

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



**Buncombe County Solid  
Waste Department**  
**828-250-5460**  
**Spring 2008**



## What's in your closet?



Or maybe it's under your kitchen sink or on a garage shelf or hiding in the basement? Look around and, chances are, you'll find some "household hazardous waste" (HHW). HHW includes old chemicals that your family no longer wants or needs, as well as outdated products.

Even though HHW is a kind of waste, it should never go into your household trash! Not only can HHW contaminate the soil and water near landfills, but it can also harm the workers who pick up and handle your trash. When hazardous waste is mixed with household trash, toxic fumes and burning liquids can injure trash workers. And, flammable materials can even cause explosions

inside the trash trucks.

HHW requires special disposal to be sure that workers and our environment are kept safe. To help your family get rid of HHW safely, we accept HHW every Friday (except holidays) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Buncombe County Landfill, 85 Panther Branch Road, near Alexander. There is no charge for most items from your home that are dropped off. Paint and paint-related (flammable) materials are \$2 per gallon. However, you will be asked to show ID to prove that you live in Buncombe County.

These are just some of the HHW items that your family can drop off for safe disposal:

- Paint, paint stripper, paint thinner, and aerosols
- Weed and bug killers
- Plant foods
- Antifreeze and other automotive liquids
- Cleaners with warning labels
- Acids and pool chemicals
- Hobby paints and glues
- Poisons

For more information, call 250-5460 or the Landfill at 250-5462.

## Everyday electronics

More than 60 percent of American households have at least one computer and one cell phone. Since there are more than 105 million households in the United States, that is at least 63 million computers and 63 million cell phones. Of course, many families have more than one of each! That's a lot of computers and cell phones, and those are just two of the common electronics used by Americans. The most common, the color TV, is found in almost every home!

Each year, millions and millions of electronic devices, including old computers, cell phones, and televisions, as well as similar products, such as computer printers and DVD players, will be discarded. Unfortunately, electronic waste, or e-waste, contains several potential toxins, such as lead and mercury, as well as reusable and recyclable parts. So, these items should not be mixed with household trash. But if you're not supposed to dispose of these items, what should you do with them? Recycle them, of course!

Buncombe County accepts electronics for recycling every Friday (except holidays) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Buncombe County Landfill, 85 Panther Branch Road, near Alexander. You may drop off computers and related components, TVs, stereos, CD and DVD play-



ers, iPods/MP3 players, telephones, cell phones, fax machines, personal copiers, and more.

There is no charge to drop off electronics that come from your home; however, you will be asked to show ID to prove that you live in Buncombe County.

For more information, call 250-5460 or the Landfill at 250-5462.

## New life for old tires

Each year, Americans discard about one tire per capita. We have about 300 million residents in the U.S., so, as you probably just figured out, we have about 300 million scrap tires each year, too!

Tires contain rubber and steel that can be recycled to make new products. Currently, about 87 percent of scrap tires are recovered for reuse, energy recovery, or recycling. The list of products made from recycled tires includes 110 items and is growing! One of the hottest uses for recycled tires is athletic fields. Many professional, college, and even high school playing fields are now made from recycled tires. When you're watching a professional football game next fall and see that black "spray" when someone falls,



you're seeing a very fine rubber product, not much bigger than sand, that used to be tires! These playing fields are more cushioned than grass and other artificial turfs, resulting in fewer injuries.

Even though there are so many uses for old tires, some still end up sitting in illegal tire piles. In these piles, tires collect water, providing an attractive home for disease-carrying mosquitoes and rodents. If tire piles catch fire, the tires burn for a long time, releasing heavy black smoke and leaving an oily film behind on the soil.

Make sure that your old tires get a new life! We accept scrap tires (off the rims, please) at the Buncombe County Landfill.

You can drop off tires Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

## Time to pull the plug?

Is it time for your family to pull the plug on an old appliance? Do you have a refrigerator that refuses to freeze ice cubes? Or maybe it's a washing machine that has begun shredding clothes? Most large appliances, such as refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers, and dishwashers, operate for 10 to 20 years with little maintenance and few complaints. However, beyond that time, they may

need more frequent repair or just quit working entirely.

Large appliances are made of many parts, but the largest component is steel. Because this steel can be recycled and turned into everything from new appliances to new cars to new soup cans, about 85 percent of old appliances are recycled.

When it is time to pull the plug on your family's large appliances, send them to meet their "remaker." Recycle them at the Buncombe County Landfill. We accept appliances year-round, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

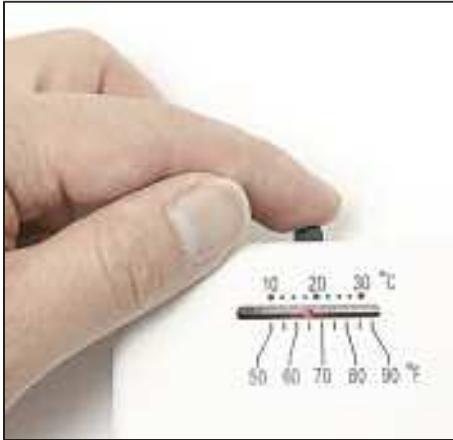
If your family is purchasing a new appliance, look for the Energy Star logo. The Energy Star ensures that you're getting an energy-efficient appliance which will conserve fossil fuel resources and reduce harmful emissions.



# 10 Tips to turn in a great year

Here are 10 easy ways to make it a better Earth Day and a better year for the Earth:

1. Turn it off. Switch off lights and appliances that aren't in use. Shut off the faucet while you shave or brush your teeth.
2. Turn it up (or down). Raise the temperature on your thermostat during the summer months to keep the house a bit warmer, and lower it during the winter months to keep the house a bit cooler. Dress accordingly.
3. Turn it over. Use both sides of paper. The back side of paper can be used to print drafts or jot notes. When you print and copy new documents, choose double-sided printing.
4. Turn it down. When you shop, carry your own tote bags and say "no thanks" to paper or plastic store bags.
5. Turn it in. Do some spring cleaning and give away clothing, housewares,



6. Turn it around. Use and reuse what you already have. Extend the life of what you own with proper maintenance. Follow instructions for recharging batteries to keep them in tip-top shape.
7. Turn it away. Reduce your waste at the source—don't buy what you don't really need. For example, take a look at last year's spring and summer clothes before you start shopping this year.
8. Turn it back...into something else. Recycle! Your old containers and paper products become brand-new stuff—from containers and paper to furniture and insulation.
9. Turn it under. Compost your yard and garden waste, as well as your fruit and vegetable scraps, to create a nutrient-rich soil amendment.
10. Turn it on. When you are excited about taking care of our Earth, you'll get others excited, too. So turn on your charm and tell your story!



Even if you don't own a pair of Crocs, you've seen them. They are the distinctive plastic clogs with the holes on top. If you have a worn-out or an outgrown pair, don't throw them away. Instead, give them a second life by recycling them through Crocs' SolesUnited program.

## Crocs reborn

SolesUnited began as a way to recycle manufacturing scrap but has now expanded to include worn-out shoes. Many retailers that sell Crocs will accept used classic Crocs-brand shoes for this recycling program. If there is not a participating retailer near you, you can mail your old Crocs to one of these addresses:

- Crocs Recycling – West  
3375 Enterprise Avenue  
Bloomington, CA 92316
- Crocs Recycling – East  
1500 Commodity Boulevard  
Lockbourne, OH 43137

SolesUnited takes the old Crocs, sorts them, grinds them up, and turns them into new shoes. These shoes are packed into large shipping containers and sent to non-profit organizations in developing countries. SolesUnited Crocs cannot be resold by the organizations and must be given away to those who need shoes.

To date, SolesUnited has donated 1 million pairs of recycled shoes, with a goal of giving away 2 million by the end of this year.

For more information, visit [www.SolesUnited.com](http://www.SolesUnited.com).

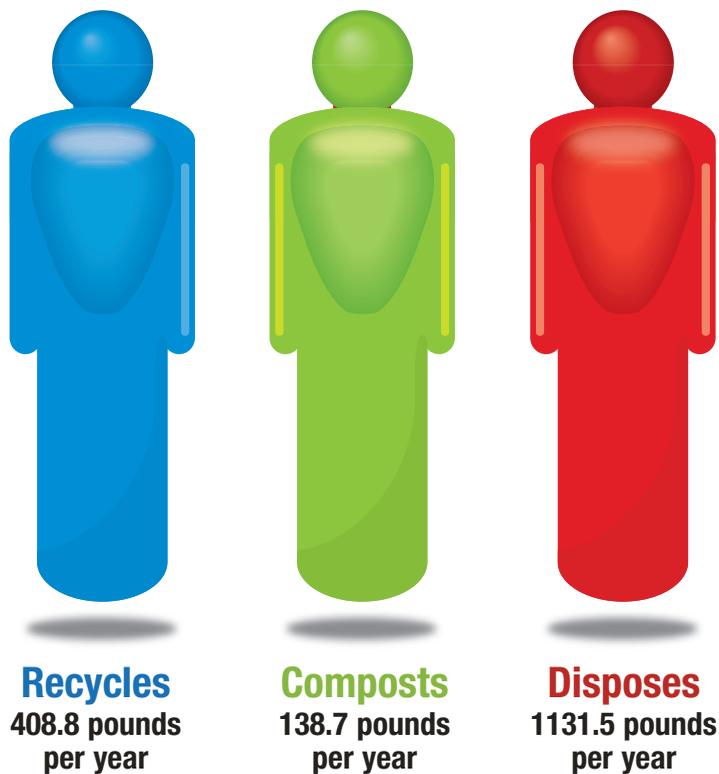
## QUOTES REQUOTED



To exist as a nation, to prosper as a state, and to live as a people, we must have trees.

Theodore Roosevelt, 1858-1919  
26th President of the United States

## The average American...



Source: "Municipal Solid Waste Generation, Recycling, and Disposal in the United States: Facts and Figures for 2006," U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## Extraordinary USES

Your house is full of ordinary things—such as vinegar, salt, toothpaste, duct tape, and coffee grounds—that can have some extraordinary uses. In the process, you can save time and money and reduce your waste. Are you ready to get started? Check out a copy of the Reader's Digest book, *Extraordinary Uses for Ordinary Things*.

For example, you can only use one mouse pad at a time. So, what do you do with the mouse pads that you get as giveaways or that come when you purchase a new computer? The book offers these suggestions: Cut the pad into small circles or squares to be used as pads under furniture legs. Make knee pads for gardening. Put the pads under houseplants to keep pots from scraping your fine wood furniture. Use them as hot pads on your dinner table.

Rather than buy special cleaning products and storage containers, take a look at the 2,317 suggestions in this



book. You'll find lots of extraordinary uses for your ordinary household things.

# Trashing Everest

Since Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reached the top of Mount Everest in 1953, more than 11,000 climbers have made the attempt and over 3,000 have reached the sought-after summit. In the process, these climbers have left behind more than 50 tons of waste at the high camps, including tents and gear that were left behind on the descent, oxygen bottles, batteries, and water bottles. This debris has earned Everest the nickname, “the world’s highest garbage dump.”

During the 2000 climbing season,

Japanese mountaineer Ken Noguchi began the slow process of cleaning up the world’s most famous—and highest—peak. His cleanup trips up the mountain have cleared away 9.9 tons of trash so far.

In addition to collecting waste and getting it off the mountain, these trips have raised awareness. As a result, more expeditions are packing down their own wastes. Plus, the government of Nepal has tightened restrictions. Climbing teams must now carry out their gear and trash or forfeit a sizable deposit.



You’re hearing more all the time about the transition to over-the-air digital television signals. But what does it mean for you? Do you need a new TV before next February? Will you need a converter box to keep your current TV working?

The answers to these questions depend on how you receive your TV signal now. Do you subscribe to cable TV or a satellite TV service? If so, you shouldn’t need to do a thing. The cable or satellite carrier will make all of the needed adjustments. If you have questions, watch for bill inserts describing the transition, or call your cable or satellite company’s customer service number.

If you rely on an outdoor antenna or indoor “rabbit ears” to receive local channels, you may need a converter box. The first question is this: Do you receive local, digital channels now? These are the “extra channels,” such as a weather/news station that comes from your local ABC network affiliate. If you are already receiving these channels, you have a TV with a digital tuner and you are all set for

the transition. If you don’t receive these channels, you will need a converter box to continue using your older TV. Converter boxes will be sold at home electronics and appliance stores. There is a federal program to help you pay for your converter box.

Each household with analog-tuner TVs may receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of digital-to-analog converter boxes. Converter boxes sell for about \$40 to \$70 each. For more information on the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program, visit [www.ntia.doc.gov/dtv/coupon](http://www.ntia.doc.gov/dtv/coupon), or call 1-888-388-2009.

Beginning on February 17, 2009, all local, over-the-air television signals will have to be broadcast digitally. For more details about the conversion to digital transmission and how it will affect you and your TVs, visit the Federal

Communication Commission’s website, <http://dtv.gov/>, and the Environmental Protection Agency’s website, [www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/recycle/ecycling/tv-convert.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/recycle/ecycling/tv-convert.htm).

Please remember that if you do choose to replace your old TV, it shouldn’t go into the trash! Contact us about proper disposal.

**A**ccording to the “One Day in America” report published in *Time* magazine on November 26, 2007, the average American household has more televisions (2.73) than people (2.6). In terms of our time, work and sleep come in first and second, but watching TV is a strong third.

## Eco weddings and a funeral

From birth to death, our lives are filled with celebrations that mark new beginnings or tearful goodbyes. From births to weddings and from graduation parties to funerals, we mark our comings and goings with family, friends, food, and festivities.

If you are interested in planning greener festivities or learning more about the rituals that accompany common celebrations, check out these books and articles. Remember to look for books at the local library and used bookstores!

*Eco-Chic Weddings: Simple Tips to Plan an Environmentally Friendly, Socially Responsible, Affordable, and Stylish Celebration* by Emily Elizabeth Anderson

*Grave Matters: A Journey Through the Modern Funeral Industry to a Natural Way of Burial* by Mark Harris

“Green Weddings (and More)” by Tracy Fernandez Rysavy in *Real Money* — [www.coopamerica.org/pubs/realmoney/articles/celebrations.cfm](http://www.coopamerica.org/pubs/realmoney/articles/celebrations.cfm)

*Simply Green Parties: Simple and Resourceful Ideas for Throwing the Perfect Celebration, Event, or Get-Together* by Danny Seo

*Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* by Mary Roach

“The Three R’s of Wedded Bliss” by Maureen Ryan in *The Green Guide* — [www.thegreenguide.com/doc/120/weddings/2](http://www.thegreenguide.com/doc/120/weddings/2)

## Something to talk about

In January 2008, wireless service providers counted an average of 250 million cell phones in use each day. At present, the average phone is used for about 18 months, meaning that at least 150 million are replaced each year. Of these, most are probably sitting in someone’s “junk drawer.” However, many of them could easily be refurbished and reused, while the remainder can be recycled.

Cell phones contain lead, copper, and antimony in sufficient quantities that they can be hazardous when mixed with household trash. That’s just one of the reasons they shouldn’t go into the trash! The other, of course, is that they also contain reusable materials. For instance, according to a report published by INFORM, Inc., there is enough gold in 200 cell phones to create a gold ring.

According to a study of cell phone life cycles published in the *International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*, extending the use of your existing cell phone to 4 years could decrease the environmental impacts of the phone by 40%. Why? Simple—using the same phone

longer reduces the need to extract new resources, lowers emissions during manufacturing, and reduces energy use.

Learn more about cell phone use and recycling, as well as INFORM’s Secret Life Series, at <http://secret-life.org>.



# WHAT'S UP?

## Safe disposal for "sharps"

Diabetics and others use thousands of needles every day as part of treatments for chronic medical conditions. Many of these sharps are improperly disposed of and end up in residential trash bins or recycling carts, creating a safety and health risk for children, people in the community, and waste haulers and other workers both on the route and at collection facilities.

To address this issue, Buncombe County offers year-round drop-off for home-generated sharps. Here's what you need to do:



- Place used needles and other sharps into a thick, rigid plastic container, such as a liquid laundry detergent jug.
- When the container is full, screw the cap on tightly and tape it with packing or duct tape.
- Deliver the sealed container to the Buncombe County Transfer Station on Hominy Creek Road (see map and details at right).
- At the front gate, tell the attendant that you have sharps for disposal.
- Place the container full of needles into the Red Biohazard Container near the office.

All sharps are treated as biohazardous waste by Buncombe County Solid Waste Department's contractor. We offer this service to Buncombe County residents for free, but we do need you to prepare your sharps properly.

If you have questions, please call 250-5460 or call the Transfer Station at 250-6205.



**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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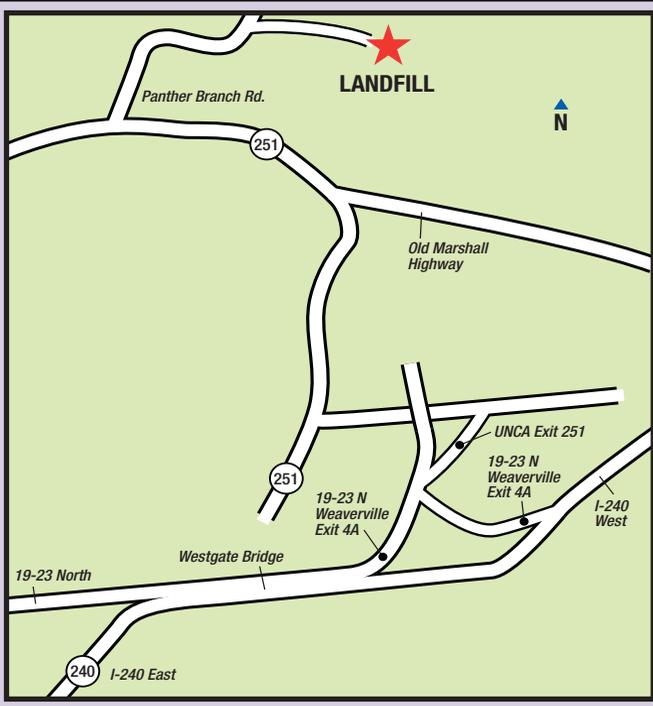
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## Directions to the Buncombe County Landfill:

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.



## 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.



# Start grasscycling this spring

Now is a great time to think about grasscycling your lawn clippings this year.

Grasscycling, which is also called mulching, means letting your grass clippings drop onto the lawn when you mow, rather than picking them up with the grass catcher or bagger. These grass clippings can provide your lawn with moisture, as well as nitrogen, which is a food that your lawn needs.

If you own a mulching mower, the mower is designed to chop the grass blades into tiny pieces and then drop them onto the mown grass. If you don't have a



mulching mower, you can simply remove the bag attachment from the mower and insert the "chute cover" (a safety device that covers the hole where the bag is normally attached). A regular mower may not chop the grass blades quite as small, so you might have to mow slightly more often.

Grasscycling is easier if you trim off no more than the top one-third of your grass on each mowing. If the grass is growing quickly, you may have to mow more than once a week. However, the small clippings will quickly begin to rot before the next mowing. Chopping off more than one-third of the grass blade is hard on the plants and leaves behind long clippings that take longer to break down.

In addition to providing moisture and nitrogen to your lawn and reducing your use of trash bags, grasscycling will also save time.

## 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/Bioreactor Manager — Kristy Smith	828-250-5473
Buncombe County Landfill	828-250-5462
Buncombe County Transfer Station	828-250-6205
GDS — Residential Trash Pick-up	828-253-3929

## Important Phone Numbers for City of Asheville Residents

Asheville City Sanitation — Trash Pick-up	828-259-5857
Curbside Management — Recycling	828-252-2532
Asheville City — Recycling Division	828-259-5936

CLIP & SAVE

# Drop-off facilities 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
- Magazines and catalogs
- Office paper and mail
- Corrugated cardboard
- Co-mingled recyclable containers, including #1 & #2 plastic (milk jugs, soft drink bottles, laundry detergent jugs, shampoo bottles); aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass bottles and jars; and steel cans
- Yard waste, including leaves, grass clippings, brush, and trimmings
- Motor oils
- Tires
- 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 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 12:30 p.m.

# Transfer Station recycling

The Transfer Station, which is located just off 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
- Magazines and catalogs
- Corrugated cardboard
- "Blue Bag" or co-mingled recyclable containers, including #1 & #2 plastic bottles and jugs; aluminum cans; clear, green, and brown glass; and steel cans
- Appliances ("white goods") and other metals

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.

If you have questions, call the Transfer Station at 250-6205.