

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Buncombe County Solid Waste Department
828-250-5460
Summer 2006



Look who's energizing Buncombe County

In March, NC GreenPower and Buncombe County invited state and local officials to see the landfill methane gas program at the old Buncombe County Landfill generate electricity for the first time. This landfill gas-to-energy project helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, and create a safer, cleaner landfill. It also encourages economic development by producing a local, renewable source of energy.

Buncombe County Department of Solid Waste and Enerdyne Power Systems partnered under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Landfill Methane Outreach Program (LMOP). Methane gas forms in old landfills as waste decomposes. In the past,

methane has often been flared off. However, methane can be used as fuel to power generators and create electricity.

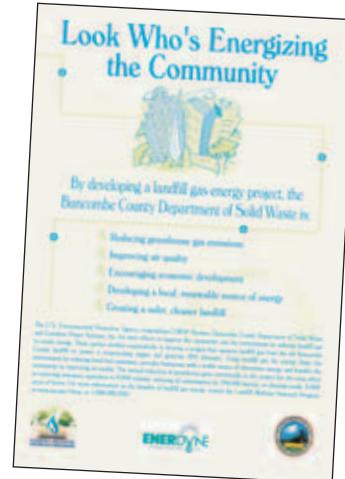
At the old Buncombe County Landfill, methane gas is being captured to power an engine that generates 984 kilowatts. The annual reduction of greenhouse gases attributable to this project is equivalent to removing 8,200 vehicles from our roads, reducing oil consumption by some 100,000 barrels, or planting nearly 11,800 acres of forest.

The landfill gas energy from the old Buncombe County Landfill is sold through NC GreenPower. Buncombe County joins more than 10 other producers in providing residents and businesses across North Carolina with a renewable source of elec-

trical energy.

NC GreenPower is a state-wide program designed to improve North Carolina's environment by encouraging the development of more renewable energy sources. North Carolina was the first state to develop a statewide plan for green power. Individual utility companies in 31 other states have developed similar programs, but North Carolina's program is a collaborative effort supported by all of the state's electric utility companies and is administered by Advanced Energy, an independent, nonprofit organization.

For more information on the benefits of landfill gas energy, read more about the LMOP at www.epa.gov/lmop or www.ncgreenpower.org/types/landfill%20methane.html.



Did you know?

Smog formation is greatest during the summer months, resulting in ozone forecasts that warn citizens of unhealthy air days. Especially for high-risk groups, such as children, the elderly, and people with respiratory disease, exposure to high levels of smog can cause asthma attacks and visits to the emergency rooms. A 1999 study for the Clean Air Task Force estimated that smog pollution in North Carolina triggered 240,000 asthma attacks during the summer months of 1997. Although North Carolina's Clean Smokestacks Act helps reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from the state's power plants by about 70 percent, NC GreenPower offers renewable energy that produces little to no emissions.

Benefits of renewable energy

- Renewable energy improves regional air quality and the environment.
- Sources for renewable energy are virtually everywhere and can be constantly replenished.
- Renewable energy will not run out—ever.
- Production of renewable energy supports North Carolina jobs and our economy.
- Renewable energy helps to stabilize fuel supplies and costs.
- Renewables reduce dependence on fuel sources from other states and countries.
- It's the right thing to do for North Carolina!



Don't get burned

Did you know that throughout North Carolina it is illegal to burn garbage, trash, or any other manmade materials—even in a burn barrel? If you are caught burning any of these things, you could be fined up to \$10,000. The basic message behind the open burning rules is simple: *If it didn't grow on your property, don't burn it!*

So what is allowed under the law? Homeowners can burn leaves and yard trimmings, excluding logs and large stumps, as long as no public pickup of such materials is available, and as long as the burning does not cause a public nuisance. Other allowable burning includes campfires, outdoor barbecues, and bonfires. Landowners and contractors in Buncombe County who want to burn vegetation for land-clearing or rights-of-way must receive a permit to do so from the Western North Carolina Regional Air



Quality Agency.

Why do the state and your local air quality agency have such strict rules regarding open burning? There are several reasons. First, fires can easily get out of control, endangering neighboring properties. Second, smoke from a burning trash pile releases many toxic air pollu-

tants, which can cause serious health problems. In fact, a recent study found that a family of four that burns its household trash in a burn barrel can generate more toxic pollution over the course of a year than a municipal waste incinerator that serves tens of thousands of households! This sort of pollution can cause allergies, headaches, nausea, and even cancer and heart disease. While the smoke from your burning trash pile may not bother you, it could be a nuisance and a health threat to your children or your neighbors, particularly those with respiratory conditions such as asthma, allergies, or emphysema.

A lot of open burning isn't necessary. Brush and other vegetative matter can be

composted, ground up for mulch, or piled up for wildlife habitat. Newspapers, cans, and plastics can be recycled for free. And as for the clothes, furniture, and other items that you no longer want, how about giving them away for someone else to reuse? By making a few sensible choices, we can reduce the amount of trash we create in the first place.

So, remember—burning garbage, paper, cardboard, tires, building materials, plastics, and other synthetic materials is illegal. You could not only be causing serious health problems to your children and your neighbors, you could also receive a big fine, up to \$10,000. It's just not worth it. Help keep the air clean and clear—don't burn!

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
Environmental Manager — Denese Ballew	828-250-5425
Buncombe County Landfill	828-645-5311
Buncombe County Transfer Station	828-250-6205

CLIP & SAVE

10 TIPS for a Healthier Home

The chemicals that you use in and around your home affect your budget, your indoor air quality, your family's safety, and our hazardous waste disposal programs. As you clean, maintain, and improve your home, think about the air you breathe and the water we share.

1. Read the labels on household cleaners and garden chemicals. Look for "signal words." Signal words tell you how hazardous the product is to humans. Here's what you need to know: "Poison" means highly toxic. "Danger" specifies that the product is extremely flammable, corrosive, or toxic. "Warning" indicates a moderate hazard. "Caution" denotes a mild to moderate hazard. Seek products with the "lowest" signal word, *caution* or *warning*.
2. Buy only the amount you need! Know how much product it will take to do the job and only buy that amount. It is better to make a second trip to the store than to have to dispose of large quantities of a hazardous chemical at a special collection.
3. Follow instructions on all chemicals carefully. When you are required to mix a chemical with water, don't guess or dump. Measure the amounts as directed. Dedicate a set of measuring spoons and a measuring cup to use with household or garden chemicals. Be sure to triple-rinse (flush three times with water) your measuring spoons or cups between uses.
4. Store chemicals safely. Children and pets can be easily poisoned or injured by improperly stored chemicals. Be sure to keep all chemicals away from sources of heat, including sun shining into a garage or shed window. The same goes for rags!
5. Consider "home remedies." For

instance, cooking oil is useful to remove adhesive price tags from jars, mugs, and dishes. Vinegar, baking soda, and soap can be effective cleaning agents. For "recipes," look for books about "natural cleaning" at the library or search for "Recipes for Natural Cleaners" on the Internet.

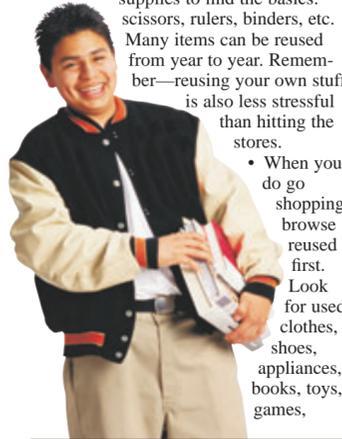
6. When you paint, choose latex. Latex is water-based for easier cleanup. Better yet, choose latex without volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs contribute to the formation of indoor and outdoor air pollution. If you have questions about proper disposal of unneeded latex paint, call us.
7. Weed; don't spray. In addition to reducing your use of pesticides and eliminating hazardous waste, you'll also be improving your muscles and enjoying the fresh air.
8. When it is time to replace your light bulbs, choose compact fluorescents. They use less energy and last much longer, creating less waste. (Compact fluorescents do contain mercury. So they do require special disposal as hazardous waste when they burn out. Call us for details.)
9. Purchase paper products, such as toilet paper, made from recycled paper. (If you buy paper napkins or paper towels, look for recycled-content paper in those, too!)
10. Check out library and Internet resources. Learn some quick and easy steps to a healthier home.



Go back to school without breaking the bank!

Whether you're getting ready for school yourself, getting someone else ready for school, or just taking care of your own end-of-summer shopping, there are ways that you can reduce your waste, improve our environment, and save money, too.

- Plan ahead and make a list. Check to see what you have on hand. After that, make a list of what you really need.
- Reuse what you already own. Check closets for forgotten tote bags, backpacks, lunch boxes, and refillable containers. Go through last year's supplies to find the basics: scissors, rulers, binders, etc. Many items can be reused from year to year. Remember—reusing your own stuff is also less stressful than hitting the stores.
- When you do go shopping, browse reused first. Look for used clothes, shoes, appliances, books, toys, games,



Billboards never got so much attention! This "urban bag for the road," by Vy & Elle, was fashioned from reclaimed billboard vinyl.

office supplies, and household goods through online services such as www.freecycle.org, at garage sales, or at resale shops.

- Buy recycled by picking up recycled-content paper, pens, pencils, scissors, rulers, file folders, binders, storage containers, and jewelry.
- Purchase refilled or remanufactured ink jet cartridges for your printers. Or, buy a refilling kit and do it yourself.
- Pick up a cool recycled accessory, such as a bag or purse made from a reused vinyl billboard. Look for hip new sustainable products at www.sustainablestyle.org.

Worth Noting

A plastic cup that will biodegrade in a food waste compost pile? Yes, some exist and more are in development. Research continues on how to make crops such as corn into biodegradable plastic and how best to compost this plastic, which is known as PLA (polylactic acid).

Biodegradable plastics offer two advantages. First, they are made from renewable resources, instead of non-renewable petroleum resources. Second, they are well-suited to food-contact applications where composting is a better option than recycling, such as single-use drink cups, carry-out food containers, and disposable eating utensils.

The Biodegradable Products Institute tests biobased plastics and certifies those that "have been scientifically proven to biodegrade and compost satisfactorily in municipal and commercial composting operations." The products that meet these criteria receive the Institute's approval to use the "Compostable Logo."

Seeing the "Compostable Logo" does NOT guarantee that the item will compost in your backyard bin or that it is accepted by local composting programs. Just as not all items that carry the "recyclable" logo are locally recyclable, biodegradable plastics may not be either. Always check with your hauler or composter before adding a new item!

For more information, visit the Biodegradable Products Institute website, www.bpiworld.org.



These "leading ladies" from Biocorp sported biodegradable plastic evening gowns at a Hollywood event. (Photo Courtesy of Biocorp, www.biocorpaavc.com)

QUOTES REQUOTED

To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.

Theodore Roosevelt 1858-1919

Cleaning up the Gulf Coast

Late last summer, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast with a one-two punch. In their wake, were 300,000 displaced Americans and 75 million cubic yards of waste. This debris, the equivalent of 30 years worth of waste in the Gulf Coast region, included about 350,000 flooded vehicles and at least 25 million cubic yards of green waste (tree limbs, trunks, leaves, and dead bushes).

Much of this debris will be landfilled. However, the automobiles and white goods (large appliances) will be recycled in large numbers. After the first six months of cleanup, about 280,000 tons of steel had already been recycled. Meanwhile, smaller scale efforts are gathering plumbing fixtures, cypress wood, and doors, which will be reusable.

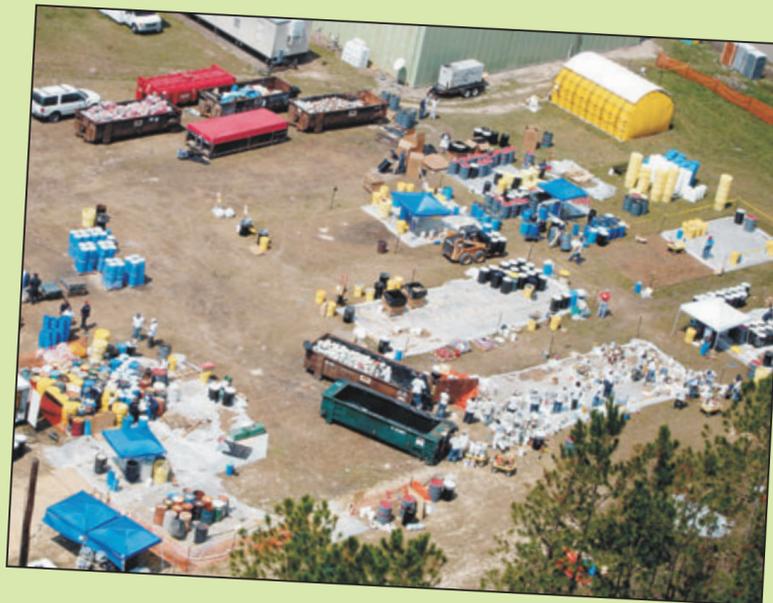
Of particular concern during cleanup is the huge quantity of hazardous waste "orphaned" by the storm, including household hazardous waste. By February, 2 million containers of hazardous waste, a total of more than 10 million pounds, had been collected. Of these, 1.9 million were small containers, many of which were flood-damaged household hazardous materials collected by crews going house to house or dropped off at collection centers by residents.

Preparing your home and family for potential disasters helps minimize waste. For details, visit www.ready.gov.



Chris Jordan photographed this "Remains of a Business, St. Bernard Parish" while working on his upcoming book, *In Katrina's Wake: Portraits of Loss from an Unnatural Disaster*. (Photo courtesy of Chris Jordan, www.chrisjordan.com)

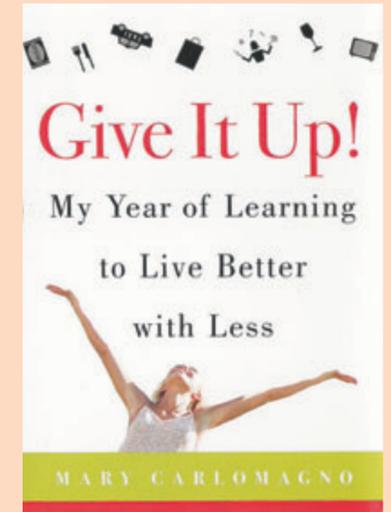
During hurricane cleanup, this Louisiana site was set up to handle the massive quantity of household hazardous waste. Some of this material was found inside houses, garages, and sheds, but a great deal was recovered from swamps, waterways, and other outdoor areas.



What could you live without?

When I set out to write this book, my intention was to eliminate unnecessary facets of life, in essence to determine what I could live without.

Mary Carlomagno
"Introduction," *Give It Up!*



What could you live without? After being hit on the head by boxes of shoes falling from her overfilled closet shelves, author Mary Carlomagno set out to answer this question.

Each month for a year, she gave up something that she valued—something whose sacrifice created for her "a personal and significant 'ouch' factor." Her choices were personal—coffee, reading the newspaper, television, eating out. But the lessons she learned can teach us some things about our own wants and needs.

During the summer, you may take some time off or you may have a different routine. Use some of this time to think about what you could live without. What possessions do you value and which just create clutter? Do you have habits that cost money and create waste?

While setting out to give up something every month for a year may seem daunting, try giving up one of your favorite "wants" for a week or a month. See what you learn about yourself.

Read more about it!

Remember to look for books at the library, at book swaps, at www.freecycle.org, or at used bookstores! Then share titles with friends and relatives!

Choosing Simplicity: Real People Finding Peace and Fulfillment in a Complex World by Linda Breen Pierce (Gallagher Press, 2000)

Give It Up!: My Year of Learning to Live Better with Less by Mary Carlomagno (William Morrow, 2006)

Living Simply with Children: A Voluntary Simplicity Guide for Moms, Dads, and Kids Who Want to Reclaim the Bliss of Childhood and the Joy of Parenting by Marie Sherlock (Three Rivers Press, 2003)

Simplicity Lessons: A 12-Step Guide to Living Simply by Linda Breen Pierce (Gallagher Press, 2003)

Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich by Duane Elgin (Revised Edition, Harper Paperbacks, 1998)

What Kids Really Want that Money Can't Buy: Tips for Parenting in a Commercial World by Betsy Taylor (Warner Books, 2003)

Healthy Home Resources

Center for a New American Dream
www.newdream.org/clean

Debra Lynn Dadd, "The Queen of Green"
www.debraslist.com/

Earth Easy's Guide to Living at Home with the Earth
www.eartheasy.com/live_menu.htm

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Do's and Don'ts Around the Home"
www.epa.gov/owow/nps/dosdont.html

Green Seal
www.greenseal.org

LivingHome, an online magazine
<http://library.livinghome.com/Cool-Tools/>

Project Laundry List
www.laundrylist.org

The Seventh Generation "Guide to a Toxin-Free Home"
www.seventhgeneration.com/living_green/toxin_free.php

Better Basics for the Home: Simple Solutions for Less Toxic Living
By Annie Berthold-Bond, Three Rivers Press, 1999

Naturally Clean: The Seventh Generation Guide to Safe & Healthy, Non-Toxic Cleaning
By Jeffrey Hollender, Geoff Davis, Meika Hollender, New Society Publishers, 2006

WHAT'S UP?

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

Each week, we accept e-waste from residents at no charge. E-waste includes computers, televisions, and related equipment, as well as cell phones. Businesses may also drop off electronics, but they are charged a fee of 30 cents per pound.

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

Proof of residency, such as a driver's license or current utility bill, may be requested. For more information, call 250-5460 or the Landfill at 645-5311.



Drop-off centers accept recyclables, too

You can recycle white and colored office paper, such as copier and printer paper, and mail, including envelopes, as well as newspaper, cardboard, #1 and #2 plastic containers, aluminum cans, and steel cans, at these drop-off center locations:

- Behind Asheville Pizza Company, 675 Merrimon Avenue
- Curbside Management Facility, 116 North Woodfin Avenue in Woodfin
- Westgate Shopping Center, near EarthFare

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
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www.buncombecounty.org

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Transfer Station recycling

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 3 p.m.

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

- Lead-acid batteries
- Newspaper and brown paper bags
- Office paper and mail
- 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. Place your sharps in a puncture-proof, labeled container. At the front gate, tell the attendant that you have sharps for disposal.

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.



Landfill offers drop-off for residents' trash, recyclables, and more

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
- Office paper and mail
- 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
- Yard waste, including fall leaves
- Motor oils
- Tires
- White goods, including stoves, refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, and all metals

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

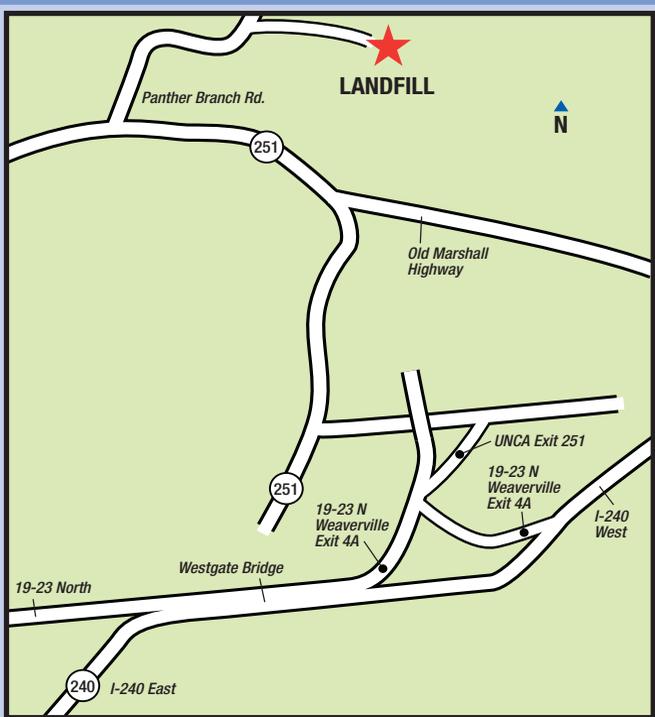
You can drop off household trash at the Landfill. There is a fee to dispose of trash.

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.

Tours of the landfill are available to interested groups, including clubs, civic organizations, scout troops, and classes. For details, call 645-5311.

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.



Help solve recycling problems

We need your help to solve some recycling problems. Food scraps and liquid soap pumps are being placed in recycling bins. These items create "contamination" in the recycling bins. As you can imagine, contaminated recyclables are a problem for recycling centers, as well as the manufacturers that make new products out of the recyclables. No doubt, these items are often being placed into bins accidentally. However, we need your help keeping contamination out of the bins, so here are a few, helpful reminders.

When you leave food scraps in cans, you are making recycling bins and recycling centers much more attractive to nasty visitors—such as bugs and rodents. Now, these aren't the kind of visitors that a recycling center wants to see! Please rinse all bottles and cans.

Those handy pumps on soap dispensers are great—when you are using the soap. However, when the recycler gets your bottle, the pumps are a problem. They are made from a different type of plastic, meaning they can't be mixed with the container. You wouldn't stir broccoli into your favorite brownie mix, so keep trash and non-recyclables out of recycling bins. Please remove and discard pumps and dispensers, as well as caps and lids.

Transportation is one of the largest costs when it comes to recycling. It is most cost-effective and energy-efficient to transport bins that are full of recyclables—not air. Please help us fill our bins properly. Flatten plastic jugs and plastic soda bottles. Break down and flatten all corrugated cardboard.

Items NOT accepted for recycling

- NO aluminum foil
- NO pie plates
- NO paint cans
- NO aerosol cans
- NO plastic bags
- NO antifreeze, motor oil, or pesticide bottles
- NO Styrofoam
- NO plastic wrap
- NO plastics marked #3 through #7
- NO broken glass
- NO dishes or cookware
- NO drinking glasses
- NO light bulbs
- NO window or mirror glass
- NO carbon copy paper
- NO dog food bags
- NO drink boxes
- NO hardcover books
- NO milk cartons
- NO paper towels
- NO spiral-bound notebooks
- NO Styrofoam egg cartons
- NO wax paper