

WASTE BYTES!

Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management and Recycling Program

Let Us Call It an “Adjustment”

In the somber day-to-day news presented by the media, the public is watching budgets, the markets, and the overall economy. The products and materials we recycle are truly a commodity and subject to the effects of supply and demand. Generally everyone is worrying about jobs and services. In an election year there is naturally more attention paid on all levels of government. Town and school budgets are being eyed closely. The times are challenging for many.

Where do we stand in recycling? Do we still support recycling? The answer is a resounding ‘YES!!’ When we step back, we realize that we definitely are in a global economy. If Hank were still in the office, we would still be hearing, “We have to look at the Big Picture”. We *are* watching the “Big Picture”.

It is also a time to analyze, and rather than helplessly say, “What can we do?”, we can step back and actually look at recycling historically as well as what our current options are. Recycling has always been dependent upon markets, and more recently it had enjoyed more options than ever – especially in a worldwide economy. The strategies are now well tested and well-defined, and the rationale for recycling is clear. After having enjoyed a more than favorable markets in the past few years, we are experiencing an adjustment. Recycling continues to serve communities well - as it has for some time. Those with experience tell us that they have ridden the cycles of the markets before, and once the correction happens, we will return to more stable markets. Recycling is still a critical component in the “Big Picture”. In short, hold fast to what has worked....

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Maine Recycles Week Resurfaces in December

The MRW Steering Committee has completed its tasks for the year. At its November meeting, the members selected the school and poster contest winners. The Committee has approved the awards, and now has charged the MRW to carry on to the New Year with the publication and distribution of the 2009 Maine Recycles Calendar.

Winners of the school competition have been notified. The three schools selected for their outstanding contribution to make the tenth anniversary of MRW another success were:

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The Waste Management Hierarchy continues as our policy for waste management – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, compost, waste-to-energy, and landfill.

While **Reduce** is an area that we have always said was hard to measure, it can be also a measure of the economy. As we have reported that the amount of trash has grown over time, and the amount of recycling has leveled, Maine has reported showing little gain on the 50 % recycling rate. Reduce is referred to as “smart shopping”- a necessity now.

Reuse has been reported in the increase in business at the reuse stores, such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army. The Maine Building Materials Exchange has not only identified an increase from those wanting to winterize but also felt concern for possibly losing clients worried about where fuel money might come from first. The education reuse centers are no longer taken for granted but appreciated more as school budgets are tightened. A true sign of the times when boxed educational toys disappeared from the Auburn SHARECenter recently– just before the Holidays.

The **Recycle** theme has more options than any other and is most closely allied to the municipalities. When asked how the recycling rate is doing, we may even be asking how the spirit of the community is enduring. Recycling diverts resources from disposal and commits them to remanufacturing opportunities, aiding in conservation of natural resources.

Composting is another commitment by the public to reduce waste – in most cases at the source. **Compost** accepts the comments heard recently when one overhears someone say that they only had a small garden plot this year but they are already planning on a larger space next year.



Spent Cell Phones? Recycle Again!

Beginning January 1, 2008, any person, firm or corporation that sells a cellular telephone at retail in Maine must accept used cell phones for recycling at no charge to the customer. So the new law in Maine reads.....

That leads us to remind everyone about the need to recycle cell phones. Whether it is a “razor” or what, cell phones need to be recycled.

While some stores will take them back as will the company, there are also other options. One such option is the RBRC (Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation) that has established a great reputation with providing a safe and inexpensive way to take care of rechargeable batteries. Cell Phones? Try RBRC again. If you know where the boxes are located in your community, you may know that they do accept cell phones as well as batteries; otherwise you can go to their web site and discover that they are also described as “Call 2 Recycle”.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has a website with information and facts on the cell phone recycling requirement. It is: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/recycle/cellphonerecycling.htm>

You may also visit the SPO Waste Management and Recycling program web site, www.mainerecycles.com for information.

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For some municipal solid waste, the next to last step before the final resting place begins with **Waste-to-Energy**. The side benefit of energy is major when the public is looking for help. As a source of power, it plays an important piece of the power grid by providing electricity for the public while playing a major role in servicing business. As waste is combusted, the volume of waste requiring disposal is reduced. Facilities, such as the Penobscot Energy Recovery Company, have employed their own strategies, as seen with a shredder now to refine delivered materials that wouldn't conform to specifications for fuel in the past but now can be burnt – thus reducing what must be diverted to a landfill.

When all else has been exhausted, the lowest rung of the Waste Management Hierarchy is the **Landfill**. For the Solid Waste Industry, the landfill is either a noun or a verb, such as material landfilled each day. Resembling nothing like the old 'dumps' of yesteryear, these engineering and closely monitored facilities receive unwanted materials and through various methods, contain that waste. Some landfills are able to offer the value of capturing gases and combusting them to generate electricity. With this rung of the hierarchy, the landfill completes the "big picture".



Cogerno Landfill in Canada, serving parts of Northern Maine.

Holiday Time Is Recycling Time!

Christmas time creates a large influx of waste throughout the State of Maine and the whole Country. If we didn't take advantage of Maine Recycles Week to change our habits to recycle, it's not too late. Think about using Christmas Day to New Years as your own Maine Recycles Week and New Years becomes your personal ARD. This starts the year out right by having you think about recycling to discard any stress from your Holidays.

Focus on wrapping paper, for instance. Use newspaper to wrap presents. Open your presents on Christmas Eve and leave the paper for Santa with his milk and cookies and on his note suggest that he take the paper for the reindeer to use for their bedding.

Focus on saving a tree, for instance. Use a real tree for your Christmas tree. You can then donate it to a tree farm where the landowner can reuse it for another year and get tax credits for reducing his farm land. Of course you want to keep it for yourself, you can plant it as a shade tree to reduce your cooling bill in the summer ahead, add to a wind break for your house in winter, or if it is plated conspicuously enough, it can be decorated each year from the time that you learned to share Christmas.

Focus on cutting down on Santa's struggling with that huge bag and fighting hernias along with his reindeers by giving gift certificates. Gift certificates let people get what they want and also cut down on the carbon footprint by not having to return gifts. It also cuts down on greenhouse gases by not having the reindeers idling long or doing what animals do after a while when Nature calls along with the Spirit of Christmas.

Finally focus on the Holiday Season and what it can mean to you throughout the year or years ahead. Give to yourself: the luxury to be happy; the ability to dream; the patience to accept what you can't change; and the wisdom to know that the next day may bring new hope for happiness. PLEASE remember to **RECYCLE!**

Fruit Street Elementary School in Bangor - The City of Bangor has consistently produced winners over the 10 years of MRW and this year served as a kind of “topping on the cake”. This year they coordinated their efforts and caught the attention of the entire MRW Steering Committee.

Lincoln Middle School in Portland – Lincoln became the first school in committee recollection to enter the school competition. Taking an approach that many schools seem to share, Lincoln described efforts of their sustainability club as being at the core of their success.

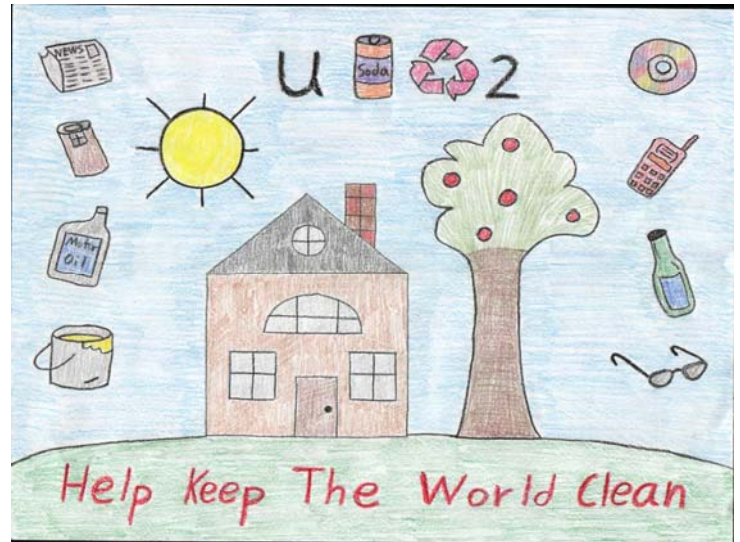
Bowdoinham Community School – Bowdoinham seems to always find new and original things to do to strengthen their efforts for the school competition. It seemed fitting that the MRW Steering Committee would recognize their commitment to recycling.

Recognizing that this was the 10th year, the committee selected another 7 schools at random to recognize the 10 years of Maine Recycles Week. The random selection also served to show what a strong group of participants were with us this year and reminded us of the many fine schools that had participated in the past.

Those schools receiving \$250 for being drawn from the remaining schools with creative, effective, and tremendous reported efforts were: Trinity Catholic School, Lewiston; Belgrade Community School, Belgrade; Saccarappa School, Westbrook; Livermore Falls High School, Livermore Falls; South Bristol Elementary School, South Bristol; St. George School, St. George; and Easton Elementary School, Easton.

The year always ends with the Maine Recycles Calendar. The 2009 calendar should be available around the first of the year now that the printer has the students’ pictures. The artwork of 13 students were selected for the calendar: Hunter Harrington, grade 3, Readfield Elementary School, Readfield; Teryn Austin (grade 12) and Hannah Keirstead (grade 10), Rangeley Lakes Regional School, Rangeley; Dominic Averill and Natalie Kudahwashe, grade 6, Lincoln Middle School, Portland; Mike Antil, grade 10, Livermore Falls High School, Livermore Falls; Arielle Leeman, Grade 4, Fisher-Mitchell School, Bath; Spenser Weiss, grade 6, Friendship Village School, Friendship; Duncan Hutchinson, grade 12, Hermon High School, Hermon; Tessa Gervais, grade 5, Stepping Stones Montessori School, Chelsea; Chloe Monson, grade 10, Cheverus High School, Portland; Alex Needham, grade 11, The Hyde School, Bath.

Calendars can be ordered on the State Planning Office’s Waste Management and Recycling Program web site, www.recyclemaine.com or contacting Bruce White at (207) 287-8053 or bruce.white@maine.gov.



The 2009 Calendar cover by Livermore Falls High School Student.



When it is all over, we can’t help but think that it is a shame that we couldn’t use every poster. The “CASTAWAY” here was done by a Rangeley Lakes Regional ninth grader.

Happy Holidays
From the SPO Waste Management
And Recycling Program to You

George MacDonald
Jetta Antonakos
Lana Laplant-Ellis

Sam Morris
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Bruce White

