



Waste Not, Grand Junction!

A publication of Curbside Recycling Indefinitely, Inc. (GJ CRI)

Phone 242-1036

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Recycling is Booming...What's Next?

You already know that Grand Junction is experiencing an energy boom. What we have found out is that the boom has spilled over into the recycling arena... in some very big ways! The first is in the amount of material being generated by local residents and businesses. Back in 2002, we were thrilled to report that you had broken the 2 million pound mark. That number doubled, to nearly 4,000,000 pounds, in 2007! All of that material resulted in the diversion of 8% of the City's trash from permanent entombment in the Mesa County Landfill. While we are still far below the national average of 32 %, Grand Junction is making great strides in recovering commodities from the City's trash stream and giving them life as new products.

Another effect of the boom has been the number of new residents signing up for the curbside program, up from 20 per month to 30+ per month in 2007. There are now nearly 3,000 residential homes in the City actively involved in curbside collection, and the River Road drop off is a constant whirl of activity. Recycling is a hot topic in many sectors of our community and part of a larger vision to cut waste and promote sustainability. An example is Alpine Bank which has achieved a "Green Building" award, setting standards and goals for energy conservation and aiming to reduce waste by 50% by the end of 2008 through recycling. Local entities such as St. Mary's Hospital are achieving LEED



(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, with recycling programs a big part of the process. City schools are involved in cardboard recycling efforts and are being encouraged to do more with the introduction of single serve plastic milk bottles in the lunchrooms. The City of Grand Junction, through it's CORE (Conserving our Resources Efficiently) leadership group, is working toward recycling at local events (the first will be JUCO) and in public buildings.

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Special points of interest:

- 2008 will be a turning point for recycling in Grand Junction
- Plastic bag bans are being considered around the world
- YOU CAN NOW MIX PLASTIC CONTAINERS WITH STEEL AND ALUMINUM CANS
- Schedules and publications available on-line.

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Don't Trash That Old Computer!

February's electronics collection event garnered 9,000 pounds of CPU's, CRT's, and printers from area residents, small businesses and government agencies.

Recycling this much material saves an energy equivalent of 2,319 gallons of gasoline and

diverts the following from the landfill:
Lead: 649 pounds, Plastic: 2,676 pounds, Glass: 1,863 pounds, Metals (aluminum, steel, copper, tin and iron): 3,345 pounds, Zinc: 104 pounds and barium and mercury 9.5 pounds.

For information about upcoming electronics recycling events, call Sammie Baratta at Lifespan Technology, 256-0182.

Waste Management also has an electronics recycling program. Phone 243-4345.



Recycling is Booming....

Smaller businesses are interested in reducing their impact on the planet as well. We receive calls every day from local business wanting to recycle, and frequent requests from the public for talks, tours and our participation at events.

Wow! Recycling has become exciting! **But, hold on...**handling these various requests for service and processing all of the material that people are more and more eager to recycle takes equipment, manpower, and the structure to house and maintain that equipment and employ those people. Equipment costs money, and the competition with the natural gas

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companies has put the qualified labor pool out of reach of many local businesses, such as ourselves. Instead of expanding the recycling program in 2007 to meet the public's requests for service, we were actually forced to cancel half of our commercial accounts!

In other words, building an infrastructure to recycle in a *big way* requires a financial investment. So, what happens next... after Grand Junction has demonstrated a desire and willingness to recycle? Mesa County Government is spearheading an evaluation of waste diversion and recycling in the valley in comparison to other

areas of the state. We eagerly await its recommendations. In the meantime, talks are underway within the City to determine what will be necessary for the program to expand to meet the needs of officials, businesses, and the public and also what funding the City is willing to provide to achieve those goals.

Would you like more recycling options? Would you like to see more of your neighbors recycle or to have recycling at your workplace? Thanks to your commitment and effort through the years, 2008 may prove to be the next turning point for recycling in the Grand Valley.

Plastic's Outlaw

Over the past 30 years the plastic bag has made its way into every aspect of our lives. So much so that it is now a major contributor to unsightly blight- blowing around the countryside, clogging waterways, sticking to fences and being ingested by animals and birds mistaking its tiny, photo-degrading particles as food.

In an attempt to control the problem created by bag litter, some state and local governments across the country are taking steps to restrict their distribution or disposal. In April 2007 the City and County of San Francisco banned the use of non-compostable plastic bags by retail businesses with \$2 million or more in annual sales. The State of California also enacted legislation requiring large supermarkets to provide free recycling collection for plastic shopping bags and make reusable bags available for purchase. In a similar move, the City of New York has mandated that all retail operations occupying 5,000 or more square feet or that have five or more outlets provide convenient recycling for plastic shopping bags. Some businesses are taking the problem in hand without waiting for legislation. Austin, Texas based Whole Foods Market is eliminating the use of the disposable plastic shopping bags from its 270 Cana-

dian, UK and U.S. stores by April 22, 2008.

Around the World

According to reusablebags.com, between 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year, and that figure increases by more than half a million bags every minute. The vast majority are used once, often for a matter of minutes, and then end up in landfills or as litter. Planet Ark, an international environmental group, reports that thousands of whales, seals, turtles and other marine animals are killed by plastic bags each year worldwide. They block drains, trap birds, and are swallowed by livestock.

The response is global. From France to South Africa to India restrictions or bans are being debated. Japan, Germany, Italy as well as cities across Canada and Britain already have them in place. In Australia, about 90% of retailers have signed up with the government's voluntary program to reduce bag use. In January of this year the Chinese government banned the free distribution of plastic shopping bags. While the bags can still be purchased by consumers, it is the hope of the Chinese government that eliminating the give away practice will encourage people to opt for reusable bags.



*Do your part...
Reuse your own
bags when shopping!*

When Ireland passed a tax on plastic bags in 2002, plastic bag use dropped 94 percent within weeks. Within a year nearly everyone had purchased reusable cloth bags. Plastic bags were not outlawed, but carrying them became socially unacceptable and the tax, now at 50 cents per bag, made it worthwhile for shoppers to rethink their habits.

You can recycle plastic bags locally at Wal-mart, Alberstons., City Market and Safeway

Some local schools, like Pomona Elementary, are currently participating in Wal-mart's *Kid's Recycling Challenge*, by collecting and recycling plastic grocery bags. Call Pomona at 254-4990, or check with the school in your neighborhood to see if they are participating and to get all the details!





Recycling In Colorado

Boulder County is the leader in recycling around the state. Since its resolution by City council in May 2006, the City has been working toward achieving an 85% recycling and composting rate. Projects being worked on include expanding recycling programs to include composting, commercial waste collection, construction and demolition debris. Also under discussion are landfill bans for electronics and possible ordinances requiring manufacturers of some goods, such as electronics, to either take back their products for recycling at the end of its useful life or to

support infrastructure that recycles the product. Boulder County commissioners in the meantime have adopted Zero Waste as a guiding principle for government decision making, in the hopes of achieving a 50% or better waste diversion for the county as a whole by 2010.

Beginning February 1, 2008, Colorado State agencies will be utilizing recycled content paper in all of their 280 copiers. The Greening Government Initiative calls

for the state to implement an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policy by June 2008.

According to *Biocycle*, in 2006, Colorado landfilled 6.9 million tons of municipal solid waste and diverted only 12.5%, well below the nationwide average of 32%.

Grand Junction is below even the State average, at only 8 %.

Composting—The Natural Way to Recycle

by Pat Garland, aka “Mother Mulch”

Recycling plastic, glass and newspapers is something many of us do. But what about yard waste- grass clippings, leaves and plant debris? How do we recycle the kitchen waste- coffee grounds, banana or potato peelings *and* those egg shells? All these things take up space in the trash and are destined for the landfill. But all are also organic and can instead be composted. Compost is the only method of recycling that can be done naturally.

The composting process requires **Nitrogen** (green material) such as kitchen waste, grass clippings (no meats, fats, greases or dairy products), and **Carbon** (brown material) including leaves and plant debris. Green and brown material should be a 50/50 mix by weight. The green will weigh more than the brown.

The living organisms within the compost that do all the work need both water and air to stay alive. You want the mixture to be only wet enough for a handful to form a ball when squeezed, without water oozing out between your fingers. If it's too wet it will begin to smell rotten, an indication the pile needs air. Using a garden fork to lift the pile and turning it over is the best method to incorporate air into the pile. Tough, yes, but critical!



Some insects are good composters and should be left alone. The heat of a pile (up to 140 degrees F) will usually kill many other unwanted pests. The unpleasant pests in your compost pile-flies, roaches, and even cats and dogs-can be discouraged by covering the pile with soil or leaves to mask the odors of fresh, rotting



It is estimated that 25% of an average household's waste is compostable kitchen scraps and yard waste.

material.

The commercial composting facility at the landfill accepts clean yard waste free of charge. If you can't have a pile of your own, take advantage of this service and allow them to do the work. They also sell high quality, finished compost to the public.

Composting is my hobby. Readers with questions or just wanting to brag about their composting are welcome to email me at rotathome@bresnan.net

Pat Garland is a Master Gardener and formerly Compost Education Technician with the CSU cooperative extension and Mesa County Landfill.

There are several different ways to compost. Compost bins are available at local retailers and through garden supply catalogues. Bins can be constructed using old pallets or a trash can with holes drilled in the sides and bottom to allow air flow. You can compost without any structure at all. Grass clipping are the easiest to compost. Leave them right on the lawn. As soon as the blades of grass are cut the composting process begins.

A favorite method of composting is to dig small holes (I use a bulb planter to dig the holes 6" – 8" deep) between the plant rows and bury food scraps. A compost pile located in a corner of the yard also works well. Pile the material together and mix it up.





Breaking News !!!

INNOVATION LEADS TO LESS SORTING AT HOME!

While some cities are spending millions (yes-millions!) of dollars on high-tech separation systems to sort recyclables, we at GJ CRI have been busy experimenting with our own designs. We have devised a system for a fraction of the cost that will allow you to mix more material together now and allows us to sort it much faster than ever before.

This system will help us deal with all the material that is currently pouring in to the facility. Additional funding is necessary to speed up processing in other areas of the facility and to handle the anticipated expansion and growth.

Here are the four categories:

- **NEW!!! Place your #1 and #2 plastic containers in the same container with your steel and aluminum cans.**
- Keep your glass jars and bottles together in a separate container.
- Place newspapers, magazines, office paper, etc. in a separate container
- Flatten and stack only non-glossy, corrugated cardboard and recycle with brown paper grocery bags.

Just a note about glass:

Glass **must** be kept separate from other materials in order to be properly color sorted, marketed and made into new glass. Mixed glass is *trash*. Worse yet, if broken glass gets mixed with cardboard or paper it can ruin an entire load of material as glass pieces will break machinery at paper mills.

Please remember that glass bottles with lids left on them will **explode** in the hot sun. We barely avoided a tragedy with one of our workers two summers ago. **Please remove all lids!** Put metal lids with cans and discard the rest. **Thanks!**

Cutting Paper Waste



In an effort to minimize the impact of our operation and the amount of paper we generate we have put your pick up schedules and our newsletters on-line at www.gjcri.com.

If you would like us to remove your name from paper mailings, please contact us by phone at 242-1036, or by e-mail at info@gjcri.com.

Or, you can fill in the form below and mail it back to us at:

GJ CRI
P.O. Box 2450
Grand Junction, CO 81502

Junk mail

You can eliminate some of that unwanted junk mail by sending a card or letter to:

Mail Preference Service
c/o Direct Marketing Association
P.O. Box 9008
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008

Request that your name, address and phone number be deleted from all mailing and marketing lists. Provide them with all spellings or variations of your name, as well as with any other names at your address. Sign and date your letter.

Within three months, much of your junk mail should vanish!

Other ideas:

1. Return mass mailed items in their own self-addressed envelopes with a request to be removed from their mailing list. (Simply writing "refused" on the envelope **won't** work.)
2. When you make a contribution or place an order by mail or phone ask that your name not be sold or given away.
3. Call the number given on catalogues and ask that your name be removed from the mailing list.

Please do not send newsletters and my pick up schedule by paper mail. I prefer to download them on-line.

Please Print:

Name _____
 Home Address _____
 Mailing Address (if different) _____
 Zip code _____

(You can save a stamp and phone us with this request at 242-1036. If we do not hear from you, we will continue to send publications via ground mail. Thank you!)