green” your lawn, consider not watering at all. By allowing the grass to go dormant, it won’t need fertilizing or mowing. This reduces water use, gas for mowing, fertilizers and time.

### FOR A “GREEN” LAWN

- Leave clippings on the lawn: they are a great source of nitrogen.
- Before fertilizing, do a soil test and then add only what is needed.
- Pull weeds before they go to seed instead of using chemicals.
- This fall, mulch leaves into your lawn. Leaves are rich in carbon, phosphorus, and potassium - all essential nutrients needed by turf grasses.

To protect rivers and streams, keep grass clippings off the roads and pavement; sweep fertilizers off of sidewalks and driveways and onto the lawn where they belong. If you must water, make sure you are not watering the sidewalk or driveway. This will only create runoff, which will carry pollutants straight to our waters.

It’s okay to have a brown lawn in the summer! Brown really is the “green” standard in lawn care, helping to conserve water and keep our rivers and streams clean.

## Subscribe to RECYCLING E-News Today!

Our annual newsletter is a great way to learn more about recycling every fall. But what about that bin giveaway in your community coming soon? And the compost workshop in spring?

For timely information, we have a number of electronic newsletters to keep you informed, along with e-postcards and e-vites for events, including: *Recycling*, *The Green Gardener*, and *Environmental Educator for Teachers*.

Are you interested in seasonal organic turf care tips, or how to recycle milk cartons at your school?

To sign up, visit [www.waukeshacounty.gov/recycling](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/recycling)

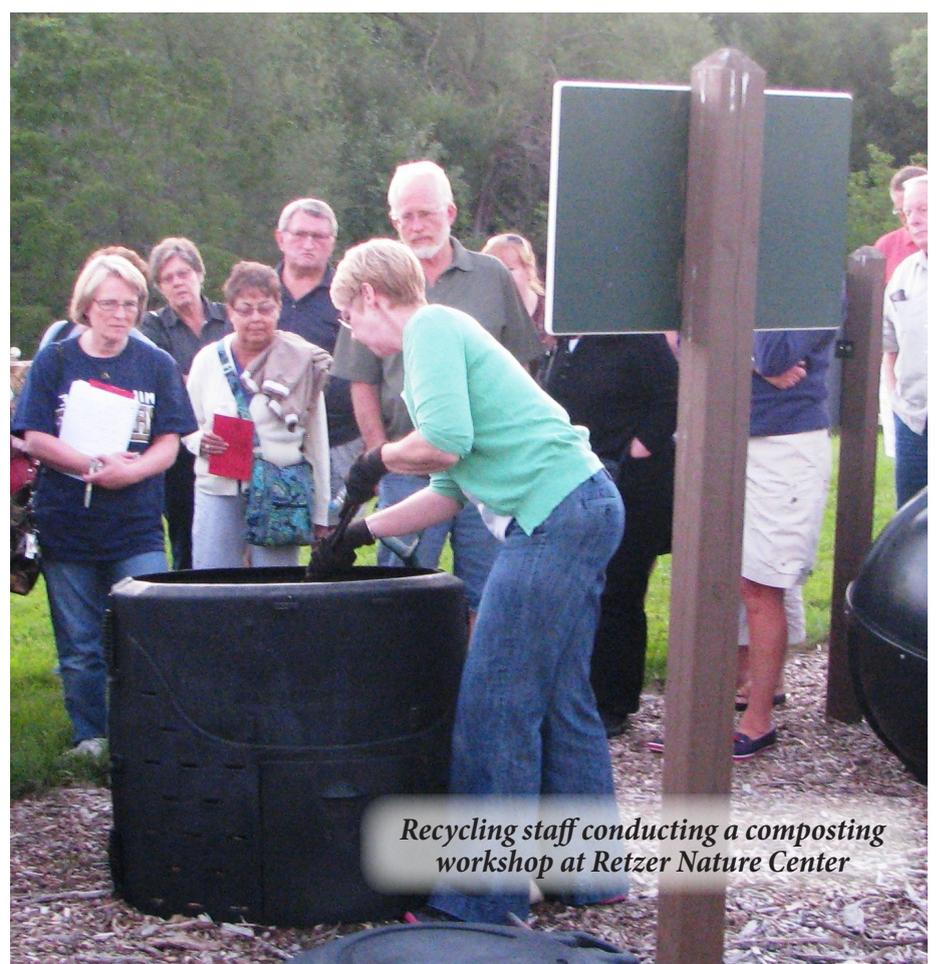
## Hundreds of Residents Discover Composting

The County Recycling & Solid Waste Office sponsored a one-day compost bin truckload sale on Saturday, June 25 at the County Expo Center. During the sale, 874 compost bins were sold. Many participants signed up to attend home composting workshops to learn more about techniques to assure successful composting.

Waste reduction is a major component of the County recycling program. In a *Reduce Your Waste Stream Challenge* held last fall with 33 families, home composting was the main reason that participants were able to reduce their waste an average of 49% over four weeks. To see results of the challenge and comments from participants visit [www.ReduceYourWasteStream.org](http://www.ReduceYourWasteStream.org)

According to the EPA, by composting food scraps and yard debris, the average household can easily divert 600 pounds of waste per year from the landfill. The 800-plus residents who purchased compost bins at the sale could potentially divert about 262 tons of waste from landfills per year. At an average landfill disposal fee of \$45 per ton, potential savings would amount to over \$11,000 a year, not including transportation costs.

Fall is a great time to start home composting. Get the basics at [www.waukeshacounty.gov/composting](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/composting)



Recycling staff conducting a composting workshop at Retzer Nature Center

Continued from Page 1

## Recycling means WI Jobs

The current market value of the 400,000 tons of recyclables collected each year by Wisconsin communities is more than \$40 million. There is potential to recover even more materials. According to a 2009 DNR Waste Characterization Study, there are still over 500,000 tons of paper, plastic and glass bottles, and metal being thrown away by residents and businesses in the state at a revenue loss of \$52 million.

Recycling all types of material including paper, bottles and cans, appliances, electronics, used motor oil and filters is not just a “feel-good environmental movement.” It is a vital component of our local, state, and national economy.

Each year workers at the county recycling facility in Waukesha sort, bale and ship more than 1,000 semi-trailer loads (20,000 tons) of paper, metals, plastic and glass to companies that make new products such as boxes, tissue and toweling, insulation, new cans and bottles, carpeting and fiber for clothing.

To see where the companies are located, visit [waukeshacounty.gov/recyclingmarkets](http://waukeshacounty.gov/recyclingmarkets)

“It makes no sense to throw away materials that have value to businesses, provide jobs and save energy and resources,” said County Executive Dan Vrakas.

For more information on the study, visit [www.isri.org](http://www.isri.org)



Down the drain...

Down the drain usually implies that something is gone. So when rainwater goes down the storm drain, it is gone...but where? When water goes down the drain it travels through an underground pipe to the nearest lake, river or stream. It is not treated or cleaned before it enters the waterway. Here in Waukesha County it is delivered to the Fox River, Bark River, Oconomowoc River, Pewaukee Lake or any other nearby stream or lake in the county.

You might think that rainwater would be clean water. However, before the water enters the storm drain, it picks up fertilizers, gas, oil, pet waste and other pollutants from our neighborhoods. Combine that with all the things that people purposely dispose of in the storm drain, such as pet waste and grass clippings, and it adds up to too much pollution entering our rivers and streams.

This sounds like a big problem—and it is. But there are lots of simple solutions. Actions such as picking up after your pet keeps bacteria and nutrients from loading our waterways. Sweeping grass clippings or fertilizers off the sidewalk and pavement helps, too. And make sure that your car is not leaking oil.

You can also make sure that you are not adding extra water to the storm drain system from water softeners, sump pumps, gutter downspouts or even washing your car. Using rain barrels to catch storm water reduces runoff. Planting a rain garden helps infiltrate runoff into the ground, reducing pollution and restoring a more natural hydrology.

So, take a step for clean water in Waukesha County. It only costs a little time and energy, but the payoff will be cleaner water for your children and future generations.



...to nearby lakes, rivers and streams.

## Have you seen us lately?

Waukesha County Recycling makes a concerted effort to get out into the community through outreach at various local events. The goal of this outreach is to promote recycling and answer questions you may have.



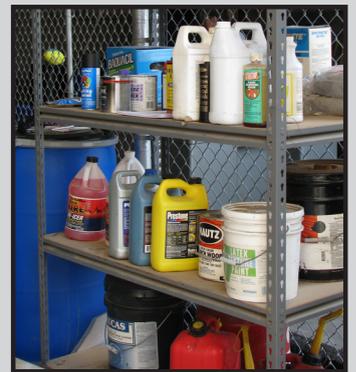
Oftentimes, our outreach booths include free blue bin giveaways for residents who need to replace their broken or missing recycling bin. We are always happy to provide bins to those who need them for more recycling!

Among the unique events we have attended: Buchnerfest in Waukesha, the Greener Oconomowoc Resource Fair, Lake Country Community Fest in Hartland, Kohl's Employee Earth Day Event in Menomonee Falls and St. Joseph's Festival and the Hispanic Family Health Fair, both in Waukesha. We have also staffed information tables at local libraries from North Lake to New Berlin, and farmers' markets from Dousman to Brookfield.

If you'd like us to provide outreach at your event, please contact our office!

## Product Exchange Program

Need a small amount of product for your home or vehicle? We know where you can get it for FREE!



In addition to providing disposal for unwanted or unusable hazardous waste, the County's Household Hazardous Waste Program also includes a “Product Exchange” component. At each of the four year-round HHW collection sites, residents can take usable materials, such as cleaning and automotive products; lawn, garden and other household products, at NO CHARGE.

Quantities and types of materials available vary by location and from one week or month to another. You will be required to sign a Liability Waiver and Release Form when taking any product.

A few general guidelines for donating products to the HHW Exchange:

- Bring only newer, unopened, or mostly full containers.
- Preferred items are cleaners and yard chemicals.
- Make sure containers are in good condition with good labels.

For hours of operation and locations, visit [www.waukeshacounty.gov/hazardouswaste](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/hazardouswaste)

### Waukesha County

## RAIN BARREL PROJECT



- Store rainwater for later use
- Reduce runoff to help our rivers and streams
- Reduce pumping of our precious groundwater
- Save money by saving water
- Provide soft water for watering plants and washing windows or cars

### Clean Water - One Barrel at a Time

For more information about rain barrels and where to buy them, visit [www.waukeshacounty.gov/cleanwater](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/cleanwater) under the rain garden/barrels tab.