

July 2009



NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the OKRA online newsletter. Please share the newsletter with anyone who might enjoy reading it. To receive electronic notification of newsletter availability and general recycling announcements, sign up for the OKRA list server on our website: www.recycleok.org

Transition Town OKC Named 27th Transition Initiative in Nation Group Brings a Community Approach to Energy Challenges

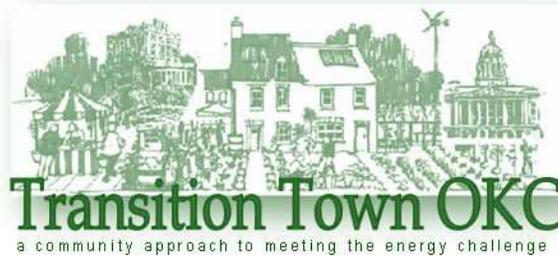
(Oklahoma City) May 21, 2009 – Transition Town OKC was recently named the 27th Transition Initiative in America. This recognition was given by Transition US, a nonprofit organization that provides inspiration, support, training, and networking for Transition Initiatives across the country.

The mission of Transition Town OKC (TTOKC) is to help Oklahoma City transition from foreign oil dependence to local resilience, energy security and sustainability.

“Working together, we can strengthen our local economy, support our local farmers, and develop renewable sources of energy,” said Shauna Struby, TTOKC co-chair and president of Sustainable OKC. “We aim to bring information and resources together in one place about groups and organizations already working toward making OKC more sustainable and resilient.”

TTOKC does not plan to launch any projects that overlap or duplicate work already being done by other sustainability and environmental groups. Rather it aims to help connect citizens and the general public with such groups and resources as they journey on the road to energy transition.

“Oklahoma City is a special place, with a unique geography, natural resources, demographics, ideals, and history,” said Christine Patton, TTOKC co-chair. “What works for other cities



may or may not work for us - we need to design our own path to energy security and local resilience. Transition Town OKC aims to act as a catalyst for our community to explore solutions to the energy challenges we face.”

Similar to how communities prepare for severe weather or other emergencies, TTOKC will serve

as a vehicle to empower communities to plan for changes associated with transitioning away from fossil-fuel dependency. The Transition Town model engages directly with the public to raise awareness about key issues, and encourages citizens to create a vision and actionable plan for a better future.

According to Transition US, the toughest challenges facing us all are those posed by the current economic crisis coupled with impending fossil fuel decline and climate change. The main goals of the Transition Movement are to increase community resilience by developing energy security, strengthening local economies, producing food locally, building self sufficiency, improving environmental conditions and increasing social equity.

Transition Town OKC is a project of Sustainable OKC. Details about this group and its network of resources can be found at www.goinglocalokc.com.
By Lindsay Vidrine

Recycling Organics Helps Grow Local Foods and Healthy Communities

May 1, 2009

The Oklahoma Composting Council has great news! You can Keep Oklahoma Beautiful and save a lot of money when you “harvest” or recycle yard “waste” instead of bagging and storing bags curbside for the customary trip to the land fill. This means fewer plastic bags to buy, less waste, less litter and less pollution!



When you “harvest” or recycle green wastes such as lawn clippings, leaves, and other organic debris you can make compost or mulch and begin growing most of your own food or you can start community or school gardens.

When you compost or mulch you will also be increasing water storage and sequestering carbon in your soil. Soils with organic matter naturally have more plant available nu-

trients, and water holding capacity that help eliminate erosion, sediments and pollutants in our streams and surface waters. This means you will use less water, help prevent global warming and save even more money.

Diverting organic debris from landfills to grow more local foods provides exercise, food security, biodiversity, appreciation of our natural surroundings, and builds relationships. It also supports and improves public health, local economies and provides opportunities for Agritourism. ... *Continued on Page 2*

At community and state levels, you can help Keep Oklahoma Beautiful by advocating for collaborative new alliances or programs to divert organic debris from landfills to grow more local foods in backyards; schools and community gardens, and on farms. This means you are personally contributing to cost effective solutions to unique state challenges such as rebuilding our soils; increasing water holding capacity; energy and water efficiency; public health, food security and job creation.



Harvesting or composting organic materials instead of sending them to a landfill means you and all of us can save money on food and health care costs, while responding to new demands to Keep Oklahoma Beautiful through less waste, less litter, energy and water efficiency, local food, Agritourism and jobs.

by Kathy Moore

Oklahoma Composting Council & Anichini – Moore Ranch & Farm (written at the request of Keep Oklahoma Beautiful)

For additional resources see: *Backyard Composting in Oklahoma*; www.jgpress.com/biocycle; www.compostingcouncil.org; and anichinimoore@hotmail.com (Oklahoma Council)

Recycling Mysteries: #5 Plastics

by Lindsey Wilson

If you're trying to be more eco-conscious, chances are you're already recycling plastic bottles (or using reusable ones!). But what about yogurt cups, hummus tubs or cottage cheese containers? What's the best way to dispose of those?

Items like these, as well as medicine bottles and some microwave-safe take-out containers, are typically made from #5 plastic, or polypropylene. This type of plastic is lightweight, yet durable and can withstand high temperatures, moisture and oil, making it ideal for food and other containers.

So, What's the Problem?

Up until recently, most community curbside recycling programs didn't accept #5 plastics. And while 28 of the 100 largest U.S. cities now collect plastic containers beyond bottles, many areas still do not.

"[#5 plastics] are not mainstream, but that's because it takes a while for things to catch on," says Judith Dunbar, the director of environmental and technical issues (plastics) for the American Chemistry Council. "In the early stages of recycling, like the '90s, it was mostly about bottles. Ninety-five to ninety-six percent of the bottles that are manufactured are either #1 or #2."

Of that remaining 4 percent, she says, polypropylene represents maybe 1 percent. But she explained that because #5 has a similar type resin to that of #2, many reclaimers are starting to find ways to incorporate it into other products. Garbage and recycling bins, water filtration systems, shipping pallets, sheeting and automotive battery casings are just a few of the products that can be made out of recycled polypropylene.

Where Can I Recycle #5?

If your community doesn't have curbside #5 recycling, or there aren't [plastic #5 recyclers](#) near you, here are two programs that can help:

1. Preserve Gimme 5

[Preserve](#), a maker of household goods that utilize 100 percent recycled plastics and post-consumer paper, has partnered with Organic Valley and Stoneyfield Farms to help capture #5 plastics before they end up in landfills. You can either drop your #5 plastic containers off at designated Whole Foods locations or mail them directly to Preserve, where they will be remade into items such as razors, toothbrushes, cutlery and mixing bowls—all of which are fully recyclable.



This type of plastic is lightweight, yet durable and can withstand high temperatures, moisture and oil.

Photo: Dustbowl.wordpress.com

2. Recycle Caps with Aveda

Even though they typically aren't printed with a #5 symbol, most plastic caps (like those on water and soda bottles) are made from polypropylene. [Aveda](#) created this program to ensure they don't end up harming birds and other marine life when discarded on beaches or in water sources.

Besides collecting plastics caps from participating schools and stores, Aveda is encouraging people to bring in clean tops from shampoo, beverage and condiment bottles (such as ketchup and mayonnaise) to its retail stores. Aveda will then ship the caps to its own recyclers and use the material to make new caps for its hair and beauty products.

Keep the Cap On

Remember those bottles you were recycling earlier? If you're not already taking the caps to Aveda, screw them on loosely before you toss them in the bin. While former instructions told us to throw the caps away, the new rules say to keep them on. Dunbar explains that if polypropylene caps travel to a recycling plant and are not attached to a bottle, it's very easy for them to jam machines or slip through cracks and get lost, defeating the whole purpose. "During the grinding and wash process for #1 or #2 bottles, the bottle material will sink and the cap material will float," says Dunbar. Then it's just a matter of skimming them off the top and either selling or utilizing the caps for something else.



While former instructions told us to throw the caps away before recycling, the new rules say to keep them on.

Photo from transfigurationpittsford.org

The same as any movement, the more people try to recycle polypropylene, the more widespread and easier it will become. "It's really a volume issue, just like anything else," Dunbar says. "If you don't have a lot of volume, then it's not going to sell."

Recycle Your Old Clothes Washer: Replace When Needed with ENERGY STAR

Has your clothes washer been around for years? You've had it so long, it sounds like a marching band when it runs?

There's no better time than the present to recycle your time-worn clothes washer. If your washer is more than 10 years old, you're paying about \$145 more each year on your utility bill than you would if you owned a new, ENERGY STAR qualified model. You're also wasting 30 gallons of water per load of laundry--equivalent to almost two times the amount of water used in an average shower.



ENERGY STAR Make a Clean Change Campaign encourages consumers to recycle their old, inefficient clothes washer, and when needed, replace them with new models bearing the ENERGY STAR label. Led by the U.S. Department of Energy, the campaign aims to help our country save energy, save money, and protect the environment.

In addition to the immediate energy and water savings from unplugging your old unit, some utilities, cities, and counties are paying consumers to get their old washers off the grid, and to properly recycle the steel and other materials they contain. You may also be able to take advantage of rebates on new energy-efficient appliances in the coming months, thanks to federal stimulus funds. Visit the ENERGY STAR Make a Clean Change: Recycle Your Old Clothes Washer Campaign at

www.energystar.gov/recycle to find recycling options and learn about rebates and special deals in your area.

When you go searching for a new unit, be sure to look for the blue ENERGY STAR label. Every major appliance manufacturer sells ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers, which are 40 percent more energy and water efficient than the minimum federal energy standard. That means that purchasing an ENERGY STAR qualified model over a conventional model will save you an average of \$50 a year on your utility bills. Over the life of your new washer, you'll save enough money to pay for the matching dryer.

Other pluses: new ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers are easier on your clothes, have larger capacities, and use less detergent than their conventional counterparts. Perhaps best of all, ENERGY STAR qualified clothes washers use less energy, helping us reduce our contribution to global climate change. By reducing water consumption, they also help protect our lakes, streams, and oceans.

To get the best performance from your machine, use the recommended amount of high-efficiency laundry detergent. For the greatest energy savings, fill the washer to capacity and use cold water whenever you can.

ENERGY STAR is a government-backed program that helps individuals and businesses save energy and protect the environment through superior energy efficiency. Learn more at www.energystar.gov.



E-cycler Under Scrutiny from Environmental Group and EPA

The EPA filed a Complaint and Compliance Order in early June 2009 against EarthCycle, an electronic waste recycler based in Tulsa. The EPA complaint cites 7 violation counts for "illegal management and exportation of cathode ray tubes". The counts also include "failure to prepare a hazardous waste manifest" and "unauthorized export of hazardous waste"

EarthCycle came under close scrutiny from the Basel Action Network (BAN), an environmental watchdog group, after holding numerous electronic collection drives in and around Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. EarthCycle partnered with local charities to hold the electronic collection drives as fundraisers, with the agreement to pay the charities for the electronics collected.

But, BAN claims EarthCycle had no intention of recycling the electronics and instead sold them for profit and shipped them to developing countries, where it is possible the computers could be stripped and dumped, with the hazardous chemicals still inside. These hazardous chemicals include lead and mercury which can cause birth defects and brain damage in children.

BAN, in connection with the Electronics TakeBack Coalition (ETBC), is seeking national legislation to ban the export of toxic e-waste to developing countries, as many European countries have already done. They are calling on consumers, manufacturers and retailers of computers and electronics to make a commitment to

never allow their old e-waste to go to recyclers that will simply export it to developing countries. BAN has developed a list of responsible e-cyclers (e-Stewards) that have agreed not to export hazardous e-waste to developing countries, and they encourage all consumers, particularly charities, to be conscientious and use the e-Steward recyclers.



To read more on this subject, check out the on-line articles at:

- <http://www.ban.org/Library/PittsburghScam.pdf>
- <http://www.greenercomputing.com/blog/2009/05/27/green-e-waste-goes-wrong>
- <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09163/976877-455.stm#ixzz0IFmcezUT&C>
- <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09163/974365-455.stm#ixzz0HJljO2Ou&A>
- <http://kdka.com/kdkainvestigators/EarthEcyle.JeffNixon.2.1036667.html>
<http://kdka.com/consumer/fake.recycling.scam.2.1022891.html>
<http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2009/06/11-1>

Oklahoma private school receives President's Environmental Youth Award

Students create a "green" sustainability program for school and campus

(Dallas – May 13, 2009) Keystone Adventure School and Farm, Inc. of Edmond, Oklahoma, was recognized in Washington, DC, at a ceremony for receiving the President's Environmental Youth Award (PEYA) sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Keystone Adventure School and Farm, Inc., a small private school of students from grades Pre-Kindergarten through 6th grade, earned national recognition by collectively producing an environmental sustainability plan for their campus and establishing their own totally "green" restaurant called the Kid's Café.

"This was an amazing accomplishment by students, faculty, and staff at Keystone," said EPA Acting Regional Administrator Larry Starfield. "Their hard work, dedication, and resourcefulness exemplifies how our agency is encouraging all age groups to be good environmental stewards."

Working together as a team, students from Keystone produced a sustainability plan to make their school "green." Projects for the "green" sustainability plan included incorporating campus-wide recycling, encouraging chemical-free cleaning practices, cleaning with rags instead of paper, allowing reusable serving ware instead of plastic, planting and maintaining a

chemical-free garden, testing water quality, and reusing seeds for crafts and planting.

Operated totally by the students, the Kid's Café project challenged the Keystone students by incorporating environmental stewardship while managing a restaurant. Students were responsible for growing the vegetables, cooking the food, waiting on tables, and managing the funds. The funds were donated to an orphanage school in Thailand to promote green gardening to supplement their diet.



Keystone Adventure School Award Recipients

Established in 1990, the PEYA program encourages kids to learn about their environment and create strategies for improving their community's public and environmental health. Projects compete regionally and nationally and are judged by the EPA on impacts, benefits, how environmental needs were met and other criteria. PEYA encourages student participation in community projects that have positive environmental impacts and involvement in environmental issues.

Additional information on EPA's PEYA program is available at <http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/peya/index.html>

-EPA news release



It's Easy to Borrow a Resource Trunk

By Ilda Hershey

Do you have an opportunity to teach kids about reduce, reuse, recycle, composting, landfills and illegal dumping? Borrow a Solid Waste Management Resource Trunk near you! There's one in Oklahoma City, Stillwater and Tulsa that you can pick-up and use for up to three weeks.

All we need is your application and a \$25 refundable deposit. We will then



contact you to confirm your pick up date. It's that easy. To download the information and application sheet visit: <http://agecon.okstate.edu/waste/files/TrunkApplicationForm.pdf>. Questions? Email ilda.hershey@okstate.edu.

Talking trash has never been so much fun!

Left photo: Solid Waste Management Resource Trunks are easy to transport and full of useful teaching tools.

CATCH SOMEONE IN THE ACT!

Take a photo of someone recycling and we will publish their photo in our next OKRA newsletter!

Send PHOTOS, NEWS and EVENTS for the OKRA website and newsletter. Email them to Trudi Logan at trudi.logan@us.af.mil

Television Recycling

Since the last television stations have now made the switch from analog to digital broadcasting, many Oklahomans' are wondering what to do with their old sets. Fenton Rood, Director of Waste Systems Planning for the ODEQ believes television recycling is the best alternative. Rood recommends that consumers recycle their old TV sets to avoid concerns about throwing them away.

Earth911.com also argues that recycling is the best alternative for old television sets. According to Earth911, electronic circuit boards, batteries and color cathode ray tubes (CRTs) often contain haz-

ardous chemicals such as lead, mercury and hexavalent chromium. If improperly handled or disposed, these toxins can be released into the environment through landfill leachate or incinerator ash.

Responsible recycling of your TV can reduce the risks of disposing of this common household electronic device and allow valuable materials (such as steel, glass, plastic and precious metals) to be recovered from the recyclables.

Taking your old televisions to a reputable electronics recycler will ensure that



Image from Earth911.com

the hazardous materials contained in the set do not become tomorrow's environmental problems.

Sources: Earth911.com, April 19, 2007 and The Oklahoman, Jun 12, 2009

Village Curbside Recycling - Victim of Market Decline



The Village, having the distinction of implementing the first curbside recycling program in Oklahoma, recently stopped offering curbside recycling for its residents after Allied Waste Services terminated its contract. Due to the recent decline in the market for recyclables, Allied Waste was forced to stop accepting items for single-stream recycling.

Village officials have not yet determined whether to implement another curbside recycling program. But in the interim, residents can utilize the drop off recycling point at the Village Public Works Building.

Recycled Bicycles: Sustainable Transportation for Developing Countries

Have an old bike that is sitting around taking up space that you would really like to get rid of, but you just can't make yourself throw it away. Well, now Bicycles for Humanity has the answer.

A bike can change a life in a poor country. Yet for millions of people on the lowest incomes, a new bicycle is financially out of reach. Meanwhile, millions of perfectly good bikes lie unused in North America, Europe and elsewhere in the Western world.

Instead of tossing that old bike on the trash pile, consider bringing it to a bike collection. With little pavement in Africa, mountain bikes or fat tire bikes are ideal. Also, old tires and tubes, tools, bike parts, clothing, helmets, shoes, it's all needed and very valuable.

Bicycles for Humanity began in September 2005 with the simple goal of enabling people to raise funds and collect unwanted bicycles to send to reliable partners in developing countries.



In developing countries, Bicycles for Humanity, in partnership with organizations in that country, provides resources and support to make the process accountable and efficient. It works at the grassroots level to ensure that disadvantaged people are empowered through improved access to food and water, employment, healthcare, education and social opportunities.

Bike collections usually happen in the spring and the fall generally, on a specific weekend to be announced. This is because most groups sending bikes to Africa do not have storage facilities and cannot take

the bikes until the weekend the transport container is being loaded. Bicycles for Humanity has chapters across all of **Canada**, the Western **United States** and **Australia**. For more info, check out their website at www.bicycles-for-humanity.org

KAB AND NRC PROPOSE COMBINED OPERATIONS, CREATING A MORE POWERFUL VOICE FOR RECYCLING

from the National Recycling Coalition



National Recycling Coalition



Keep America Beautiful (KAB) has offered, and the NRC Board of Directors has accepted, a proposal to combine operations of both organizations. The NRC Board believes that this proposed combination creates a powerful alliance that will enhance the environmental and economic value of recycling in the United States, and sustain NRC as the nation's most credible Voice of Recycling.

This proposal is the most important decision that the Board and membership of NRC have faced in our 30 year history, and rightfully it requires the approval of the membership to take effect. The NRC will conduct a referendum vote of its members before the end of summer.

The Board strongly encourages our members to carefully review the proposal and consider the dynamic future that it provides for our mission. We hope that members will enthusiastically support the proposal by voting in favor.

Merits of the Combination

Very importantly, the proposal creates a greater participatory role for NRC members through creation of an NRC Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will help shape and implement the programs and policies of the organization by assuming many of the responsibilities previously undertaken by the NRC Board of Directors. As a result, the State Recycling Organizations, active NRC Councils, and individual members will have *more* direct access to the executive operations of the NRC and KAB. The size and scope of the Advisory Council will be at the discretion of the SROs and Councils, ensuring that the body reflects the interests and concerns of the membership in "real-time". The members will also have direct, ongoing input through at least 3 member-elected seats on the KAB Board of Directors.

The combination also ensures that the NRC will remain a Washington-based entity with dedicated staff and resources to focus on programs and policies on behalf of its members. Plans for the NRC are detailed in the attachments, and are intended to greatly enhance the capabilities of NRC to deliver programs and services to affiliates and members that were not available historically, or for which resources were scarce.

The combined organization will be better able to support the efforts of our affiliate network and constituents. Ultimately it allows us to deliver more comprehensive, measurable, and meaningful recycling programs targeted to consumers, businesses and municipalities. The proposed organization provides compelling synergies of communication, education and advocacy resources, including those of KAB/NRC affiliated states and membership, and will create a more powerful Voice for Recycling. In addition, in many states, KAB and NRC have common constituents who will provide cultural integration at the state and local level and who can take advantage of new opportunities for cooperation in local recycling initiatives. The combined organization will have reach into almost all 50 states, giving us the basis to build a truly national coalition.

Diversity will remain a core value of the combined organization. Affiliates of both KAB and NRC may continue to pursue independent programs, outreach and policy/advocacy efforts or may choose to cooper-

ate in these efforts, at their sole discretion.

What the Combination of NRC and KAB Will Achieve

Over the next 3 years, the combined organization will undertake various activities in connection with its broad mission, as outlined in the Work Plan and Strategic Plan in the attached Proposal.

KAB's network of nearly 600 local affiliate organizations and 3 million volunteers, combined with the technical expertise of the NRC membership, allows for exponential growth in the organization's role as the National Voice of Recycling for the general public, media, and policy makers.

We believe it is important for NRC and KAB to establish measurement standards and promote national recycling goals as a performance metric for the organization.

With and through the State Recycling Organizations ("SROs") and KAB affiliates, we will develop and promote best management practices for recycling, and address challenges to higher recycling rates for materials with established markets.

Together, we can build broader financial support and improved infrastructure for SROs and KAB affiliates to promote and implement America Recycles Day, as well as many other revenue-generating programs and opportunities.

We will retain and grow the annual Congress and Exhibition as the central unifying event of the recycling community.

We can more readily expand the organization, increasing the ranks of members and affiliates.

Next Steps

NRC and KAB want the membership to have adequate time to review and consider the proposal, and we intend to provide extensive opportunity for the membership to ask questions and offer input. Arrangements will be made to meet, in person or by telephone, with State and Council leaders, and a web-based forum will be established within the next 10 days to allow NRC and KAB members and supporters to comment on the proposal.

NRC will conduct a referendum vote before the end of summer. An affirmative membership vote (2/3 majority of votes cast or greater) is necessary for the combination to go forward. NRC will communicate with members directly and through affiliates to promote participation in the vote. A complete voting packet, consistent with NRC past practices, will be formally submitted to the members in the coming weeks.

NRC will continue to plan for the 2009 America Recycles Day and the 2010 RecycleMania event in anticipation of an affirmative outcome.

This decision is important – perhaps critical – for the future of recycling in America.

Your voice, and your vote, matters.

EPA Examines Health Impact of Shredded Tires

by Trey Granger

Based on new research that shows shredded tires may release arsenic, lead and mercury into the products they are used in, the EPA is examining the safety of using them in applications such as playground surfacing.

Part of the investigation is a small-scale survey commissioned by the EPA. Its goal is to determine if children can suffer health risks from ingesting the toxic chemicals present in tires.

In addition to playground surfacing, ground rubber is used as an additive for artificial turf, and the Center for Disease Control issued an advisory for potential lead contamination from this turf just last year.

While the investigation is underway, the group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility is requesting that the EPA remove its endorsement of using crumb rubber in consumer products.



The Rubber Manufacturers Association has responded that several studies show no health risks from using recycled rubber, and are calling this a “misinformation campaign.”

What’s in a Tire?

So how is this rubber containing toxic chemicals in the first place?

Part of this is the metal component of tires, which includes everything from the rim to lead weights that maintain wheel alignment. This

metal must be removed by machinery after the tire is already shredded into pieces.

As a result, it’s not uncommon to see tire recyclers that require rims to be removed prior to recycling.

Reprinted from Earth911.com, Published June 17, 2009

Coca-Cola Experiments With Aluminum Bottles

by Trey Granger

Recognizing that sales of carbonated beverages have dropped in the U.S. for four straight years, Coca-Cola will be releasing new forms and sizes of packaging based on sales success in Europe.

Traditionally, soft drinks have been available in only a few sizes, such as 12-ounce aluminum cans and two-liter plastic bottles. But Coca-Cola wants to experiment with different sizes moving forward, as there are over a dozen varieties of soft-drink packaging in Europe.

Aluminum is a durable and sustainable metal: two-thirds of the aluminum ever produced is in use today. Photo: Beview.com

The packaging experiment will focus

both on material and price point:

Coca-Cola will be featuring aluminum bottles and a redesigned two-liter plastic format known as contour, which is shaped the same way as Coca Cola’s classic glass bottles from the early 20th century.

Meanwhile, the price-per-ounce will be based on size, with a twin-pack of 1.5-liter bottles costing more per ounce than a two-liter bottle. Generally, price-per-ounce would decrease when consumers purchase a higher quantity.



Aluminum is a durable and sustainable metal: two-thirds of the aluminum ever produced is in use today.

“There was a point in time when value was defined as more—more ounces for less [money],” Ralph Kytan, vice president of Coca-Cola’s North American bottling operations tells The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. “Package diversity is about matching up the benefits of the package with the needs of the purchaser for the occasion they’re buying for.”

As far as recycling, all of the new packaging options will be recyclable since they are manufactured using aluminum or PETE plastic. Size of the containers does not factor into recyclability.

REMINDER — AMERICA RECYCLES DAY — NOVEMBER 15, 2009

Updated pledge cards and signs for local collection boxes will be available on the OKRA website by September 1, along with other information for this year’s ARD celebration in Oklahoma: www.recycleok.org

The Global Face of Recycling

by Brandy Norleen

Many of us are aware of how the U.S. approaches recycling, but have we ever taken the time to consider how the world approaches it?

We are often so comfortable in our own surroundings, that sometimes we don't have the opportunity to see how other countries approach the same daily concerns. Here is a glance at some different parts of the world and how seriously they take recycling.

The village of Dharavi in the heart of Mumbai is also a recycling emporium. The majority of the one million plus inhabitants gathering waste from all over the city, transforming old, used and unwanted trash into new products. Photo: Daylife.com

India

- In Dharavi, India, many people make a living by creating their own recycling factories. It is estimated that the self-made recycling industry employs roughly 200,000 people. It's not merely taking care of waste, but a way of life and a source of income.

- India recycles roughly 40 percent of their e-waste a year. This includes such items as broken or unwanted electrical appliances.



The village of Dharavi in the heart of Mumbai is also a recycling emporium. The majority of the one million plus inhabitants gathering waste from all over the city, transforming old, used and unwanted trash into new products.
Photo: Daylife.com

Europe

- Austria takes the cake by recycling roughly 60 percent of its waste.

- The United Kingdom recycles roughly 17.7 percent of its waste.

Ireland, Italy, and Portugal are around the same percentage.

- The majority of recycling in the United Kingdom is handled by authorities. They institute incentives in order to encourage recycling. For example, a landfill tax is charged on top of normal landfill fees to encourage business and local authorities to recycle, reduce, and reuse.

- Many of the products the United Kingdom recycles include, but are not limited to, paper (including cards), glass, clothes, shoes and aluminum cans.

Japan and China

- In China, recycling isn't just a citizen responsibility; it's now considered second nature. Citizens and government alike in China are taking steps to encourage recycling. This has also become a profit machine. The citizens who diligently collect recyclables off the street are numbered around 2.5 million people. These scrap collectors earn the equivalent of \$150 a month which is roughly half of what a cab driver earns in that country in the same time frame.

- It is estimated that 20 percent of the country's waste is disposed of improperly in China. This includes such items as building materials.

- Despite this, Beijing has built the world's largest recycling facility

and continues to install recycling bins. The city of Beijing hopes to increase their recycling rate from 10 percent to 80 percent by 2010.

- In Japan, recycling is a \$360 billion dollar industry.

- In 1995, Japan established the Containers and Packaging Recycling Act to "meet the increasing need to reduce the volume of solid waste and make full use of recyclable resources by means of sorted collection and to recycle waste containers and wrapping." The [Japan Containers and Packaging Recycling Association](#) helps to take on this responsibility by investing and managing recycling fees.



With the world's largest recycling facility in Beijing, recycling is "second nature" in China.
Photo: Samrecovery.com

South America

- In Brazil, nearly 500 cooperatives employ approximately 500,000 recycling collectors. This is a \$3 billion industry.

- Fifty percent of the 140,000 tons of trash generated daily in Brazil is recycled.

- Chile opened its first electronic scrap recycling facility in 2005.

- Peru opened its first recycling plant in 2007, which processes plastic packaging.

Africa

- The Glass Recycling Company has partnered with the government and glass manufacturers in South Africa in an attempt to increase the current glass recycling rate. This partnership increased recycling rates from 148,000 tons to 183,000 tons of glass recycling in roughly a year and a half.

- In Egypt, refuse collectors actually buy the right to collect trash since it is seen as such a profitable business. The collectors gather and recycle anything they can turn for a profit.

A Different Angle

The world's recycling perspective ranges anywhere from profitable to vital in preserving the environment and controlling waste. While some countries offer elaborate setups for recycling and their citizens take the extra step to sort their waste, other countries have to choose alternative methods.

In places like Africa, India and South America, the common trend is that the recycling industry is a means to provide income for many residents. While in the U.S., companies and governments take the lead in recycling, other countries do not have the structure to setup such an arrangement.

Despite this, the waste situation is real and turning the situation into profit has both helped many countries by controlling their waste and providing income for struggling families. However, there are very real health issues brought to light. While collecting the waste, people can easily contract diseases due to the methods of collection.

Bibliography: *The Global Face of Recycling*

Presidential Memo on EPA Proposed Rulemaking for Renewable Fuel Standards *(excerpt from the Federal Register)*

[Federal Register: May 7, 2009 (Volume 74, Number 87)]
[Presidential Documents] [Page 21531-21532]
From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access
[wais.access.gpo.gov] [DOCID:fr07my09-154]

Memorandum of May 5, 2009

Biofuels And Rural Economic Development

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Energy, [and] the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

In the Nation's ongoing efforts to achieve energy independence, biomass and biofuels promise to play a key role by providing the Nation with homegrown sustainable energy options and energizing our economy with new industries and jobs. While producing clean renewable fuels locally is a powerful engine of economic growth, they must be developed and used in a way that limits environmental impact. Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, as required by the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, to set new national renewable fuel standards and implement those standards. The public will have an opportunity to provide input on this proposal through a 60-day comment period, and the EPA is conducting peer reviews on key aspects of the environmental impact assessments within the proposal.

In order to shepherd our Nation's development of this important industry and to coordinate interagency policy, I hereby establish a Biofuels Interagency Working Group (Working Group), to be co-chaired by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy and the Administrator of the EPA. This Working Group will coordinate with the National Science and Technology Council's Biomass Research and Development Board in undertaking its work. The responsibilities of the Working Group shall include:

(a) Developing the Nation's first comprehensive biofuel market development program, which shall use existing authorities and identify new policies to support the development of next-generation biofuels, increase flexible fuel vehicle use, and assist in retail marketing efforts;

(b) Coordinating infrastructure policies affecting the supply, secure transport, and distribution of biofuels; and

(c) Identifying new policy options to promote the environmental sustainability of biofuels feedstock production, taking into consideration land use, habitat conservation, crop management practices, water efficiency and water quality, as well as lifecycle assessments of greenhouse gas emissions

Alongside the Working Group's efforts, the Secretary of Agriculture may pursue other important biofuel development efforts. The Rural Development Act of 1972 and the Rural Development Policy Act of 1980 direct the Secretary of Agriculture to develop, in coordination with State and local governments, a nationwide rural development program to assure rural America's health and

prosperity. In keeping with that mandate, and recognizing the key role rural America will play in the development of biofuel technology and development, I request that the Secretary of Agriculture take the following steps, to the extent permitted by law:

(a) Immediately begin restructuring existing investments in renewable fuels as needed to preserve industry employment; and

(b) Develop a comprehensive approach to accelerating the investment in and production of American biofuels and reducing our dependence on fossil fuels by providing, within 30 days, under the authorities made available in the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008:

(i) Loan guarantees for the development, construction, and retrofitting of commercial-scale biorefineries and grants to help pay for the development and construction costs of demonstration-scale biorefineries;

(ii) Expedited funding to encourage biorefineries to replace the use of fossil fuels in plant operations by installing new biomass energy systems or producing new energy from renewable biomass;

(iii) Expedited funding to biofuels producers to encourage production of next-generation biofuels from cellulosic biomass and other feedstocks;

(iv) Expansion of the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program, which has been renamed the Rural Energy for America Program, to include hydroelectric source technologies, energy audits, and higher loan guarantee limits; and

(v) Guidance and support for collection, harvest, storage, and transportation assistance for eligible materials for use in biomass conversion facilities.

This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

The Secretary of Agriculture is hereby authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.

(Presidential Sig.)

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, May 5, 2009



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—President Obama

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Should you have questions about membership, or if you'd like a supply of OKRA membership brochures to share at your next meeting or event, please contact Ilda Hershey, OKRA Membership Chair, 405-744-9806 or ilda.hershey@okstate.edu.