

Conservation News



Environmental News and Information from the City of Melbourne
Public Works & Utilities Department ~ Environmental Community Outreach Division

State of Florida endorses 75% recycling goal

The Energy, Climate Change, and Economic Security Act of 2008 signed into law by Governor Crist establishes a new statewide recycling goal of 75 percent to be achieved by 2020. Also, the statute directs the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to develop a comprehensive program designed to achieve this goal. FDEP's 75 percent recycling goal report has been submitted to the Governor, Senate President and House Speaker.

The report states that Florida generates 32 million tons of municipal solid waste annually, almost two tons per resident per year. Currently Floridians collectively recycle only 28 percent of their solid waste.

There are many ways residents here can begin to reduce, reuse and recycle more to get ahead of the curve. Some of these are outlined below, while you may have other great ideas you could add to these suggestions:

Reduce Waste

- ✂ Buy only what you need. Rent, borrow or share items that aren't used much.
- ✂ Sell or donate goods instead of throwing them out.
- ✂ Buy non-toxic or the least toxic products available.
- ✂ Buy products that use little or no packaging. Buy individually wrapped packages only when there are no alternatives.
- ✂ Buy reusable products, such as re-chargeable batteries that don't have to be



recycled after one use.

- ✂ Buy products made from recycled materials.
 - ✂ Buy one general house cleaner rather than a variety of products for different purposes.
 - ✂ Use all of the product containing toxic ingredients so there is no hazardous waste left.
 - ✂ When you can't use something, find someone who can. Give extra paints to theater or civic groups and extra house cleaning or gardening supplies to neighbors.
 - ✂ Take used motor oil, brake and transmission fluids to the local gas station for recycling or to the household hazardous waste collection center, located at the County Landfill on Sarno Road. The landfill collects these items on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can call them at 321-255-4365.
- ### Reuse Waste
- ✂ Hold garage sales to sell things you no longer want or need. That way, you can help the environment and make money too.
 - ✂ Paper and plastic bags can be saved and reused. Bags can be used to clean up around the house or after your pet. Otherwise, take them with

you to the grocery store on your next trip.

- ✂ Twist ties can be used to secure wires on appliances and computers.
- ✂ Paper and envelopes can be reused to write notes or make lists before being recycled. Gift boxes and bags can be reused, along with ribbons and bows.
- ✂ Packaging, colored paper, egg cartons and other items can be used for arts and crafts projects for schools, and at day care and senior citizen centers.
- ✂ Newspaper, packaging, "peanuts" and bubble wrap can be reused to ship packages.
- ✂ Glass and plastic jars, milk jugs, coffee cans, dairy and other kinds of containers can be washed and used to store leftovers, buttons, nails and thumbtacks. Empty coffee cans can be turned into flower pots.

Recycle

- ✂ To make recycling more convenient, keep a recycling bin or container in the kitchen so no one accidentally forgets and throws something into the trash that could be recycled.
- ✂ Practice grasscycling. When you cut the grass, leave the clippings on the lawn instead of raking them up and putting them in bags. It's good for the lawn because the grass breaks down and all the nutrients from the clippings go back into the soil. As a result, you won't need as much fertilizer or water.



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City earns multiple environmental outreach awards

The City of Melbourne Environmental Outreach Division recently received a number of awards for programs and projects completed last year.

The Florida Section of the American Water Works Association (FSAWWA) held their 2009 Water Conservation Excellence Awards program, where the City was honored with two awards.

According to Deborah Green, secretary and education/communication chair of the FSAWWA Water Use Efficiency Division, the program has raised the bar for water conservation in Florida.

Melbourne received a Show of Excellence Award in Public Information for a large utility for its EnviroWheel program. This

interactive game, developed using the "Wheel of Fortune" TV program as a model, is used at many of the outreach programs in which the City participates.

Players spin the wheel, which includes six categories of questions a participant can land on. The questions range from easy to difficult so that young children up to adults can enjoy the game. When players answer the questions correctly they are rewarded with a prize.

Student's at last year's Hoover Middle School Career Fair line up to play the EnviroWheel game.

This fun activity consistently draws a crowd. While they are having fun playing it, they are challenged to think about water conservation and other environ-

mental issues.

The City also received an FSAWWA Meritorious Award for its educational program, entitled, "Today's Lesson -- How to Conserve & Ways to Protect." Geared toward third-graders, this program includes an interactive PowerPoint presentation, and includes a movie and game.

The Florida Government Communicators Association (FGCA) also commended the City for its work by awarding two Crystal Awards for the brochure, "Solutions to Stormwater Pollution -- We Can All Make a Difference."



Beautiful cover photo of the Indian River Lagoon introduces the brochure. (Courtesy of Melody Hendrix)

The City's ECO Division was awarded both the 2009 Judge's Award and the Award of Excellence for this brochure developed for residents and businesses about the harmful effects of polluted stormwater and how to help. The brochures were mailed with utility bills last July, and continue to be used at environmental outreach events, included in new utility customer welcome packets, and is on the City's web site at www.melbourneflorida.org/watercon/publications.htm.

"We are proud of being recognized with these awards which show the City's commitment to public education and outreach on important environmental issues," said Public Works & Utilities Director Ralph Reigelsperger.

Save water, energy and money by using water more efficiently

There are many ways you can conserve water in your home and use water more wisely. For instance, new homes have water-efficient plumbing fixtures and toilets. Retrofitting these fixtures in older homes can decrease your utility bill by reducing the amount of water you use every day. Besides changing plumbing fixtures, there are many other ways you can save water in your home.

Fix leaky faucets



Just one slow drip can waste 15 to 20 gallons of water a day. With each repair, you'll save about 6,000 gallons of water a year. Most faucet leaks occur because the washer and seal (or O ring) are worn out.

This is an easy repair, but if you are unsure, ask an expert at a hardware store or find a do-it-yourself guide on the Internet or at the library.

Fix leaky toilets



Your toilet may be leaking so slowly that you don't even realize it. Put a few drops of dark food coloring in the toilet tank to test for leakage. Without flushing, wait a few minutes to see if the color appears in the bowl, indicating a leak. It's not uncommon to lose up to 100 gallons of water a day

from a toilet leak — which means you'll save more than 30,000

gallons per year for each repair. If you do find you have a leak, look in your tank. If water is flowing into the overflow tube, the ballcock isn't closing properly. Try bending the float arm down. If this doesn't work, it will need to be replaced. If the ballcock isn't the problem, the flapper valve is probably worn out and needs to be replaced. Also, consider purchasing a new high-efficiency toilet

Think "five" for showers



Limit showers to no more than five minutes. You can turn the water off while you're soaping up and turn it back on to wash off. If you have an older showerhead, replace it with a new water conserving model. For

baths, fill the tub only half full.

Wash dishes and laundry in full loads



Washing dishes in an older dishwasher uses about 14 gallons of water, while hand washing that same load can use more than 30 gallons. If you are replacing your dishwasher,

look for Energy Star qualified models. They are required to use 5.8 gallons of water per cycle or less.

When doing laundry, always run full loads and if you are in the market for a new washing machine, again, look for Energy Star water-efficient models.