

A Quarterly Newsletter of



Buncombe County Solid Waste Department

828-250-5460

www.buncombecounty.org/green

Fall 2011



Buncombe County ranks 3rd in the state for recycling!

Each year, the North Carolina Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach uses the data from the solid waste and materials management annual reports that are completed by each local government in North Carolina to assess the total amount of material recycled

by North Carolina municipalities and counties. During fiscal year 2009-10, the recovery of traditional recyclable materials increased compared to previous years, and the proportion of materials recovered and returned to the economy compared to disposal was the highest on record. A notable increase came in plastic bottle recovery, which rose by 22 percent over the previous year.

Using these reports, counties were ranked based on the number of pounds



of material recycled per person. Buncombe County ranked third overall, with 393.1 pounds of material recycled per capita. A total of 45,285 tons of traditional recyclables were recovered in Buncombe County during FY 2009-10. Only Pitt and Catawba counties recycled more

per capita.

The Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach has released the annual ranking of County Recycling Performance for FY 2009-10. To see the complete rankings and for more information, visit this website: www.p2pays.org/localgov/Documents/County%20Recycling%20Performance%20for%20Fiscal%20Year%202009-10.pdf.

What's so great about recycling?

For starters, it saves a lot of energy. Every ton of mixed paper recycled saves an amount of energy equal to 165 gallons of gasoline. Every ton of aluminum cans recycled saves an amount of energy equal to 1,665 gallons of gasoline. But that's not all! Recycling also provides valuable resources for manufacturing new products. In 2009, Americans provided 122.5 billion pounds of recyclable paper, cardboard, and containers to factories. People like you supply a lot of raw materials to manufacturers!

Since 1997, Americans have been reminded each November that recycling is not only a great habit but also an important part of our economy! On America Recycles Day, which is observed nationally on November 15th, we celebrate all of the great things that recycling does—conserves resources, saves energy, reduces pollution, and creates jobs!

This fall, take some time to evaluate your recycling. Do you recycle regularly? Do you know what materials go into your bin at home and at work? When you shop, do you look for products made from recyclables? Did you know you can buy recycled-content paper, folders, T-shirts, fleece hoodies, and reusable water bottles? In other words, do you know all you need to know about recycling? Recycling is a great thing to do—be great at it!

Do you need help? We are here to answer your questions. Contact Curbside Management at 252-2532 with recycling questions or visit their website, www.curbie.com. For additional information about garbage and HHW, visit www.buncombecounty.org/Governing/Depts/SolidWaste/Default.aspx.



Turning fall leaves into garden gold

The morning air feels crisp. The leaves are beginning to change colors. Fall is in the air. That means you'll soon be raking!

Rather than picking up, bagging, and disposing of your fall leaves, consider using them in your yard. Here are three simple options to turn your fall leaves into garden gold:

- ❖ Carry the raked leaves to your compost bin. Mix in the leaves using a shovel. Keep in mind that too many leaves may slow down the composting process. If you have a lot of leaves, pile the extras near your compost pile or bin and mix them in slowly over the next several months as you add "green" debris, such as fruit and vegetable scraps.
- ❖ Shred the leaves with a bagging mower. Use the leaf bits as mulch around trees and plants or to cover your garden for winter. Leaf mulch protects the soil and the beneficial creatures that live in it from the harsh winter temperatures.
- ❖ Forget the rake. Use your mulching mower to shred the leaves onto your lawn. These leaf bits provide protective cover for the grass plants and will decompose by spring. This is perfect if your lawn has only a few younger trees. Your grass will initially look like it has

been "sprinkled" with leaf bits. If it looks "frosted" and not "sprinkled," you are going to have to rake!

If you still have extra leaves after you've composted and mulched, recycle



them at the Buncombe County Landfill. Yard trimmings, brush, and leaves are accepted during regular hours (see back page). Leaves must be separated from brush. If you carry leaves to the landfill in plastic bags, you will be required to remove the leaves from the bags. No plastic bags can be dumped in the yard waste area. There is a fee of \$20 per ton (prorated) for yard waste. If you have questions about yard waste drop-off, call 250-5462.

Reusable bags

Whether you are shopping for groceries, picking up a prescription, or buying a new sweater, you are probably offered a plastic bag. Americans bring home about 312 plastic shopping bags per person each year. While these bags are a valuable commodity in making new bags and other plastic items, very few of them end up getting recycled because they must be kept separate from other recyclables and dropped off at local grocery and discount stores. Unfortunately, many bags end up as litter, stuck in fence rows or branches or floating in our waterways. More go to the landfill. In fact, more than 600,000 pounds of shopping

bags may end up in our landfill each year!

When plastic shopping bags are mixed with other recyclables, they can get caught in processing equipment at recycling facilities. Plastic shopping bags are not accepted in either the Curbside Management or Waste Pro curbside programs in Asheville and Buncombe County. These bags also aren't accepted at the County's drop-off facilities. Instead, most grocery stores have a plastic bag recycling box near the front entrance of the store. The plastic bags are collected and then recycled by the supermarkets and made into new products.

Rather than disposing or recycling plastic bags, why not switch to reusable bags? When you choose reusable bags, you reduce the amount of waste that you create. Reusable bags can be used hundreds of times, with no more than an occasional washing. Keep your bags in your car or truck so they'll be handy when you stop to shop.

Many retail stores, including grocery and discount stores, sell reusable bags. Many stores will give you a small discount when you use your own bags.





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If you were going to make only one change this month, we have a great idea—capture all of your aluminum cans for recycling!

Aluminum beverage cans are one of the easiest containers to recycle in America. Every curbside and drop-off program accepts them. Where recycling containers are found in public spaces, like hotel lobbies, airports, malls, or bus stations, aluminum cans are almost always accepted for recycling there, too. In 2010, Americans recycled nearly 56 billion aluminum cans. That's a huge number and represents 58.1% of the cans used. However, with such easy access to recycling for these cans, why isn't that number even higher?

There are many great reasons to recycle aluminum cans. A new aluminum can has 68% total recycled content, so the markets for aluminum cans are healthy and the cans are being used to make new aluminum. In addition, making aluminum from recycled beverage cans creates only 5% of the greenhouse gas emissions and uses only 5% of the energy when compared to making aluminum from raw materials. Aluminum is infinitely recyclable, so today, 75% of the aluminum ever smelted is still in use.

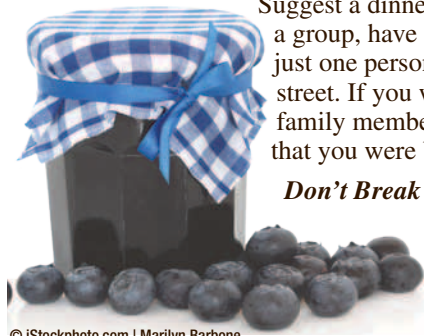
The next time you finish a drink, think about that can. Don't litter it! Don't toss it in the trash! Recycle it! Capture all of your cans—we know you "can" do it! Learn more about aluminum can recycling at www.recyclecansnow.com.

Green Gifts for a Happier Holiday

Would you like to make your holiday season a little less stressful and turn it a brighter shade of green? Would you like a season that focuses more on your relationships than your stuff? We have some advice that will help.

Making a List and Checking It Twice: Write down all of the names of people for whom you normally buy gifts. Is there someone on the list that you'd like to see more often? Instead of giving a gift, make arrangements to get together. Could someone on your list use company throughout the year? Avoid buying a gift and, instead, promise a monthly visit. Do you have adult family members on the list?

Suggest a dinner together in lieu of gifts, donate to a charity that you select as a group, have a "white elephant" gift exchange, or draw names and buy for just one person. Remember, in most relationships, gift-giving is a two-way street. If you want to change the rules this year, communicate with friends and family members about your ideas and suggestions. They will probably be glad that you were brave enough to bring it up!



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Don't Break the Bank: Decide how much you plan to spend on holiday giving. Once you have a total, estimate a budget for each person on your list. Remember that the little extras, such as stocking stuffers and accessories, can add up. As you begin to shop, keep track of your receipts. Periodically evaluate how much you're spending compared to the budget that you developed.

Priceless: Consider gifts of yourself and your time. These gifts improve your relationships, cost nothing, and create no waste. For example, you could offer to visit a friend and bring all the fixings for a homemade dinner—and then make it together. You might schedule a game or movie night for family or friends. You could offer to babysit for an evening or even a weekend. No children in the family? Offer to pet sit or house sit. Volunteer to clean up the yard in the spring or mow the lawn. The possibilities are endless.

Made With Love: Another way to give of yourself is to put your skills to work by making homemade gifts. If you preserve food or jams, give some away as gifts. Record a CD or DVD of a child's performance or an "interview" that gets the child talking about friends, school, and activities, and send the recording to a far-off relative. Refresh a family memory by making your brother the cookies that Grandma used to bake. Decorate an old picture frame with fishing lures and add a photo of you and your grandpa fishing together. Put your old jewelry, clothes, and hats into an unneeded suitcase to create the perfect dress-up chest for a child. We're sure you can think of many other ideas that reflect your own hobbies or honor the skills that a family member or friend passed along to you.



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Experience the Drama: Do you have friends or relatives who love a certain sports team but don't go to games very often? Give them tickets! Not a sports fan? Give tickets to a concert or play, a movie gift card, a museum membership, or park passes. If you have a friend who is interested in learning something new or becoming an expert on a favorite hobby, offer to pay for a class.

Know Thy Recipient: Waiting until the last minute to shop can lead to breaking the budget and choosing less-than-perfect gifts. When you are out of time, anything near a checkout seems "good enough." However, a good-enough gift is likely to be unused. At best, it will be returned, re-gifted, sold, or given away. At worst, it will be forever unused and, eventually, thrown in the trash. Knowing what a friend or family member likes and dislikes, as well as knowing sizes and other essentials, can lead to thoughtful gifts that don't waste your time and money or end up as trash. If you don't have time to find a gift that will reflect the recipient, give a gift card instead.



Wrap It Up: Remember to wrap without waste. Reuse last year's paper (and save this year's for next year). Choose reusable gift bags. Decorate boxes that you use each year for the same person. Use fabric scraps, magazine pages, colorful brochures, or old maps to create unique wrapping "paper."

FAST FACTS

Greenest on the Gridiron

This fall, colleges and universities across the U.S. will be competing in the Game Day Challenge. Each participating school designs a waste reduction plan for one 2011 regular season home football game and then measures the results. Schools can collect common recyclables, such as paper, beverage containers, and cardboard, as well as food for donation and composting. The amount of waste generated and recycled will determine which school is the greenest on the gridiron.

Last year, more than 75 colleges and universities took part in the Game Day Challenge. During the challenge, the participating schools kept 500,000 pounds of waste out of landfills, preventing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to taking 180 cars off our roads for a full year.

If you enjoy fall sports, concerts, or festivals, be sure to look for and use recycling bins. If you are managing events, please be sure to include recycling in your plans.



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Old bags with new purpose

We've all been there. One day you are at the store and realize that your favorite reusable bag, the one you've had for the past several



years which has been with you through rain and shine, has a rip that is beyond your ability to repair. Never fear! ChicoBag has partnered with The Grateful Thread to accept

old reusable bags and put them to a new use. Bags that can be repaired will be given to families who can't afford to purchase reusable bags. Bags that can't be repaired will be turned into useful new products, such as beautiful hand-woven rugs.

You can mail clean, old reusable bags to this address: ChicoBag Company, c/o Zero Waste Program, 13434 Browns Valley Drive, Chico, CA 95973.

Learn more at www.chicobag.com/t-repurposing_program.aspx.

Simplify, simplify!

In *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau wrote, “Our life is frittered away by detail. . . . Simplify, simplify.” Watch a few minutes of cable TV and you’ll discover that Thoreau has thoroughly modern counterparts. Do a little channel surfing and you’ll find shows devoted to clearing out the clutter, ranging from simple organizing tricks to professional clean-outs.

While most of us will never appear on a television show about hoarding, many of us have more clutter than we wish we had. Whether it is a jam-packed clothes closet or a cabinet that is bursting at the hinges, devoting some time to decluttering, organizing, and donating or selling what you don’t need can be a refreshing experience for your spirit as well as your space.

In *The Joy of Less, A Minimalist Living Guide: How to Declutter, Organize, and Simplify Your Life*, Francine Jay compares decluttering to dieting. You can go for the short-term fix, begin to feel deprived, and relapse, or you can transform your relationship with stuff. She advocates for making conscious decisions about what you buy, what you have, what you keep, and what you release. In other words, she focuses on making the long-term change.



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In a chapter entitled, “Trash, Treasure, or Transfer,” Jay begins with trash—things that are clearly garbage or are outdated and can be recycled, like newspapers and magazines. The treasure pile will contain those things that you want to keep. However, she cautions that your treasures need to add either beauty or function to your life. Finally, in your transfer pile, you include all of the perfectly usable things that you no longer want or need. As she puts it, “In here belong all those perfectly good items that are no longer good for you.” Your transfer pile will include items that you plan to give away and those you hope to sell.

Thoughtful decluttering can also lead to less impulse shopping. When you declutter, you often find things that you “had to have” and, yet, never used.

You don’t have to spend much time at a thrift store to know that you are not alone. Many of the items donated or resold each year aren’t just like-new, but are brand-new.

Rather than fritter your life away with details, or spend all of your time at home moving stuff to find what you’re looking for, simplify. And when you simplify, share. Many items that are no longer good for you would be very good for someone else.

Image courtesy of Jenna Isaacson

Reuse is big business



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Reuse has environmental, social, and economic benefits. The environmental benefits are clear—when we reuse, no new materials are harvested, mined, or manufactured. Reusing leads to less air and water pollution. In addition, reused items may be transported shorter distances to the end user.

In terms of social benefits, reuse provides usable goods to people and organizations with limited means. Many reuse centers take part in job-training programs and provide employment for adults with disabilities and at-risk youth.

You might, however, find the economic benefits most surprising. Reuse creates jobs, encourages local business activity, and, of course, lowers disposal costs. Nationwide, reuse is a more than \$14.1 billion industry. Depending on the product, reuse creates 30 to 300 times more jobs than disposing of the same material on a ton-per-ton basis. At the low end, wood pallet repair creates about 28 jobs per 10,000 tons of material, whereas landfilling creates only one. At the high end, computer reuse creates 296 jobs per 10,000 tons of material.

ALL THRIFTY STATES



Jenna Isaacson is a woman on a mission. Her goal is to promote secondhand shopping. A self-proclaimed “thrift store addict,” Isaacson is on a massive road trip, traveling the United States on what she terms “a visual journey through America’s collective closets.” She isn’t investigating actual closets, of course. She’s stopping at a thrift store in every state. Learn more about Jenna’s mission at www.allthriftystates.com.

Read More About It

the joy of less
a minimalist living guide



how to declutter,
organize,
and
simplify your life

francine jay

The Joy of Less, A Minimalist Living Guide: How to Declutter, Organize, and Simplify Your Life by Francine Jay

Live More, Want Less: 52 Ways to Find Order in Your Life by Mary Carlomagno

Organized Simplicity: The Clutter-Free Approach to Intentional Living by Tsh Oxenreider

QUOTES REQUOTED

Just by simply choosing healthful options every day, you can make a world of difference. You can improve your own health and the health of the environment.

It’s just like choosing to change your lightbulbs or draw your drapes. Just like choosing to drive a greener car. Just like choosing to recycle and buy recycled. Just like choosing to reduce your energy needs and get your energy from greener sources. Just like choosing to eat locally grown, organic food.

It’s all about choices. And you’ve got the power to choose.

Ed Begley, Jr.
Living Like Ed



What's UP?



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After the holidays, the County accepts real, fresh-cut Christmas trees at no charge from residents who are bringing trees from their homes. Please remove all of the decorations, ornament hooks, lights, garland, and tinsel, as well as the stand. Christmas trees are only accepted at the Buncombe County Landfill. These trees will be chipped and turned into mulch, so make sure that your tree is totally bare.

Commercial haulers and businesses will be charged the standard yard waste fee for Christmas trees. This fee is \$20 per ton of yard waste.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

**Buncombe County
Solid Waste Department
81 Panther Branch Road
Alexander, NC 28701
828-250-5460
www.buncombecounty.org**

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Take it to the Transfer Station

If you don't have curbside trash and recycling service, you can deliver your residential household waste and recyclables to the Transfer Station. Residential household waste must be bagged, and there is a fee for disposal.

The Transfer Station accepts these recyclables at no charge:

- Newspaper and brown paper bags
- Office paper and mail
- Magazines and catalogs
- Corrugated cardboard
- Recyclable bottles, jugs, and jars, including plastic bottles and jugs with tapered necks; aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass; and steel cans
- Appliances
- Lead-acid batteries
- Drained oil filters

In addition, you can drop off reusable corrugated moving boxes and shipping cartons for reuse. (Please break down and flatten the boxes.) We also accept medical equipment, such as wheelchairs and crutches, for reuse. Plus, you can drop off "sharps," such as needles and lancets, and non-infectious medical waste from in-home care. Please place sharps and other medical waste in an approved sharps container

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.



(available at pharmacies) or in a sturdy, thick-walled plastic jug.

All other garbage items, including bulky waste, construction and demolition debris, mattresses, wood, and other oversized items, must be disposed of at the Buncombe County Landfill.

The Buncombe County Transfer Station's hours are Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you have questions, call the Transfer Station at 250-6205.

Safe disposal at the landfill

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.



No matter where you live in Buncombe County, you can drop materials at the landfill for safe and proper disposal.

Many items are accepted at no charge for recycling:

- ◆ Oil filters
- ◆ Newspaper, office paper, magazines and catalogs, and mixed paper
- ◆ Corrugated cardboard
- ◆ Bottles and jars, including plastic bottles (milk jugs, soft drink bottles, laundry

detergent jugs, and shampoo bottles); aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass bottles and jars; and steel cans

- ◆ Lead-acid batteries
- ◆ Motor oil
- ◆ White goods, including stoves,

refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, and all metals

- ◆ Empty, triple-rinsed pesticide containers
- ◆ Empty propane tanks (20-pound, gas grill type ONLY)

You may also recycle tires. Each year, residents may recycle 10 tires without rims at no charge. After that, tires may be recycled at \$2 per tire. All tires on rims (even the first 10) are \$2 per tire.

You can drop off household trash, as well as bulky waste, construction and demolition waste, and yard waste, at the Landfill. There is a fee to dispose of trash, bulky waste, wood pallets, and yard waste. Fees are lower for clean pallets and yard waste than for trash.

Household hazardous waste and electronics are accepted at the Landfill on *Fridays only*, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Some fees do apply.

The Landfill is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. If you have questions, call the Landfill at 250-5462.

Is it junk?

An old vehicle can be an eyesore but not be considered a junk vehicle. So what exactly is a junk vehicle? According to Roger Presley, Environmental Control Officer for the Buncombe County Solid Waste Department, "The definition of a junk vehicle is one that does not display a North Carolina license plate, cannot be self-propelled in the manner in which it was originally intended, or has been wrecked and dismantled."

Because of the problems, environmental and otherwise, that junk vehicles can cause, Buncombe County has an ordinance that regulates abandoned and junked motor vehicles. Since the ordinance was passed in 1998, over 3,000 junk vehicles have been removed from properties and recycled in

Buncombe County.

To report a junk vehicle in your neighborhood, contact Roger Presley at 250-5470.



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Important Phone Numbers for County Residents

Junk Motor Vehicle Officer – Roger Presley	828-250-5470
Mobile Home Removal – Roger Presley	828-250-5470
Environmental Control Officer – Rick Ramsey	828-250-5471
Environmental Control Officer – Jane Cole.....	828-250-5472
Bioreactor Manager – Kristy Smith.....	828-250-5473
Buncombe County Landfill.....	828-250-5462
Buncombe County Transfer Station.....	828-250-6205
Waste Pro – Residential Trash Pick-up.....	828-684-7790

Important Phone Numbers for City of Asheville Residents

Asheville City Sanitation – Trash Pick-up.....	828-259-5857
Curbside Management – Recycling.....	828-252-2532

CLIP & SAVE