



Diversions

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The '04 Waste "Diversion" Numbers Are In!

The CCCSWA recently submitted Central Contra Costa member cities' 2004 "diversion" rates to the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) for approval.

Diversion rates are estimates of the amount of waste being kept out of the landfill by reducing, reusing, recycling and composting. All California cities are required by state mandate to divert at least 50 % of materials.

What do those numbers mean for you and me? Let's look at the total amount of materials diverted in all five cities and neighboring unincorporated areas in 2004. Close to 104,000 tons of bottles, cans, paper, cardboard, other recyclables, and green waste were collected from residents and businesses to become remanufactured goods or compost. That's enough to fill a standard size football field almost 150 yards high!

Thank you, and please keep up the good work!

Batteries Not Included... In Your Trash

You may not have felt the ground shake, but on February 8, a four-year grace period ended for disposing of common items containing hazardous materials in your trash. Items now banished from the garbage in California include batteries, fluorescent tubes, televisions, computer equipment, telephones, and mercury-containing thermostats and switches. This class of trash is known as "universal waste" or "u-waste."

These items may seem harmless enough, but the heavy metals they contain—such as lead, cadmium, and mercury—are toxic to the environment and our health.

It's relatively easy to dispose of these materials properly. Many businesses take batteries, computers and other materials from residents free of charge. To find a collection site near you, visit **Contra Costa County's Waste Reduction and Recycling web site at www.ccrecycle.org** and click on "Universal Waste" to view a comprehensive list of material types and disposal locations.

You can also take u-waste items—except electronics—to the **Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's collection facility for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)** at 4797 Imhoff Place in Martinez. Call their **HHW information line at 800-646-1431** for hours, directions and answers to any of your u-waste questions.

Central Contra Costa residents wishing to dispose of electronics can set them out on the curb during their area's bi-annual Reuse and Cleanup Days, or drop them off at no charge at **Pacific Rim Recycling**, 3690 Sprig Road in Benicia. Call **707-746-6067** for hours and directions.

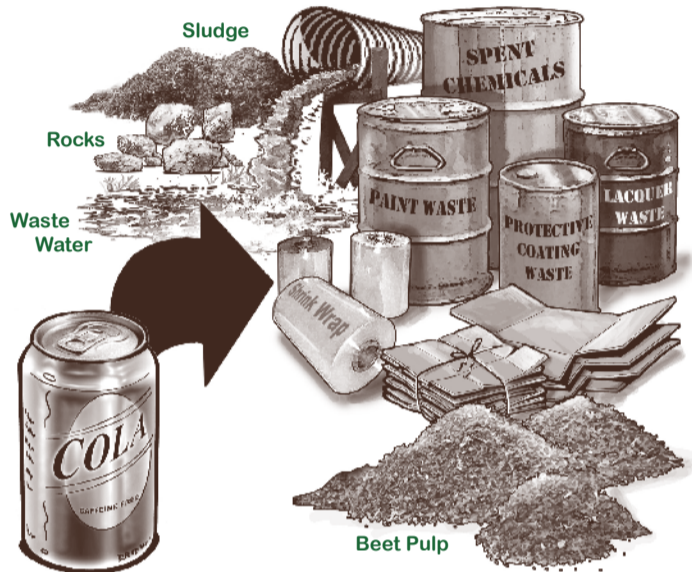
The Waste-Cutting Edge

A look behind the scenes

Hidden Garbage

What comes to mind when you think about waste? Most people probably picture the garbage bag they regularly put in their blue trash cart outside. The amount of this so-called "post-consumer waste" is substantial. In California alone, residents generate over 14 million tons of garbage every year.

Despite this huge number, post-consumer waste is actually just the tip of the "wasteberg." Most discards are created during the manufacturing of the goods we buy. Natural Capitalism author Paul Hawken estimates that, on average, some 3,200 pounds of manufacturing waste are generated for every 100 pounds of products that reach store shelves in the U.S.



The production of a simple can of soda illustrates what this means. Making aluminum from bauxite ore generates 3 tons of mining waste for every ton of aluminum, including spent chemicals and sludge. After the aluminum is rolled into thin sheets and formed into cans, it is painted, lacquered and sprayed with a protective coating, producing more chemical waste. The cans are then packed onto pallets, wrapped with plastic and shipped to the bottler, where that packaging is discarded. Add to this waste water from washing the cans before they are filled with flavored syrup, water and carbon dioxide. The syrup has its own waste "baggage." When syrup is extracted from sugar beets, beet pulp is left behind as an organic waste product. Finally, there's paper waste from cutting cardboard cartons to ship the cans.

Every product we buy leaves a trail of waste. Fortunately, consumers are beginning to demand less wasteful products, and many companies are listening. To find those companies in your area, visit the Bay Area Green Business Program's website at www.greenbiz.ca.gov, or search Co-op America's National Green Pages at www.greenpages.org.

School's new "Earth Tub" processes 100 pounds per day!

Athenian Takes Composting to Olympic Levels

At Athenian High School in Danville, students don't just learn about the principles of responsibility and stewardship, they put them into practice right on their own campus.

In January of this year, the school stepped up its composting program to include all organic waste generated on campus—about 100 pounds a day of yard waste, food scraps and compostable dishware from the cafeteria. That's over 18 tons per year of material that would otherwise go to the landfill!



Students collect, separate and weigh compostables before feeding the "Earth Tub." Results are logged and evaluated in class.

What makes these record numbers possible is a commercial composting system called "Earth Tub," purchased with the help of a CCCSWA mini-grant. About the size of a whirlpool bath, the Earth Tub churns organics with a motorized rotor and is insulated to keep heat from the fermentation process inside. The result: materials break down much faster.

"The Earth Tub turns our waste into compost in just one to three months," explains Ed Costa, Foodservice Manager at Athenian, who oversees the new program. "With our old compost bin, this process took up to a year."

Keep up the good work, Athenian!

Ideas for an Eco-friendly Wedding

Tying the knot and treading lightly on the Earth are not contradictions, announces national magazine "Brides" in a recent issue. In fact, "green" weddings are the new trend! We gathered a few tips to help you make your big day more eco-friendly.

Bridal gowns

Keep the photos, not the dress! If you want to look stunning while saving money and closet space, rent a gown at Alexandria's in Roseville: www.alexandriasformal.com or 916-787-0900. You can also find a pre-owned treasure at a vintage consignment store or online at www.ebay.com or www.used-weddingdresses.com. Gowns made from a natural, organically grown silk/hemp blend are available at www.organicweddings.com. You can also order their fabric and sew your own.

If renting isn't for you, consider donating your gown and bridesmaid's dresses to the Making Memories Breast Cancer Foundation after the wedding. Resale of the garments will help cancer patients. Visit www.makingmemories.org or call 503-252-3955.

Wedding rings

Gold and diamond rings symbolize everlasting love, but mining operations can also cause lasting environmental damage, and illegally traded diamonds have fueled atrocious wars in Africa. An alternative is to buy your wedding rings from a company that supports Fair Trade and uses recycled or sustainably harvested precious metals and stones. Look for a vendor who belongs to



Planning your big day? It's easy to say "I do" to a wedding that is both beautiful and earth-friendly.

the "Jewelers for Clean Diamond Imports" network or log onto www.greenkarat.com.

Flowers

A wedding is incomplete without flowers, but who wants a church full of pesticides? About 70% of the cut flowers sold in the US are grown abroad and heavily sprayed. Instead choose organic, locally grown flowers that are in season, or plant your own

wildflowers now for a summer wedding! If that is not practical in your case, Organic Bouquet in Mill Valley can help. Reach them at www.organicbouquet.com or 1-877-899-2468.

Caterers

Consider treating your guests to an organic feast with seasonal, locally grown ingredients. Organic wedding caterers in the Bay Area include Back to Earth (www.backtoearth.com) and Rising Sun catering (www.risingsuncatering.com), among others.

Green Venues

While the 3 Rs may not be the first thing on your mind when choosing a venue, ask if the facility recycles and composts. Beautiful Wildwood Acres in Lafayette prides itself on its dedication to waste reduction. At a recent wedding, 80% of all trash was recycled or composted. On average, each guest generated only 1.2 ounces of garbage. Contact them at www.wildwoodacres.com or 925-283-2600.

For more advice on planning a "green" wedding, visit www.organicweddings.com or www.ecolivingcenter.com/greenweddings.

Salvaged materials save resources, add charm to Moraga home

Building Character



Truly homegrown: oak wood for the table, bar and kitchen island in this Moraga "green" home was salvaged from the backyard.

About five years ago, home owners Rob Elia and Suzanne Jones decided their house needed a major overhaul. In planning their remodel, they pledged to build for energy efficiency and waste minimization.

The result is a unique "green" home that has stories to tell. For example, the beautiful maple flooring in the living room comes from a retired 1920s postal building in Los Angeles. The Douglas Fir exterior siding originated from the decommissioned Oakland Army Base, and their new deck's beautiful redwood timbers were once part of an abandoned saw mill in Ft. Bragg. Rob and Suzanne didn't even have to travel for some of the salvaged wood. Two Coast Live Oak trees, that are now structural posts, a kitchen table, a bar and stair treads, had fallen right in their backyard.

By using almost exclusively reclaimed wood, these resourceful owners saved over 4,000 board feet of wood or roughly 15-40 trees.

Where can you donate, sell or buy reusable building materials?

This & That Used Building Materials
1701 Rumrill Blvd., San Pablo
510-232-1273

Urban Ore
900 Murray St., Berkeley
510-841-7283

The ReUse People
9235 San Leandro St., Oakland
510-522-2722

C&K Salvage
718 Douglas Ave., Oakland
510-569-2070

More facilities and details are listed in the Builder's Guide to Reuse and Recycling. Call 925-906-1801 to request a copy.

Ask the Authority

Dear Authority,

I want to get a new cell phone. What should I do with the old one?

Wireless in Walnut Creek

Dear Wireless:

If your old phone has all the features you need but is on the fritz, a new battery might be all you need to revive it. However, if you're upgrading and your old phone is perfectly useable, try to find someone willing to buy or swap for it. Take an older or broken phone back to your retailer.

As of July 1, 2006, all cell phone retailers in California must accept old phones for recycling, reuse, or proper disposal when a customer buys a new phone or if the retailer sold the old phone. The reason? Mobile phones contain heavy metals and other materials hazardous to the environment and humans. Improper disposal can lead to the release of cancer-causing agents such as cadmium and lead, as well as toxins such as brominated flame-retardants, linked to diseases of the liver, thyroid, and nervous system.

You can recycle rechargeable batteries at many local chain stores, including Ace Hardware, Radio Shack and Staples. For the nearest drop-off site, call 1-800-8-BATTERY or visit www.rbcc.org.



Today's ample choice of cell phone models may render you speechless, but recycling your old mobile won't: starting July 1, vendors will have to do it for you.

Contact information

CCCSWA 925-906-1801
fax: 906-1805 web: www.wastediversion.org
email: authority@wastediversion.org

ALLIED WASTE SERVICES 925-603-1144
(formerly Pleasant Hill Bayshore Disposal)
fax: 925-685-8153
web: www.alliedwasteofcontracostacounty.com

For questions concerning billing, special cleanups, vacation hold requests, computer & TV collection, new service or your blue garbage cart.

VALLEY WASTE MANAGEMENT 925-935-8900
fax: 935-1617 web: www.valleywaste.com

For questions concerning the service of your burgundy recycling or green yard clippings carts, to request motor oil disposal containers, for recycling cleanups or information on the Walnut Creek Recycling Center.

CONTRA COSTA RECYCLING HOTLINE . . 1-800-750-4096
HOME COMPOSTING/GRASSCYCLING . . 925-906-1806
HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE . . . 1-800-646-1431
REUSE & CLEANUP DAYS 1-800-999-6067