

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Spokane Regional
**SOLID
WASTE
SYSTEM**

(509) 625-6580

www.solidwaste.org

Winter 2008



Down the drain? No way!

Years ago, you were probably told to flush old medications down the drain, but no more! We now know that medications we flush into our sewers or septic systems often end up in the water. Wastewater treatment plants remove bacteria and pathogens from wastewater. However, there is currently no method for removing excess medications. Please do not flush old medications.

To be sure that your old medications, as well as your needles, syringes, and lancets, are disposed safely, please follow the instructions printed in the box below. If you have questions, call the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800.



Third year Washington State University – Spokane pharmacy student, Kasey Daley, distributes flyers on the proper disposal of household sharps and pharmaceuticals to Barry Ehlert, the pharmacy manager at the Walgreens Pharmacy on Argonne Road. WSU Doctor of Pharmacy students partnered with the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System to distribute this information.

Disposal Recommendations for Household Pharmaceuticals & Sharps							
<p>Household Prescription Drugs Over-the-Counter Medications</p> <p>Spokane County residents can throw prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications in the garbage.</p> <p>Please follow these guidelines prior to disposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove medications from original containers & throw medicine and containers in the trash — OR Keep medications in original containers. Remove labels or mark out name and prescription information. For pills: Add water to dissolve or mix in coffee grounds. For liquids: Add cat litter, dirt or cayenne pepper to the liquid. Close the container lid, secure with duct or packing tape. Hide container in the trash. <p>Free Disposal</p> <p>Don't want to throw your medications in your garbage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare medications for proper disposal, secure in plastic bags and bring to the Household Hazardous Waste section at any of the System's disposal sites. <p>Questions? Recycling Hotline 625-6800</p>	<p>Residential Needles, Syringes, Lancets</p> <p>Needles, syringes and lancets can be put in puncture-resistant containers (coffee cans, liquid detergent or bleach bottles), with a label noting the container holds sharps, needles, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once secured in puncture-proof containers, residential sharps can be disposed of, free of charge, in the Household Hazardous Waste section at any of the System's disposal sites. Residents served by City of Spokane Solid Waste & Empire Disposal may place puncture-proof containers in garbage cans. Residents served by Newman Lake Garbage, Sunshine Disposal & Recycling, or Waste Management are prohibited from putting sharps in the garbage. Contact hauler for options. <p>Remember Never flush medications, needles, syringes or lancets down toilets or drains!</p> <p>System Disposal Sites</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>• Valley Transfer Station</td> <td>3941 N. Sullivan Road</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• Waste to Energy Facility</td> <td>2900 S. Geiger Blvd.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>• North County Transfer Station</td> <td>22123 Elk-Chattaroy Rd.</td> </tr> </table> <p>Spokane Regional Solid Waste System www.solidwaste.org</p>	• Valley Transfer Station	3941 N. Sullivan Road	• Waste to Energy Facility	2900 S. Geiger Blvd.	• North County Transfer Station	22123 Elk-Chattaroy Rd.
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Is your home making you sick?

If you think the answer to this question might be "yes," the American Lung Association can help you find out! Trained Master Home Environmentalist volunteers are available to do free home assessments to identify lead, dust, household chemicals, mold, smoke from wood stoves, or other pollutants that may be making you or your family sick.

Individuals with asthma, allergies, and respiratory illnesses, as well as families with young children, can benefit from these assessments. For additional information or to schedule a free home assessment in Spokane County, call the American Lung Association of

Washington at 509-325-6516 or email lhook@alaw.org.

For those living outside Spokane County or those who prefer to conduct their own home assessment, call and request an abbreviated Do It Yourself Assessment Form which guides you through the process of making your home healthier.

Many of the household chemicals that can pollute the air in your home need to be disposed of properly at the System's Household Hazardous Waste area at any of our three sites. With questions related to proper disposal of household chemicals, call the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800.

Spokane Recycles calendars now available

Our annual "Spokane Recycles Poster Contest" brought in 311 entries from 45 different classrooms, one Camp Fire group, and 12 individuals. Each student who entered the contest deserves special recognition for his or her efforts. The optimism and insight of these youthful citizens reinforces our belief that they will change the world someday! Congratulations to all who participated. You should be truly proud of your efforts.

From the many great choices, we are forced to choose just a limited number of winners each year. Here are the 2008 finalists:

- Betz Elementary, Cheney**
Megumi Call, Grade 2
Marissa Hunley, Grade 5
Peyton Stark, Grade 2
- East Farms Elementary**
Ellie Reavis, Grade 4
- Five-Mile Prairie Elementary, Mead**
Amanda Garrett, Grade 8
- Freeman Elementary, Freeman**
Stephen Eggers, Grade 5
- Garfield Elementary, Spokane**
Patrick Fallis, Grade 5
- Greenacres Middle School, Spokane Valley**
Alisha Goss, Grade 8
- Hallett Elementary School, Medical Lake**
Jeremy Ryan, Grade 4
- Hamblen Elementary, Spokane**
Amy Cantrell, Grade 3
- Home Schooled**
Sarah Murphy, Grade 8
- Libby Center (Odyssey Program), Spokane**



America Recycles Day Poster Contest finalists were all smiles as they proudly displayed their America Recycles Day art work. Finalists were recognized during the November 27th meeting of the Spokane County Commissioners. A reception in their honor followed.

- Andrew Chuang, Grade 6
Logan Elementary, Spokane
Bailey Lynch, Grade 5
Mykkal Wright, Grade 5
- Michael Anderson Elementary, FAFB**
Marissa Rodriguez, Grade 1
- Moran Prairie Elementary, Spokane**
John Girsberger, Grade 3
Ryan Moore, Grade 3
- Pioneer School, Spokane Valley**
Amy Bethmann, Grade 1
Anoop Chandra, Grade 4
Maddie Collins, Grade 2
Hannah Craig, Grade 1
Abby DeNike, Grade 4
Brooke Martin, Grade 2
Kennedy Peterson, Grade 4
Evelyn Rowe, Kindergarten
Henry Schmick, Grade 1
- Spokane Valley Seventh Day Adventist**
Delaney Grant, Grade 3
Kayla Matheson, Grade 4
- West Valley City School, Spokane Valley**
Mariska Gramlow, Grade 8
Gabi Olscamp, Grade 6

Posters from 15 of these finalists are included in the 2008 Spokane Recycles Calendar. If you don't have one yet, call the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800 to request a copy.



Spokane River Clean Up: On Saturday, October 6, about 750 volunteers participated in the 5th Annual Spokane River Clean Up. This year, volunteers picked up 12,000 pounds (6 tons) of garbage and 2,500 pounds of recyclables. Last year, our 600 volunteers collected 4 tons of trash and 1,500 pounds of recyclables. Thank you to Mary Lou Johnson who coordinated recycling efforts for this event and all the volunteers that came to help. We appreciate your efforts to keep our river clean!

10 Tips to reduce your footprint



Ever walked down a beach or through a soggy meadow and looked back? You probably saw your footprints, a clear trail of the path you'd taken. You might not realize it, but your life choices are also leaving behind footprints. Only these footprints are ecological—resource extraction, energy consumption, water and air emissions, and waste.

The concept of ecological footprints begins with the obvious—we have only so much land here on Earth. Of this land, only about two-thirds can be considered productive. This productive space must be capable of meeting all of our needs and absorbing all of our wastes. Based on the world's current population, there are about 4.45 productive acres available per person per year. However, the average global citizen has a footprint of about 5.56 acres. Not surprisingly, the average American's footprint is larger than the international average—about 23 acres.

Decisions we make about transportation, travel, housing, food, energy consumption, and more have a direct impact on how many resources and how much energy our lives require. These decisions also impact what and how much we waste. Follow these tips to create a smaller, and more earth-friendly, footprint:

1. At least once a week, eat foods that were produced in-state. Much of our food travels from overseas or from distant states. In fact, the average meal travels about 1,000 miles to get to your plate. This transport of food uses a great deal of fuel and produces harmful air emissions, as well. By “eating local” at least once a week, you reduce the amount of fuel required to provide your diet. Eating locally or regionally produced food can also reduce waste. Why? When foods are transported long distances, there is often a higher rate of spoilage. While you don't necessarily throw this waste away at home, it is thrown away on your behalf.
2. Thirsty? Choose tap water instead of buying water bottles, many of which were filled with tap water from someone else's community water supply. Buy durable water bottles and fill your own. At home, keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator and fill a glass. Every time you drink a glass of tap water, you eliminate a plastic bottle that you'll need to recycle.
3. As long as we're talking about reusables, let's talk about coffee and tea. If you're a regular at a local java joint or tea shop, carry your own reusable mug. Most stores will give you a slight discount on your drink. Plus, you'll eliminate the waste of one cup and perhaps a cardboard sleeve for every drink that goes into your reusable mug.
4. Use what you already own for a longer period of time. Many items—from toaster ovens to iPods—are replaced while they are still in perfect working condition. Rather than replace what is working, keep using it. In the long-run, what is “cooler”—having the money in your pocket and no waste in your trash or having the newest “it” gadget?
5. Recycle everything that is accepted



6. Start composting. Your yard waste, plus many of your fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps, can be composted, turning a “waste” into a valuable nutrient for your lawn and garden.
7. Choose the least toxic products for every household and home improvement job. And remember to buy *only* the amount you will need to use. Not only can household chemicals contribute to indoor air pollution, as well as soil and water contamination, but they also end up as “hazardous wastes” when we no longer need them. Hazardous wastes are costly to dispose properly.
8. Save money on gas and reduce your air emissions. Plan your errands to make efficient use of your time and fuel. If possible, make your trips during lower traffic times, when you will spend less time idling in congested traffic. Planning your errands also helps eliminate waste by reducing the chances that you'll make impulse purchases. Remember to carry your own reusable shopping bags and eliminate disposable bag waste, too!
9. Carry around your trash. For one day (or one week, if you are brave and daring!), carry all of your non-recyclable waste with you. Keep it in a sealed plastic container or resealable bag to reduce odors. Make sure it is never more than 5 feet away from you. By the end of your project, you'll have come to some conclusions about what you use and what you waste. In fact, you may have decided that it is time to make some changes.



10. Stop thinking of yourself as a “consumer.” What if you began to think of yourself less as a *consumer* and more as a *producer, creator, inventor, artist, community leader, or volunteer, or even friend, parent, or child?* The labels we use can change the way we think about ourselves and our world. They can also affect the decisions we make. This is one of the points that Ernest Callenbach makes in his book, *Living Cheaply with Style: Live Better & Spend Less*. He argues that the environment, personal health, and family finances are part of an interrelated triangle. When one is out of balance, the others are negatively affected. By keeping these three factors in balance, you can spend less, enjoy more, and treat our communities and planet with care. Check out his book at your local library or look for it in a used bookstore.



Learn more! Do more!

Find out how you are doing. Several websites allow you to calculate your ecological footprint by completing an interactive survey. At the end, most of these sites show you how many planets it would take for everyone on Earth to live your lifestyle. The results may surprise you!

Adventures with Bobbie Bigfoot
www.kidsfootprint.org

Best Foot Forward: Bringing Sustainability Down to Earth
www.bestfootforward.com

Ecological Footprint Quiz
www.myfootprint.org/

Global Footprint Network
www.footprintnetwork.org

The Green Office: Carbon Offsetting
www.thegreenoffice.com/carbon

What will they think of next?



Last fall, a British reality TV show invited 11 volunteers to participate in a “Survivor”-type challenge at a South London garbage dump. The volunteers were dropped off on the landfill and challenged to survive for three weeks. Learn more about the show, discover what happened to the volunteers after they left the dump, or watch episodes online at www.channel4.com/lifestyle/green/dumped/index.html.

Running the Numbers

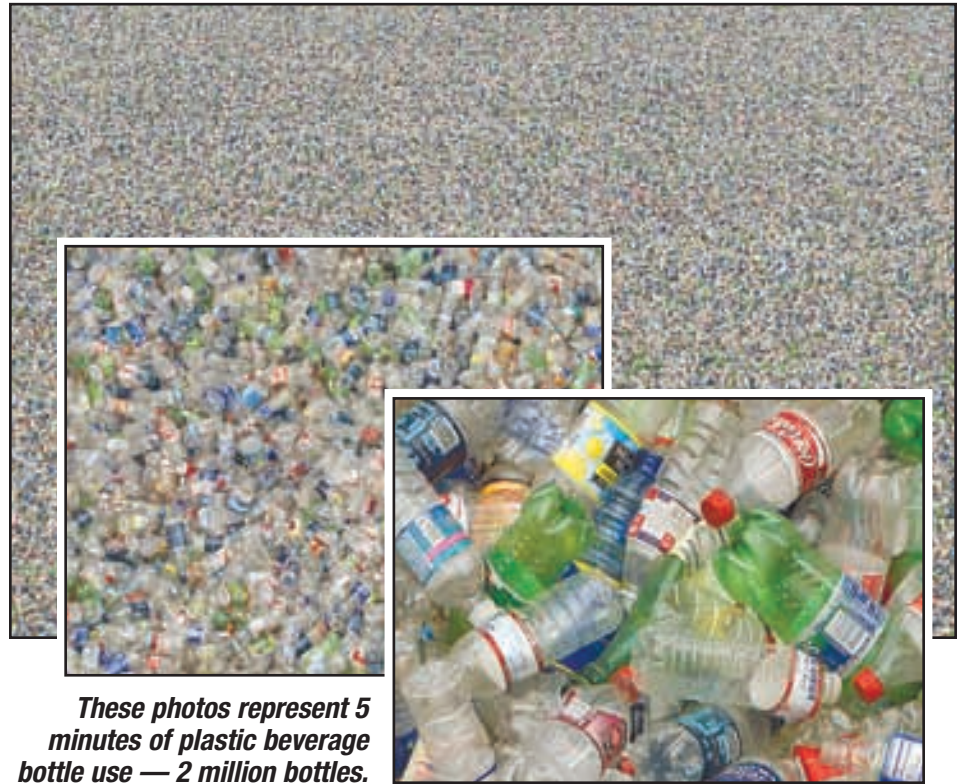
Artist Chris Jordan believes that statistics can tell stories, helping to create an American self-portrait. His new series of large-scale photographs depicts a specific quantity of selected items, such as five minutes of office paper use (15 million sheets), 30 seconds of aluminum can consumption (106,000 cans), five minutes of plastic beverage bottle use (2 million bottles), a day's worth of retired cell phones (426,000 phones just in the U.S.), and an hour of paper grocery bag consumption (1.14 million brown bags).

Jordan writes, "This project visually examines these vast and bizarre measures of our society, in large intricately detailed prints assembled from thousands of smaller photographs." He continues, "My underlying desire is to emphasize the role of the individual in a society that is increasingly enormous, incomprehensible, and overwhelming."

For more information about Chris Jordan's series, "Running the Numbers: An American Self-Portrait," including a list of galleries that will be exhibiting his work, visit www.chrisjordan.com.



Photos Courtesy of Chris Jordan



These photos represent 5 minutes of plastic beverage bottle use — 2 million bottles.

Change is in the air

In a little more than a year, TV will be changing. There will still be the Big 3 networks, news will still be available 24/7, and you'll still be able to enjoy your favorite shows. However, the way that TV is being transmitted will change.

Since the inception of television, most television came into your home as an analog signal. Beginning on February 17, 2009, all TV signals will have to be broadcast digitally, using computer-type code instead of over-the-air frequencies. Since nearly every home in America has at least one television, this change will affect almost everyone.

Older televisions have analog tuners built in, so these TVs will not be able to read the new digital transmissions. This doesn't mean your old TV will be obsolete. It does mean that you may need a converter box to keep using it.

During the coming year, you'll be hearing more about this change. You'll probably also see a lot of

advertisements encouraging you to get new TVs that include digital tuners to replace your older TVs. Remember—you don't have to replace your TVs!

If you are a cable TV or satellite subscriber, call your cable or satellite company to find out what you'll need to do to continue using your older TVs. In many cases, you won't even need a converter box, but your fees may change. If you rely on an antenna, you'll need to purchase a converter box. The federal government has set aside funds to help Americans purchase converter boxes.

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 National Association of Broadcasters website, www.DTVanswers.com.

If you do choose to replace your old TV, remember that TVs shouldn't go into the trash! Contact us about proper disposal.



Tissue facts

Each year, Americans use about 50 pounds of tissue paper products, such as toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels, paper napkins, and similar products. About two-thirds of tissue products are used at home, with commercial and industrial products constituting

the remaining one-third. According to Conservatree, more than 40 percent of tissue products do have some recycled content, and overall 60 percent of the fibers used to make new tissue products come from recycled paper. However, the most popular commercial brands of tissue products used by people at home, including toilet paper, facial tissues, and paper towels, are all made from 100 percent virgin forest fibers.

While you have no direct control over the type of paper used to print your favorite magazine, you have total control over what type of tissue paper products come into your home. When you shop, look for recycled-content tissue products. There are many brands that contain a high percentage of recycled fiber.

Check the labels.

Remember to reduce your use of disposable tis-

sue paper products, as well. Instead of paper towels, choose washable cloths and rags. Instead of paper napkins, opt for cloth napkins.

For more details about tissue paper products, including a list of which brands contain recycled content, visit www.conservatree.org/paper/PaperTypes/tissueoverview.shtml#intro.

QUOTES REQUOTED

The only lost cause is one we give up on before we enter the struggle.

Václav Havel, 1936–
Czech writer and former president



WHAT'S UP?

Did you know that if you sign up to receive your City of Spokane utility bill via email, you can prevent the bill from being printed, saving all the resources that go into making and printing the paper and the ink? For more information on this service, contact the City of Spokane Utility Billing office during regular business hours at 625-6000. If you are outside of the City of Spokane service area and are interested in paperless billing, contact your service provider for options.



The new Master Composter training class will start Monday, March 24 and continue on March 31, April 7, 14, and 21 (6 to 8:30 p.m.). In addition to the Monday classes, there is a class on Saturday, March 29 (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.). The final class session will be held during the Master Composters Compost Fair on Saturday, April 26 (9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.). Classes will meet at Spokane County Extension, N. 222 Havana. The class is free and participants receive their training and materials in exchange for volunteer hours. To receive a more complete description and registration materials, please call the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800.



The 2008 Spokane Youth Environmental Conference (SYEC) will be held on May 8, 2008 at Spokane Community College. The SYEC is a one-day, high-energy event for students in grades 7 through 12. The conference allows them to showcase their environmental science projects. The event is in its 10th year. The deadline for registration is January 31, 2008. Student abstracts are due March 31. Registration information is available at www.syec.org.



The 28th Annual Washington State Recycling Association Conference and Trade Show will be held May 18-21, 2008 at the Pasco Red Lion Hotel. The theme for this year's event is "Recycling: Reducing Our Footprint." For information on becoming a sponsor or an exhibitor, visit www.wsra.net or call 206-244-0311.



During February, Solid Waste System staff will be teaming up with the Spokane Public Library to promote recycling and support the Friends of the Library book sale. The System will offer a paper recycling activity in each of the libraries to educate residents about recycling and highlight the library's used book sale. Participants will learn how to make new paper from old paper. It's easy and fun and a great hands-on recycling activity for youth, scout troops, and others.

Here is the schedule for the paper recycling program:

- East Side — Wednesday, February 6, 4 p.m.
- South Hill — Thursday, February 7, 4 p.m.
- Downtown — Saturday, February 9, 11 a.m.
- Shadle — Saturday, February 9, 2 p.m.
- Hillyard — Wednesday, February 13, 4 p.m.
- Indian Trail — Thursday, February 14, 4 p.m.

Thomas Hammer Coffee Roasters: Making a Difference!

When Thomas Hammer Coffee Roasters moved its operations from the Spokane Valley to a 23,000 square foot warehouse in downtown Spokane, owner Thomas

Hammer had his work cut out for him.

During the cleanup and remodeling phase, the Waste Reduction Assistance Program (WRAP) worked with Hammer to donate unwanted materials from the building to the MOBIUS Children's Museum. In addition, WRAP developed a comprehensive recycling/composting program to divert cardboard, mixed office paper, curbside material, and "chaff," an organic by-product of the coffee roasting trade. The environmental designs of the company also reduced its refuse expense by \$1,500/year. Refuse expenses are expected to continue to decrease as the company grows.

The company has settled into its new headquarters at 210 West Pacific Avenue in downtown Spokane. Currently, the facility houses the Thomas Hammer Coffee Roasters corporate offices, roasting operations, the Mad Batter Bakery, and the Shipping & Receiving department. Thomas Hammer Coffee Roasters, home of the "Eco-Brew," is open 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, offering wholesale coffee and tea to the public.

If you are planning a new business or relocating—or if you have an existing



business and want to increase your recycling and decrease your disposal expenses—call Jim Haynes at 625-6536.

Through WRAP, Haynes can provide you with a confidential waste assessment, as well as offer suggestions on how to reduce, reuse, recycle, and save money in the process.

Buy, sell, or trade

Does your business or organization have unneeded, but usable, industrial process wastes, byproducts, surplus raw materials, chemicals, off-specification products, or packaging? A materials exchange can help you get these items out of storage, keep them from disposal, and save money. Or, maybe you don't need to get rid of anything—maybe you have something you need. With a materials exchange, you can buy, sell, or trade.

A materials exchange is an information service that lists products available from some businesses and institutions, as well as items wanted by others. Materials listed and wanted include pallets, boxes, wood, leather, metals, construction materials, equipment, acids, solvents, and more. This information is published by category in an electronic list, which is updated with regular emails as new items are posted. The exchange does not broker any deals. The businesses or institutions make their own arrangements for the exchange of the materials, including transportation and payment.

For more information, contact Jim Haynes at 625-6536 about the Pacific Materials Exchange, or contact the IMEX (Industrial Materials Exchange) directly at 206-296-4899 or imex@kingcounty.gov.

Remember—2Good2Toss.com is another convenient way to exchange small or large quantities of used or surplus building materials and large household items. Making an exchange is quick and easy. Visit www.2Good2Toss.com.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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Spokane Regional
Solid Waste System

WASTE TO ENERGY REPORT CARD

Working Together!



Wheelabrator
Spokane Inc.

July–September 2007

Garbage In
73,762.34 tons disposed
66,961.45 tons processed at WTE Facility
2,419.39 tons of ferrous metal recovered from the ash for recycling
20,849.26 tons of ash disposed at Rabanco

Electricity Generation
43,626 MWh produced
7,723 MWh used to run the facility
35,903 MWh sold to Puget Sound Energy

Revenues After Electricity Transmission Expenses
\$2,681,289.76

Notice of Violation None

Free tours are offered every Wednesday and Thursday at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome. Call ahead (625-6580) if your group is larger than 10, if anyone in your group has special needs (difficulties with walking, for example), or if an alternate day/time is needed for the tour. And don't forget, home-school groups and private/public schools are also welcome; please call ahead to schedule a tour.