



Preserving Resources,
Preventing Waste

The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Spring, 2010
*WasteWise...improving your bottom line and the environment
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.*

Earth Day to Mark 40th Anniversary

As most Americans know, Earth Day is an annual reminder about the importance of protecting our natural environment and focuses attention on what citizens can do to improve their local and national environments. It will be celebrated on April 22, 2010, which will mark the 40th anniversary of this national day of environmental awareness.

Earth Day was the brainchild of then Senator Gaylord Nelson from Wisconsin. Upon starting his Senate career, which would run from 1963 to 1981, Nelson was dismayed to discover that the environment was a non-issue in the politics of the country despite the many grassroots environmental movements that were forming throughout the United States during the 1960s. While he spoke out about the need to protect the environment throughout the 1960s, the idea of holding an Earth Day did not come to Senator Nelson until 1969. He was inspired by the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations that were being held at college campuses throughout the country and thus decided to use that same spirit to organize a grassroots protest about what was happening to America's environment.

Upon announcing his idea for an Earth Day protest to be held in the spring of 1970, he soon discovered that Americans were more than ready to express their dissatisfaction with the political system's lack of interest in the environment. The idea quickly took off at the grassroots level and was followed by extensive coverage in the national media prior to the event. This first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970 and was a huge success. It was estimated that over 20 million people and thousands of schools across the country participated in the event.

Senator Nelson's bold idea was not only successful at the grassroots level, but it also finally put the environment on America's political agenda and ultimately led to the passage of many of the most important pieces of environmental legislation ever to become law in the United States.

Did You Know...

- USA World Cup Soccer team uniforms will be made from recycled plastic (PET) bottles. Each Nike manufactured uniform will be 100% recycled content and will be comprised of eight plastic bottles. All replica jerseys to be sold to the public will also be made from recycled plastic.
- The Olympic medals awarded in Vancouver were made with gold, silver and copper that was recycled from electronic circuit boards mixed with mined metals.
- Matter of Trust, Inc., a public charity based in San Francisco, is collaborating with thousands of hair salons across the United States on a program wherein hair clippings from salon operations are mailed to Matter of Trust. The clippings are then made into hairmats that are used to soak up oil spills. For details visit www.matteroftrust.org.
- Wooden pallets can be recycled at many approved Class B recycling centers in New Jersey. Visit www.recyclenj.org and click on "Choose a Material for Recycling" for more information.
- TerraCycle, Inc. of Trenton now accepts and recycles pens, markers and other writing instruments. The collected items are reprocessed to make new products. Visit www.terracycle.net for details.
- California adopted the nation's first mandatory Green Building Standards Code. The code calls for 50% of the waste generated by new construction to be diverted from landfill disposal.

Somerset County Providing Recycling Option to Small Businesses

Despite the fact that recycling is mandatory in the commercial sector throughout New Jersey, one of the more difficult challenges facing municipal and county recycling coordinators is getting small businesses to recycle. Small businesses often do not generate significant quantities of recyclable materials and thus many simply do not recycle at all.

To address this situation, Somerset County recently implemented a "Small Business Recycling Drop-off Program," which enables small businesses (defined as businesses that employ between one and fifty people) to bring their recyclable materials to the county's recycling center in Bridgewater with no processing fee charged back to the businesses. Businesses may drop off their recyclables Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Thus far, over thirty small businesses in Somerset County have taken advantage of this program. This figure will undoubtedly grow as word spreads about the program.

This relatively simple approach to commercial recycling provides a needed option to small businesses and is consistent with the recommendations found in the Statewide Solid Waste Management Plan Update (2006) that encourage the establishment of recycling depots for the commercial sector. It is hoped that more municipalities and counties will consider establishing similar programs in the future.

Use of Social Media to Promote Recycling

While the use of brochures, billboards and door hangers will most likely continue to be part of the educational strategy used to promote recycling in the near future, the use of social networking websites to promote recycling may soon eclipse these more traditional methods of outreach. This

approach represents a key new educational and promotional tool and is being used more and more to help spread the recycling message, especially to young adult audiences that have been shown through market research to be less likely to recycle than other age cohorts.

The State of North Carolina is a leader in the use of social media to spread the recycling message. For example, the state created a You-Tube account for online video sharing, which is visited frequently by those interested in viewing the recycling commercials used in the state's advertising campaign. The North Carolina program also features the use of a MySpace page and a Facebook group. In addition, a Flickr account was created to support the state's recycling campaign. Flickr is an online photo sharing site that allows people to download photos and graphics. Photos of various recycling events are posted on the site. In 2008, Twitter became part of the state's social media program. Twitter is a microblogging site that allows participants to post short entries in regard to events or topics occurring at that moment. A blog was also created to facilitate communication with recycling coordinators and environmental educators.

While there are a number of logistical considerations associated with the use of social media websites in a recycling campaign, this approach has been successful in North Carolina and elsewhere.

Meeting Announcement

The next meeting of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network will be held on May 19, 2010 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at PSE&G's Hadley Road facility in South Plainfield. For details, contact Steven Rinaldi at Steven.Rinaldi@dep.state.nj.us.

Bumper Sticker of the Month

"A rind is a terrible thing to waste. Compost."

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