

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



**Buncombe County Solid Waste Department**  
**828-250-5460**  
**Summer 2004**



## Weekly collections continue for hazardous waste and electronics

Buncombe County now accepts household hazardous waste (HHW) and electronics every Friday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. at a special drop-off area at the Landfill (see map).

Since weekly collection began on February 6, we have filled a 53-foot semi-trailer every two weeks. This loaded trailer leaves the Landfill carrying mostly paint and electronics. However, there is also a drum each of corrosive materials, flammable liquids, aerosol cans, and small, loose-packed flammable items.

About 95 percent of all of this material is being recycled!

Each week, we accept electronics from residents at no charge. Businesses are also able to drop off electronics, but they are 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.

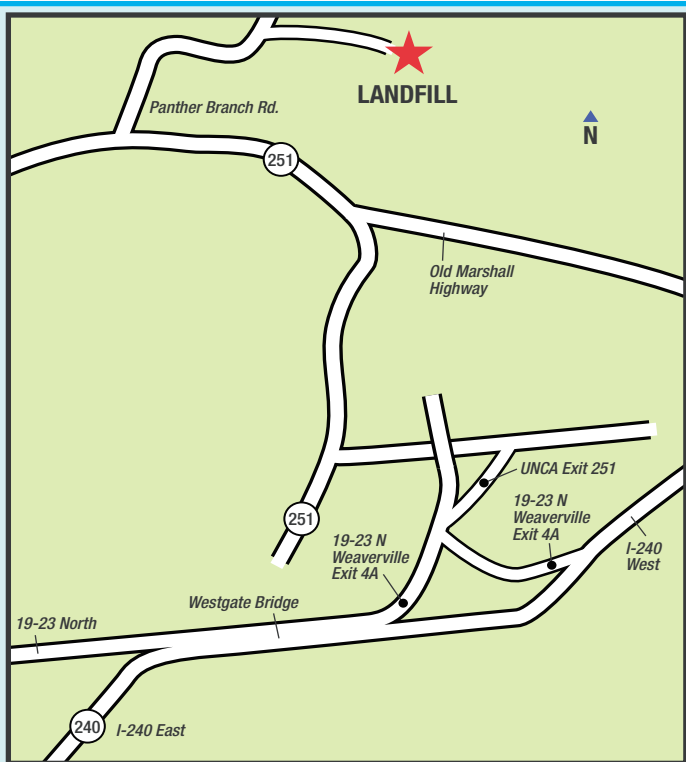
For more information, call 250-5460 or the Landfill at 645-5311.



*This building is the centerpiece of our new weekly collection of household hazardous waste and electronics.*

### 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.



## Remember to recycle at the Landfill, too!

You can recycle all of these items 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.

## 10 tips for good recycling

Recycling is a simple activity that keeps valuable resources out of landfills and gets them into manufacturing plants where they can be used again. Here are 10 tips that will make you a better recycler:

1. Know what you can recycle:
  - If you have **curbside recycling**, you can commingle these items in your blue recycling bags: #1 & #2 plastic bottles and jugs; aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass food and beverage containers; steel cans; newspapers and inserts; magazines and catalogs; and phone books. Next to your blue bag, you can also recycle flattened corrugated cardboard.
2. Don't put non-recyclables into recycling bags or bins. They are contaminants that need to be sorted out—by hand—at the processing center.
3. Trash goes in...well...trash cans. Soiled, food-stained, and greasy pizza paper, food and gum wrappers, pizza boxes, diapers, and other similar items are garbage.
4. Rinse your containers before recycling them. This keeps the floor

*(Continued on Page 4)*



*Have you seen these trucks lately? Our Buncombe County truck fleet now includes moving billboards reminding residents to show their "Buncombe County Pride."*



### 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

CLIP & SAVE

# Why do we buy?



According to the Worldwatch Institute, 1.7 billion global citizens are now part of the consumer culture, with nearly half of these in the developing world. Driving the consumption of these global citizens is a social competition that is often described as “keeping up with the Joneses.”

Of course, the “Joneses” aren’t simply our neighbors anymore. Instead, they are the idealized images of modern citizens presented to us by advertising, a global industry spending \$446 billion a year to influence how we think and feel—and who we compare ourselves to.

Not only do advertisers attempt to focus our social comparisons outside our circle of friends or community, but they and the businesses they represent also encourage us to accept the belief that our primary connections are to products and not people. Consider all of the ads that suggest a razor, coffee, or other consumer product will be with you long after Mr. or Ms. Right is long gone.

Meanwhile, most consumers like to believe that advertising affects the decisions of others but not their own. Ask around about advertising. How often are you told something like “Oh, I don’t watch the ads on TV” or “I never read the ads in the magazine”?

Advertising works exactly by making us believe that it is not working. According to Rance Crain of *Advertising Age* magazine, “Only eight percent of an ad’s message is received by the conscious mind; the rest is worked and reworked deep within the recesses of the brain, where the product’s positioning and repositioning takes shape.” Couple this with the studies suggesting that as much as 95 percent of consumer decision-making occurs in the subconscious mind. In other words, most of the input and output related to our purchasing habits isn’t occurring in the part of our brains

where we are evaluating and consciously making choices.

As advertising continues to encourage us to seek satisfaction through shopping, the consumption habits of the 1.7 billion global consumers make a larger and larger impact on our natural world, taking a bigger bite out of natural resources, drawing down water supplies, using up energy created from non-renewable fossil fuels, and creating vast quantities of waste.

In the countries, including the United States, where per capita consumption is the highest, satisfaction has not increased apace with the ever-growing house full of stuff. In fact, many report that the pressure to work longer hours to earn more money and the resulting loss of time for families, friends, hobbies, and volunteer activities have led to more dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Apparently, a larger quantity of stuff does not lead to a better quality of life.

Modifying these consumption habits won’t be easy. Our global economy feeds off the demand for inexpensive, easily-replaced goods. Much of that demand is created or encouraged by advertising. However, the same machine of commerce that provides these goods can be retooled to provide higher-quality, more durable, and environmentally friendlier products.

Changing our consumption patterns for the better will take time, as well as action from governments and corporations. However, it will also require literally “millions of individual decisions that can only begin at the grassroots” (*The State of the World 2004*).

What’s a conscientious consumer to do? Here are some ideas:

- Quiz yourself. How much do you know about our consumer society? Are Americans happier today than they were 50 years ago when they made and consumed less? Take the quiz at the Center for a New American Dream website and find out. Go to [www.newdream.org/the-dream/index.html](http://www.newdream.org/the-dream/index.html), and click on “Consumption Quiz.”
- Get connected. One of the ways that advertising works on us is to intensify our feelings of social disconnection. Volunteer. Meet your neighbors. Get involved in the civic life of your community.
- Focus time with family and friends on activities that involve everyone but don’t cost a lot of money. A credit card is not necessary to achieve a “priceless” moment.
- Turn off the television. Studies have shown that for every hour of television watched each week, viewers spend an extra \$4 on average—

that’s \$208 per year. That means if you are watching five hours of television a week, you are probably spending at least \$1,000 that you wouldn’t be otherwise.

- Make your voice heard. Let those in government, corporate leadership, and your community know that issues related to how and what we consume matter to you. You can participate in online campaigns, such as “Take Back Your Time Day,” call or write public officials and corporate marketing departments, or share your concerns one-on-one with your neighbors and friends.
- Purchase wisely those products that you truly need. Learn where and how products are made. Opt for durable, high-quality products that won’t need to be replaced right away. Select products made from renewable resources using renewable energy. Choose recycled-content products whenever possible. Tell retailers what you are looking for and ask them to please stock these types of products.

To learn more about how and why we buy the things we do, take a look at these resources:

- *Can’t Buy Me Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel* by Jean Kilbourne (Touchstone, 1999)
- *The State of the World 2004, Special Focus: The Consumer Society* from the Worldwatch Institute (W.W. Norton & Company, 2004)
- *Good Stuff? A Behind the Scenes Guide to the Things We Buy* from the Worldwatch Institute, published online at [www.worldwatch.org/features/consumption](http://www.worldwatch.org/features/consumption)
- “Why Consumption Matters” by Dave Tilford, posted at [www.newdream.org/core/whyconsumption-matters.html](http://www.newdream.org/core/whyconsumption-matters.html)
- *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* by Gary Cross (Columbia University Press, 2000)
- *How Much Is Enough?: The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth* by Alan Durning (W.W. Norton & Company, 1992)

## Did you know?

At the same time that 1.7 billion people are living as world consumers, 2.8 billion are living on less than \$2 per day. Providing adequate food, clean water, and basic education to these poorest of our world’s citizens would take only about as much money as their richer neighbors are spending on cosmetics, ice cream, and pet food.

## Quotes requoted

*Our enormously productive economy... demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate.*

**Victor Lebow, 1955**

*In America, we keep upping the ante. Our expectations keep accommodating to what we have obtained. Wanting more remains constant, regardless of what we have.*

**Paul Wachtel, 1989**

*For the first time in human history, children are hearing most of the stories, most of the time, not from their parents or school or churches or neighbors, but from a handful of global conglomerates that have something to sell.*

**George Gerbner, 1994**

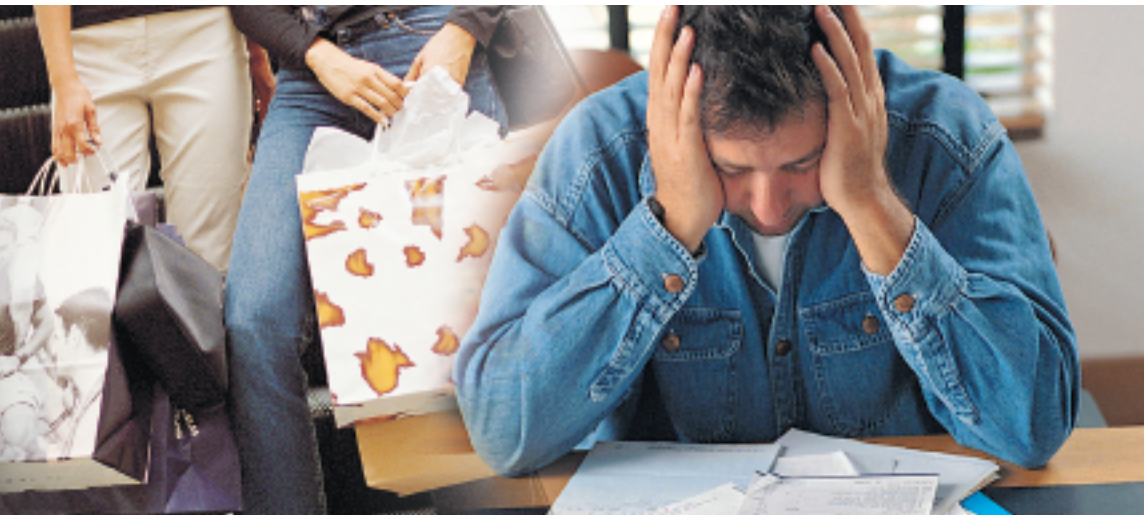
*[J]ust about everyone in America still feels personally exempt from advertising’s influence.... In truth, we are all influenced by advertising. There is no way to tune out this much information, especially when it is carefully designed to break through the “tuning out” process.*

*The fact is that much of advertising’s power comes from this belief that advertising does not affect us. The most effective kind of propaganda is that which is not recognized as propaganda.*

**Jean Kilbourne, 1999**

*One way to see it is to recognize that perception is a form of physiological intake, just as is eating, drinking, or breathing. Like food, water, or air, the information we take in can be polluted.*

**Ed Ayres, 2004**



## Sizing up well-being



There are many ways to measure an economy. However, the one we hear about most often is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The GDP measures total spending on all goods and services, even items such as crime and pollution that aren't necessarily good for our communities or lives. The GDP has many critics because it values all spending equally.

As a result, researchers continue to work on developing new measures of economic well-being that will more accurately reflect how well humans, economies, and ecosystems are faring. One of these proposals is that of Robert Prescott-Allen, who authored *The Wellbeing of Nations: A Country-by-Country Index of Quality of Life and the Environment*. Prescott-Allen ranks 180 countries based on these two indicators and the way that they interrelate:

- **Human Wellbeing** measures human health, longevity, and the stability of family size; how well basic needs are met; the vitality of the national economy; access to education, knowledge, communications systems, and culture;

freedom, peacefulness, and community situations; and equity.

- **Ecosystem Wellbeing** looks at the demands placed on land, water, and air; species diversity; energy consumption; agriculture and mining impacts; and resource extraction, use, and reuse.

Prescott-Allen's findings? No country is sustainable on both measures. In the countries doing the best, either people or the environment suffer. In the majority of the countries measured, there is a deficit in both human and ecosystem well-being.

Other ways to measure the economy include the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) and the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW). Both take into account many factors, including spending (the current GDP), the positive value of such things as volunteering, parenting, and housework, and the cost of social ills such as crime, car accidents, family breakdown, and loss of natural resources. Like the Wellbeing Index, both the GPI and ISEW suggest that quality of life is not improving for people or the planet.

# If you can't beat 'em, join 'em

Advertising works. That's why organizations including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Environmental Defense, and others are taking part in a movement that you might call "counteradvertising." Counteradvertising uses the same clever tools, presentation styles, language, and art as modern advertising. However, it is designed to tell another side of the story.

In some cases, such as the UNEP's "Shopping for a Better World" campaign which promotes sustainable consumption as a way to a more desirable lifestyle, counteradvertising offers an alternative and more positive message. In the case of Environmental Defense's battle against global warming, counteradvertising alludes to another more famous ad campaign, capturing more attention and shining a spotlight on the effort. Environmental Defense's campaign is dubbed "UNDO IT."

Meanwhile, other counteradvertising spoofs advertising, poking fun at the way ads are designed to subtly and not-so-subtly lead us to make sometimes selfish, often unnecessary, and frequently environmentally unfriendly picks.

### Do you want to learn more about how you can shop for a better world?

*Industry and Environment*, a publication of The United Nations Environment Programme Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics, published a 56-page report entitled "Shopping for a Better World: Sustainability and Retailing." This report is available online at [www.unep.org/media/review/vol26no1/UNEP0103.PDF](http://www.unep.org/media/review/vol26no1/UNEP0103.PDF).

## How literate are you?

What kind of media consumer are you? Do you think about how and why certain types of messages are being "sent" to you through various media, including magazines, television, newspapers, video games, and more? Do you stop to consider who is sending these messages and why? Do you wonder what information was left out? Are you sometimes skeptical about the claims being made?

Although many of us are cynics about media messages, Jean Kilbourne, author of *Can't Buy Me Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*, points out that few of us are critics, taking careful stock of how and why we receive the messages that we do—and what to do about them. A critic thoughtfully evaluates, while a cynic minimizes the importance of both the media and the messages. When it comes to media messages, we need more critics.

If we are all more literate about commercial and non-commercial messages, we can make better decisions as individuals, communities, and a nation. Learn more about media literacy and media education efforts at these sites:

Action Coalition for Media Education  
[www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org)

Alliance for a Media Literate America  
[www.aamlainfo.org](http://www.aamlainfo.org)

Center for Media Literacy  
[www.medialit.org](http://www.medialit.org)

Resources for Change: Media Advocacy and Media Literacy Organizations  
[www.jeankilbourne.com/resources/medialit.html](http://www.jeankilbourne.com/resources/medialit.html)

Media Matters, a campaign of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.aap.org/advocacy/mediamatters.htm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/mediamatters.htm)

National Institute on Media and the Family  
[www.mediafamily.org](http://www.mediafamily.org)

**10 tips...***(Continued from Page 1)*

- under your recycling bin or bag from getting sticky. It also keeps hungry bugs and rodents away—at your house and at the recycling center.
- Remove caps, lids, and pumps. Even on plastic containers, these are made from a different plastic resin, or “recipe,” so they can’t be recycled with the plastic bottles. When you empty the container and prepare to rinse it, discard the cap, lid, or pump. Don’t save it and put it back on!
  - Plastic bags are handy—at the store and around the house. At the recycling center, they are a nuisance! Plus, we don’t have a market for them, so they must be fished out of the recyclables and discarded. Please, don’t put plastic bags into recycling bins. If you want to recycle your plastic bags, drop them off at a grocery or discount store that provides a recycling bin.
  - Most plastic bottles are recyclable. Look for the chasing-arrows recycling symbol surrounding a number 1 or 2. Sometimes you’ll see the letters PETE under the number 1 and the letters HDPE under the number 2. These bottles ARE recyclable. If you see any other number, put the container in the trash. We ONLY have markets for #1 and #2 plastic bottles.
  - Plastic tubs and trays aren’t recyclable—no matter what number you see printed on them. Reuse them around the house, give them to a school to be used in craft projects, or toss them into the trash.
  - Glass bottles and jars that held food or drinks ARE recyclable. Other glass objects, such as cookware, plates, glasses, mirrors, window glass, and light bulbs, are not the same type of glass as container glass and are a very serious contaminant in making new glass containers. Please keep these items OUT of recycling bins.
  - Never, ever put hazardous waste, other liquids, or sharps, such as needles and lancets, into recycling bins. These aren’t recyclable—and pose a serious risk to recycling haulers and sorting line staff. Be considerate!

**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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70% POST-CONSUMER NEWS  
CONTENT, USING SOY INKS

# Recycle more at the Transfer Station!

The Transfer Station, which is located on Brevard Road, is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 1 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.



When you think of summer, you might think of pickup baseball games in the backyard, picnics, and playing fetch with your favorite pooch. But how safe is that grass under your feet and how clean is that fresh air?

This year, Americans will apply more than 70 million pounds of chemicals to about 30 million acres of lawns. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, homeowners use up to 10 times more chemical pesticides per acre on lawns than farmers use on crops.

And then, there are those lawn mowers and leaf blowers. Gasoline-powered mowers and blowers leave behind more emissions than an automobile driving 200 or more miles—and they leave them all concentrated in your yard.

So, what is a caring homeowner and good neighbor to do? Grow dandelions? Convince the neighbors that the “shaggy” look is in? No, you don’t need to go to those extremes.

Here are some ideas to keep your lawn beautiful and healthy, even as you protect the children, pets, and other folk who would like to enjoy it this summer:

- Use a rake and broom instead of the gas-powered blower. Blowers dehydrate your soil and disperse particles into the air. Plus, raking and sweeping help build muscles and a

healthier heart.

- Keep mower blades sharp and the engine tuned up on your gas-powered mower. Mow high and never cut off more than one-third of the grass blade. This will lead to more efficient—and less polluting—mowing.
- If you need a new mower, consider a manual push mower or an electric mower. A manual, or reel, mower has no emissions, and is good for you as well as your lawn. An electric mower has fewer emissions and also eliminates the need for you to store flammable gasoline in your garage.
- Grasscycle your clippings by leaving them on the lawn when you mow. They provide needed nutrients and moisture to your lawn.
- Compost your yard waste.
- Allow more of your lawn area to “go natural” with native plants, including ground covers, wildflowers, and trees. Native plants are better adapted to our environment, so require less water and fewer chemicals to thrive.
- Pull or dig up weeds, such as dandelions.
- Practice “integrated pest management.” Invite good bugs, such as ladybugs, lacewings, and praying mantises, to live in your yard by planting some of their favorite plants.
- Try homemade alternatives to chemicals. For instance, a spray made of lemon juice and vinegar will kill weeds growing up through sidewalk cracks.
- When you need a chemical, read labels carefully before you buy. Pay close attention to recommended safety precautions and storage requirements.
- Select the least hazardous chemical available to do the job.
- Avoid “combination” products. Often these are designed to treat a wide variety of problems that your lawn may not have.
- Spot treat problem areas rather than broadcast spreading or spraying the entire lawn.

**Read more about it**

Beyond Pesticides

[www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org)

Center for a New American Dream

[www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org) (Click on The Conscious Consumer.)

Environment & Human Health

[www.ehhi.org/pesticides](http://www.ehhi.org/pesticides)

Environmental Protection Agency

[www.epa.gov/pesticides](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides)