

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



**Buncombe County Solid Waste Department**

**828-250-5460**

**Fall 2004**



# Transfer Station expands Saturday hours

The Transfer Station, which is located on Brevard Road, is now open for two hours longer on Saturday afternoons, providing more convenient drop-off services for residents. The Transfer Station is now open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

During all open hours, residents can drop off these recyclables at no charge:

- Lead-acid batteries
- Newspaper and brown paper bags



- Corrugated cardboard
  - "Blue bag" or commingled recyclable containers, including #1 & #2 plastic; aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass; and steel cans
- We also accept reusable corrugated cardboard moving boxes and shipping cartons. Please break down and flatten the boxes for storage.

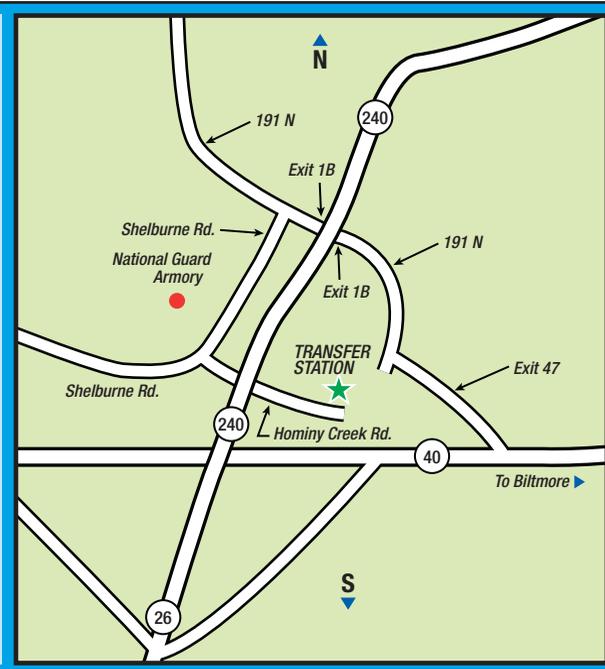
Plus, you can drop off "sharps," such as needles and lancets, used at home for personal medical care.



## Directions to the Transfer Station:

From I-240, take exit 1B (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. Turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left.

From I-40, take exit 47 (Brevard Road/Hwy. 191). At the traffic light, take Highway 191 North. After crossing I-240, turn left onto Shelburne Road. Turn left onto Hominy Creek Road. The Transfer Station will be on the left.



## Household hazardous waste and electronics collected weekly

Buncombe County accepts household hazardous waste (HHW) and electronics every Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at a special drop-off area at the Landfill (see map).

Each week, we accept electronics from residents at no charge. Businesses will also be able to drop off electronics, but they will be charged a fee of 60 cents per pound.

HHW is accepted for \$2 per gallon for paint-related material, such as paint thinner, kerosene, gasoline, and paint. Other materials, such as lawn and garden chemicals, are accepted at no charge.

During the first six months of this new, year-round program, we collected about 200,000 pounds of materials, of



which 195,520 pounds were recycled. The only materials that we are not able to recycle are hazardous chemicals that are corrosives, reactives, and pesticides. These materials are safely disposed.

For more information, call 250-5460 or the Landfill at 645-5311.

## Residents can drop off items at Landfill

You can drop off all of these items for recycling at the Buncombe County Landfill at no charge:

- Lead-acid batteries
- Newspaper and brown paper bags
- Corrugated cardboard
- Commingled recyclable containers, including #1 & #2 plastic (milk jugs, soft drink bottles, laundry detergent jugs); aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass bottles and jars; and steel cans
- Motor oils

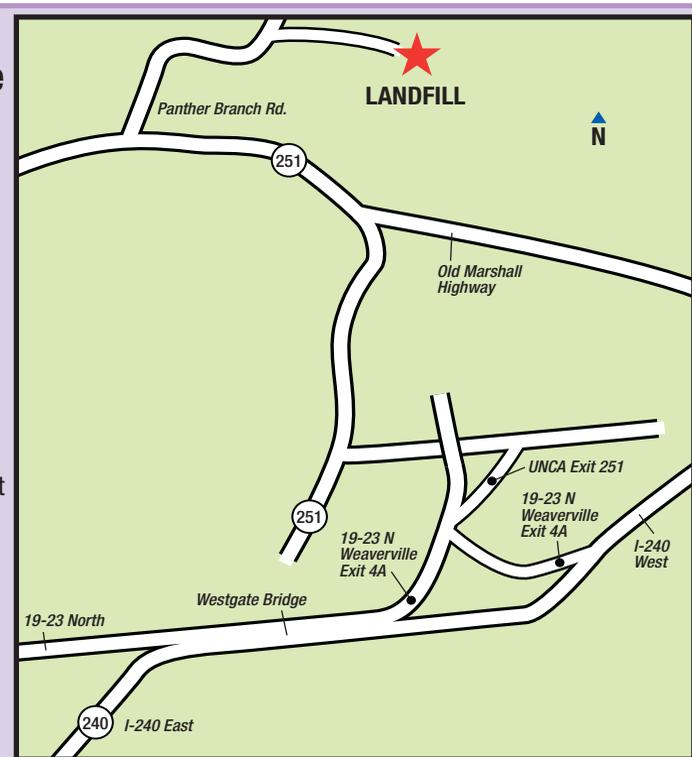
- Tires
- White goods, including stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, and all metals
- Empty, triple-rinsed pesticide containers

You can drop off household trash at the Landfill. There is a fee to dispose of trash.

The Landfill is open to accept trash and recyclables Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## Directions to the Buncombe County Landfill:

From I-240 East or West, take Exit 4A to 19/23 North. Travel 1 mile and then take UNC-A exit. At the end of the exit, turn left. Go to traffic light and turn right onto 251 North. Continue on 251 North for 9 miles to Panther Branch Road. Turn right onto Panther Branch Road and travel 1/10 of a mile to the Buncombe County Landfill, which is located on the right. The new landfill is 6 miles north of the old landfill.



## Recycling results

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year, Buncombe County recycled at least 33,345 tons of material, or about 21 percent of the waste that was generated.

Here are some of the details:

- 27,108 tons of recyclables accepted at the Landfill, Transfer Station, and the Blue Bag curbside program
- 851 tons of recyclables from drop-off centers in Asheville, Black Mountain,

- Biltmore Forest, and Weaverville
- 1,184 tons of yard waste
- 35 tons of household hazardous waste
- 5,640 gallons of used motor oil
- 462 lead-acid batteries
- 2,900 tons of tires

Thanks for doing such a great job separating your recyclables from your trash. Keep up the good work!

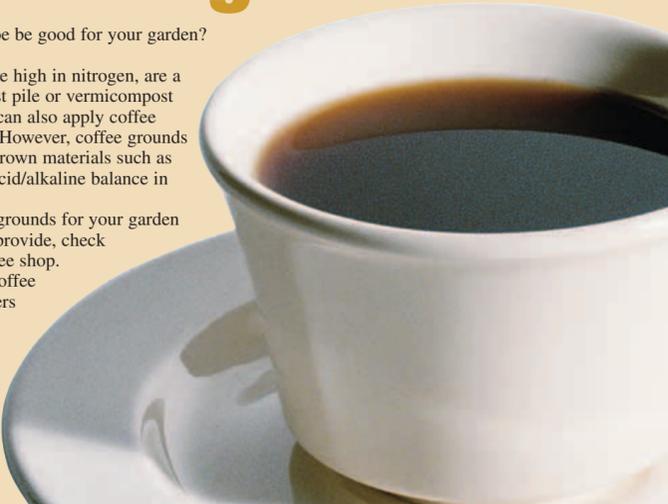
# Grounds for gardeners

Could your morning cup of joe be good for your garden? The answer is YES!

Coffee grounds, which are high in nitrogen, are a good addition to your compost pile or vermicompost (worm composting) bin. You can also apply coffee grounds directly to your soil. However, coffee grounds are acidic so mix them with brown materials such as fall leaves to keep a healthy acid/alkaline balance in your soil.

If you want more coffee grounds for your garden than your own daily pot will provide, check with a local restaurant or coffee shop. Many are already providing coffee grounds to gardeners and others may be willing to do so. For instance, Starbucks stores nationwide provide grounds to residents who request them through the "Grounds for Your Garden" program.

Don't forget—you can compost your paper coffee filters, too!



# Go to the source

Whether you're a researcher, an interested citizen, a teacher, or a student, there are many great books and other resources to help you learn more about reducing, reusing, recycling, and buying recycled. By reading more about these topics, you will see what a difference you can make with your choices and actions. Plus, you'll be excited to share your newfound knowledge with your friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and others.

Search for resources at the local library or try to find them at used bookstores. Here are some book lists that will get you started:

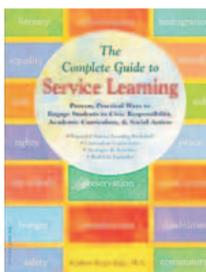
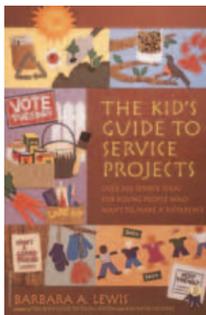
- America Recycles Day Suggested Readings on Recycling, Garbage, Composting, Vermiculture (worm composting), and the Environment: [www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org) (click on "Suggested Reading")
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's site for Teachers and Students: [www.epa.gov/epahome/students.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epahome/students.htm)
- An Annotated Bibliography of Children's Literature with Environmental Themes: [www.teachers.net/archive/envirobks.html](http://www.teachers.net/archive/envirobks.html)
- National Association for Humane and Environmental Education List of Best Books: [www.nahee.org/awards/best\\_books.asp](http://www.nahee.org/awards/best_books.asp)
- Outdoor Book Reviews, a Guide to Outdoor Literature: [www.ronwatters.com/BkMain.htm](http://www.ronwatters.com/BkMain.htm)

Here's a great way to spread the word to others. Compile your own list of favorites about the environment. Visit the library and write down the call letters and numbers for each of these books or other resources. Back at your computer, create an easy-to-read bookmark with the titles and library information. These bookmarks would even make good holiday card inserts or gift tags.

## Are there children in your life?

Do they know that they can help make our world a better place? This fall, students are talking a lot about voting and elections. Even though they aren't yet old enough to vote, there are still many things that they can do to improve our communities and the environment. Check out these books:

- The Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference* by Barbara A. Lewis (Free Spirit Publishing, 1995)
- The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action* by Cathryn Berger Kaye (Free Spirit Publishing, 2003)



# Give me the good news first

Today, Americans are recycling between one-quarter and one-third of the trash they generate. Some regions of the United States have much higher rates than others. And, of course, in states with disposal bans on specific materials or deposits on items such as beverage containers, rates for those materials are much higher than the national averages.

Enjoying the highest national recycling rates are lead-acid batteries at 94 percent, corrugated boxes at 70 percent, newspaper at 60 percent, steel cans and packaging at almost 59 percent, yard waste at about 57 percent, and both large appliances (often called "white goods") and office papers at 55 percent. Other products continue to see growth in their recycling rates, including magazines and tires.

The news when it comes to beverage containers is less good. Soft drink and water bottles (made from #1 PETE plastic) are only being recycled at a rate of about 36 percent, down from a high of 46 percent a decade ago. Milk jugs and detergent bottles (made from #2 HDPE plastic) have also seen a drop in their recycling rate, to 28 percent from a high of just over 30 percent. However, even as the proportion of recycled to discarded containers has dropped, the weight of the recycled plastic has continued to grow because more of these containers are being used.

Glass containers have also seen a drop in recycling—both in terms of percentage and total weight. The current rate is around 22 percent, down from a high of 27 percent.

The most distressing trend, however, concerns aluminum beverage containers. Nationwide, the recycling rate for aluminum cans peaked in 1992 at 65 percent. As of 2003, that rate had dropped to only 44 percent. The Container Recycling Institute estimates that Americans are now failing to recycle more than 50 billion recyclable



aluminum cans each year. If you stacked these cans end-to-end, they would circle the Earth 153 times!

Aluminum should be one of recycling's greatest success stories. It does not degrade during the recycling process and can be endlessly recycled back into the same product. In fact, an aluminum can used and recycled today could be melted, remanufactured, refilled, and back on store shelves within six weeks! Aluminum recycling also requires as much as 95 percent less energy and creates 75 percent less pollution than making new aluminum from bauxite ore.

Meanwhile, Americans are under the impression that they are still recycling aluminum cans at the same rate they did in the early 1990s. A study by Alcan, an aluminum can recycler, found that 70 percent of Americans say they are always or often recycle aluminum cans. One of the reasons many Americans may be overestimating their recycling is that they are still recycling all or most of their cans at home. However, more beverages than ever—including those in aluminum cans—are being consumed and trashed away from home while people are on the go.

Sources: "The State of Garbage in America" by BioCycle magazine and the Earth Engineering Center of Columbia University; "Municipal Solid Waste in the United States" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Franklin Associates, and the Container Recycling Institute.

## Quick tips to eliminate waste

At work or school, creating less trash is easy. At least, it is if you take these simple steps:

- Use both sides of paper.
- Use scrap paper and envelopes for messages.
- Reuse rubber bands, paper clips, and other fasteners.
- Use e-mail whenever possible.
- Create electronic folders to save needed e-mails, rather than printing them out and filing them.
- Refill or buy remanufactured ink jet and laser toner cartridges.
- Keep everyone in-the-loop by posting information on a bulletin board.
- Share magazines with friends.
- Carry your own refillable mug or cup.
- Pack a waste-free lunch in a reusable bag or box with washable containers and a cloth napkin.



# Thinning down

In recent years, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 15.5 million tons of container and packaging waste have been prevented by manufacturers' redesign efforts. As a result, in the past decades, some of your favorite containers have lost weight:

- In 1972, there were 21.75 aluminum cans in a pound. Today, there are 32 cans per pound.
- Non-returnable glass containers are 44 percent lighter today than they were in the early 1970s.
- In 1977, a 2-liter bottle weighed about 2.4 ounces. Today, it weighs only 1.8 ounces.
- The average 1-gallon milk jug weighs 30 percent less than it did 20 years ago.

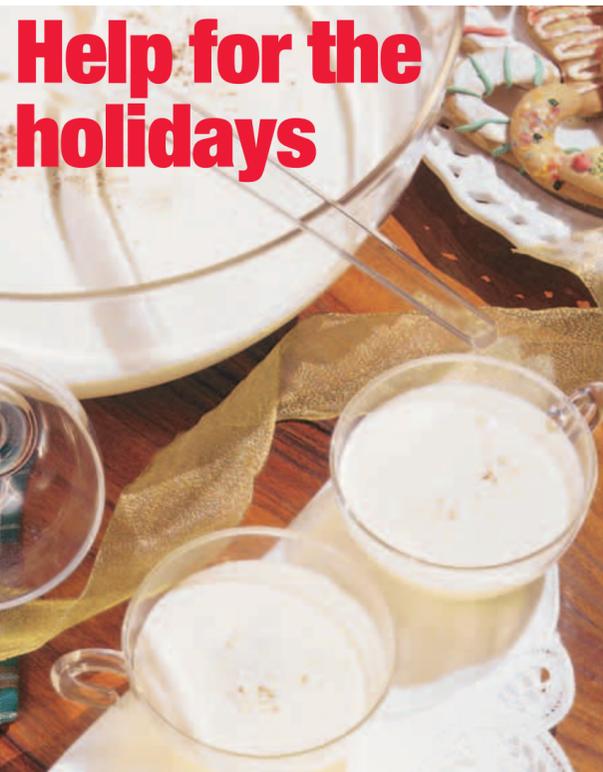
## Who measures our waste?

Each year, two separate national studies look at how much municipal solid waste Americans are creating, recycling, and disposing. These studies are "The State of Garbage in America" by BioCycle magazine and the Earth Engineering Center of Columbia University and "Municipal Solid Waste in the United States" by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Franklin Associates.

The methods and data sources of these two studies vary, so each year their results differ somewhat. In the most recent results published, the State of Garbage reported a 26.7 percent national recycling rate and the Municipal Solid Waste report estimated a 29.7 percent rate.

Municipal solid waste is the regular trash generated by households, schools, and offices. It does not include industrial or construction waste.

# Help for the holidays



As the holiday season approaches, you are probably already planning trips and parties. Beginning in November and continuing through January, many people travel, visit relatives, eat big meals, prepare special foods, and give more than a few gifts.

Because of this, the holiday season is often also the waste season. It doesn't have to be. Here are some tips to help you have a less wasteful—and more relaxing two months.

**Party Planning** — Know how many people are coming to each event you're hosting and plan the food accordingly. If you have more leftovers than your family can finish, send food home with your guests. Avoid disposable decorations, dishes, cups, and napkins. Instead, reuse old family decorations, your own dishes, glasses, and cups, and reusable, cloth napkins. If you don't have cloth napkins, maybe this would be a good time to invest in some. They are inexpensive and can be reused year after year.

**Travel** — Road trips often include disposable food packaging and recyclable drink containers that end up in roadside trash cans. If you're traveling by car, pack snacks (and even lunch) in your own washable, reusable containers. You can put them into a cooler with drinks from home. When you get to your destination, wash your containers. They'll be ready to repack for the trip home. Look for roadside recycling containers, which are available at some rest stops. If you don't find them, put your recyclable aluminum, glass, and plastic beverage cans and bottles into a bag or box and recycle them when you get home or to your destination.

# What (really) matters

This is a great time of year to discuss what really matters most to you. During this season of giving, learn what your family and friends really need. You might find that they could use more of your time and attention. Time and attention don't cost money and almost always create significantly less waste than giving them a lot of stuff.

Here are some sample resolutions for your family or friends:

- We will schedule time for unscheduled fun each week. During our free time, we will find a fun activity that all can take part in, such as playing a game, taking a "moon hike" outdoors in the evening, working on a puzzle, creating a scav-

**Gift Giving** — Make a list of everyone to whom you'll give a gift this holiday season. After making the list, decide the total amount you want to spend on gifts. Now, decide what you would like to give. One budget-conscious and waste-reducing way to give gifts is to shop for gently-used books and other items at secondhand and antique stores. Another way is to give of yourself, such as offering to babysit for young children or drive an elderly person to the store. You also might consider giving to a good cause in honor of someone on the list; you can make a card describing the group that has received money or goods in their name. Framed photos make a wonderful gift—you might even be able to make a frame or find a unique used frame. If you choose to buy new gifts, look for items such as jewelry or handmade stationery made from recyclables.

**Gift Wrapping** — Reuse wrapping paper, gift bags, ribbon, and tags from past years. If you don't have any on hand, make your own wrapping paper by decorating the blank side of brown paper grocery bags, reusing colored sections of newspaper, old maps, or children's artwork, or using fabric, shelf paper, or wallpaper scraps. In other words, begin with items that you already have on hand! Or, "wrap" the gift in a basket or canvas bag that will be reusable later. If you buy wrapping paper, look for paper with recycled-content.

**Holiday Greetings** — Think about the holiday greetings that your family most enjoys—they are probably the cards or letters that include newsy notes and fun photos. Consider making your own holiday greeting postcard or letter this year. Of course, print it on recycled-content paper and mail it in recycled-content envelopes. Or, e-mail paperless greetings instead.

enger hunt, making a craft project, or cooking.

- We will devote more of our time to helping each other. For instance, kids can help parents wash the car, do the dishes, or fold the laundry. The whole family can help elderly relatives, neighbors, or friends with a big project around the house or yard. Parents can commit to spending an hour doing an activity of the children's choice.
- We will volunteer our time to make our community a better place. There are many opportunities for whole families to volunteer. On a regular basis (monthly, quarterly, etc.), we will do something to improve our local environment or help someone in need.

## What's the fuss about fall leaves?

The way some people act, you'd think that fall leaves were poisonous. These folks rush out to remove the leaves from the lawn and shortly thereafter haul them from the property.

However, fall leaves aren't the enemy. In fact, these leaves can be friends to your lawn, garden, and soil, recycling this year's summer beauty for the good of next year's healthy plants.

Don't send your fall leaves away. Instead, use them in your yard. Here are some of the ways to put leaves to good use:

- Use your mulching mower to shred the leaves onto your lawn. The small leaf parts will decompose by spring, but, in the meantime, they will protect your grass roots from harsh temperatures and provide some valuable nutrients to your lawn. If you don't have a mulching mower, you can simply remove the bagger attachment on your mower and insert the chute cover (a safety device that covers the hole where the bagger normally attaches).
- Rake a layer of leaves onto your garden or into your flower beds. Or,



pick up leaves with your bagging lawn mower and put these shredded leaves in a layer onto gardens and flower beds.

Whether the leaves are whole or shredded, the layer should be no more than 2 to 3 inches thick. These leaves will serve as a mulch, protecting helpful insects, bacteria, and fungi from the cold and keeping moisture in the soil for your spring plants.

In the spring, aerate the soil by mixing the decomposing leaves into it.

- Compost your fall leaves. You can add whole leaves to your pile or bin, but shredded leaves will compost more quickly. To shred leaves, use a lawn mower or a chipper/shredder, a piece of equipment that can be rented or shared with neighbors. Mix the fall leaves with "green" waste, such as fruit and vegetable scraps, grass clippings, or garden plants. You can compost in a backyard pile or bin. Just remember to keep the pile moist (not soaking wet) and to turn or stir the materials occasionally. The compost is finished when the mixture looks like soil.

## What about leaf burning?

Fond memories of the "old days" aside, leaf burning is not the proper way to handle your fall leaves.

Leaf burning releases many pollutants into the air—smoke from just five pounds of burning leaves creates a full pound of pollution. Leaf burning can create health hazards for children, the elderly, and people with breathing difficulties. Burning can also put nearby properties at risk.

In order to protect people and property, leaf burning has been banned in many locations.

## It's almost tree time

Believe it or not, you'll soon be thinking about putting up a holiday tree. This year, consider a reusable tree.

Here are your options:

- Go treeless. Use twinkling lights and family decorations to decorate mantles, stair rails, and table tops. If you're traveling during the holidays, this might be a low-stress way to decorate and still make the house festive.
- Create a non-traditional "tree" by decorating a large houseplant with bows and lights.
- Buy a good-quality artificial tree. Many of these look "real," especially after they are decorated. This tree could serve your family for many



years. You just box it up each season.

- Select a live tree. Live trees can be used indoors during the holidays and planted outdoors afterward. Your family will enjoy the tree now and for years to come. Your neighbors and local wildlife will get to savor it, too!
- If you decorate with a cut, real holiday tree, be sure to recycle it after Christmas. We'll be accepting trees for recycling at the Buncombe County Landfill, the Nature Center, and McCormick Field. Last year, we collected and recycled more than 1,000 Christmas trees at the Landfill alone.

## Bulky is better

The last time you were at the grocery store, how much did you spend? Ten percent of that bill paid for packaging. And that packaging, none of which was edible and most of which wasn't reusable, in turn constituted about 12 percent of your household garbage. Fortunately, more than a third of this type of packaging is being recycled each year.

However, whether your packaging went into a trash can or a recycling bin, it's yours—bought and paid for. Would you like to save money on your next grocery bill? Reduce the amount of packaging that you buy:

- Choose the quantity of fruits and vegetables that suits your family. Rather than buying pre-packaged quantities, count the items that you need. If you have a single item, don't put it into a plastic bag. If you have a bunch of items that will be peeled for use, such as bananas, you also don't need a bag.
- Check out the store's bulk buy area. If you find items that are on your list, select the quantity you need in this area.
- Compare the price per unit of products—buying in bulk usually provides a cheaper product per unit or per serving. For instance, compare the per-ounce price of applesauce in single-serve disposable plastic cups with that of apple-



sauce in a large recyclable jar. In addition to eliminating the extra waste from the cups and the paperboard holder, you'll probably also find that the applesauce in the jar is a lot cheaper.

- Buy non-perishables in the largest possible container. Laundry detergent won't "go bad," so buy a large container. You'll get less package per unit of product.
- Purchase concentrated products and refills. Again, you get less package per unit of usable product.
- Take your own grocery bags to the store. Reuse grocery store bags that you have at home. Or, use canvas or string bags. It's easy to keep them in the car for use.



### NOW RECYCLING:

*We are now accepting empty propane tanks from gas grills and turkey fryers at the Landfill during regular business hours. We will only be accepting propane tanks from residents. (Sorry, no businesses.)*



You've seen the "Give 'em a brake" signs encouraging you to slow down in road construction zones. You know what the flashing lights on a school bus mean. But what happens when you see a trash or recycling truck at the side of the road?

For too many people, the answer is to race the engine and speed around, without paying attention to where workers are located or what they might be doing. As a result, there are many near misses and several serious accidents each year, a few of which involve fatalities.

That's how the "Slow Down to Get

Around" campaign was born. About a year ago, a trash collector was seriously injured and another killed in roadside accidents involving inattentive and careless driving. Both worked for Rumpke Waste Corporation of Ohio. After the accidents, Rumpke and its truck supplier, McNeilus Truck and Manufacturing, developed a campaign to raise awareness about the risks facing workers whose jobs keep them at the roadsides and in harm's way. The message of the campaign is that drivers need to pay better attention and slow down to get around stopped or slow-moving vehicles—for everyone's safety.

When you see a trash or recycling truck stopped or slowed, don't hurry up. Instead, sit up and pay attention. Use caution. Avoid accidents. Protect those who must work in the streets to do their jobs and yourself—*slow down to get around!*

### We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

We are also available to speak to your club or class about solid waste, waste reduction, recycling and composting.

**Buncombe County Solid Waste Department**  
2229 Riverside Drive  
Asheville, NC 28804  
828-250-5460  
Web: [buncombecounty.org](http://buncombecounty.org)

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### Important Phone Numbers for County Residents

Junk Motor Vehicle Officer — Roger Presley	828-250-5470
Environmental Control Officer — Rick Ramsey	828-250-5471
Environmental Control Officer — Jane Cole	828-250-5472
Hazardous Waste Officer — Denese Ballew	828-250-5425
Buncombe County Landfill	828-645-5311
Buncombe County Transfer Station	828-250-6205