

A Quarterly Newsletter of



**Spokane Regional
Solid Waste System**

(509) 625-6580
www.solidwaste.org

Winter 2010



Poster Contest Entries Show the Many Ways to “Go Green”

“Go Green” was the theme of 2009’s America Recycles poster contest, and 340 students from 32 schools and organizations throughout Spokane County responded with multi-colored entries. Their efforts illustrated their understanding of how making “green” behaviors, such as recycling, reusing and reducing, a part of our everyday lives can create a healthy, sustainable environment.

It was truly difficult to choose finalists from the many inspired submissions, and all participants deserve congratulations for their works of art. The 2009 finalists are:

Assumption Catholic School, Spokane – Jessie Mack, Grade 4

Betz Elementary, Cheney – Mira Pederson, Grade 3

Browne Camp Fire, Spokane – Amanda Fitch, Grade 5

Continuous Curriculum School, Otis Orchards – Kalei Meyer, Grade 7

Five Mile Prairie, Mead – Crystal Osborne, Grade 8

Hallett Elementary, Medical Lake – Jeremy Ryan, Grade 6

Hamblen Elementary, Spokane – Bryn Van Mansum, Grade 2

Logan Elementary, Spokane – Jharen Pangelinan, Grade 5; Breanna Witter, Grade 5; Nouci Yang, Grade 5; Misha Zhuikov, Grade 5

Medical Lake Middle School, Medical Lake – Molly Ryan, Grade 8

Orchard Center Elementary, Millwood – Riley Hughes, Grade 4; Danielle Mann, Grade 2; Renee Palmer, Grade 4; Frankie Schade, Grade 3; David Yevdash, Grade 5

Pioneer School, Spokane Valley – Isabelle Busch, Grade 2; Hannah Craig, Grade 4; Becca LaSeur, Grade 3; Erika Sankovich, Grade 3; Henry Schmick, Grade 3; Aditya Varadan, Grade 3-4

Salnave Elementary, Cheney – Miranda Jones, Grade 3

St. Charles Catholic School, Spokane – Rachel Dolle, Grade 8; Alexandra Logan, Grade 8; Kegley Schuh, Grade 7

Recycle Man, mascot for the Spokane Indians Baseball Club, paid a surprise visit to the celebration held on Nov. 3, 2009, for the finalists of the America Recycles poster contest.



St. John Vianney Catholic School, Spokane Valley – Connor Gilbert, Grade 6

St. Mary’s Catholic School, Spokane Valley – Bryce Dumais, Grade 8; Wendy Gregory, Grade 8; Christopher Walsh, Grade 4; Phaydra Williamson, Grade 3

The finalists’ entries were displayed at River Park Square in downtown Spokane. Additional

judging selected 18 posters from this group for the 2010 “Spokane Recycles” calendar. The America Recycles poster contest was sponsored by the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System (SRSWS) with partial funding from a Washington Department of Ecology grant. Calendars are available by calling the Recycling Hot Line, 625-6800.

The Question of Glass

As a conscientious recycler, you put your glass jars and bottles in your blue recycling bin each week so that your hauler can take them away, or maybe you take them to a recycling center yourself. But then what? Is it worth the effort to collect glass for recycling? That’s the question that recycling managers across the country are asking.

Used glass is a particularly difficult material to handle in an environmentally responsible manner. In Eastern Washington, markets for it are few and distant, which means higher transportation costs are incurred, as well as the use of fuel that contributes to carbon emissions pollution.

Landfilling glass is an option, but also involves transportation to remote locations. Locally, Spokane County can include it in the trash that is incinerated at the Waste to Energy Plant, but glass doesn’t burn; instead, it actually uses energy as it melts. And the resulting debris still needs to be disposed of at a landfill.

Recycling glass can cause contamination in other materials that are recycled, particularly paper fiber. Even a very small amount of glass (as grit or shards) lowers the quality of recycled paper products and can cause severe damage to paper mill equipment.

All of these factors are why Spokane Regional Solid Waste System (SRSWS) is motivated to find other uses for the massive amount of glass that is collected from recycling bins and centers each year (nearly 6,000 tons in 2008). One viable option may result from a recent pilot project: the use of crushed glass as part of the Market Street roadbed that was reconstructed during the summer of 2009. SRSWS partnered with the City of Spokane’s Streets, Solid Waste Management, and Engineering Services departments, as well as Pacific Steel and Recycling; Spokane Recycling Products, Inc.; S.A. Gonzales Construction, Inc.; and Inland Asphalt for the pilot.



Glass containers are fed into the hopper of a crusher that will prepare the material to be mixed with crushed rock as an aggregate to be used in roadbeds.

By combining 1,500 tons of crushed glass with crushed rock, an aggregate was created which was used to make a 9-inch-thick roadbed. Inland Asphalt construction crews then put down an 8-inch layer of asphalt to complete the 1.25-mile surface.

“The pilot project is now being evaluated,” said Rich Hanson, senior engineer for the City of Spokane’s Solid Waste Management department. “It’s a good process and we’ve had good feedback from everybody. Preliminary tests have been positive and we hope to be able to use it again this next construction season.”

SRSWS continues to seek additional uses for glass that can help reduce costs and environmental impacts. By identifying and employing more of these kinds of local projects, we can reduce transportation distances and the use of landfills, increase local preparation and use, and make glass a truly recyclable and reusable material.

Doing the Right Thing

Confused about what to put in your blue curbside recycling bin? Questions about whether you can put in a pizza box or if you should remove labels from cans and bottles? Scratching your head over what kinds of plastics are accepted? You’re not alone.

The Spokane Regional Solid Waste System (SRSWS) knows you want to do it right—that’s why you see “The Cycle Starts With You” ads in so many local publications. These messages are designed to give you brief reminders of what recyclable materials are appropriate to include and how to prepare them when you set out your blue bin for weekly pickup. If you do happen to put in an unacceptable item, your hauler should leave you an “Oops!” tag that will note why he couldn’t take it.

As recycling technology evolves, SRSWS will be able to add more types of recyclable ma-

terials to the list of what goes “in the bin.” When we do, we’ll make sure you are aware of the new information through advertising and articles in the local media.

Recycling is still one of the best and easiest things we can do to make Spokane and the planet a better place to live. If you have questions about what you can and can’t place in your blue curbside bin, or if you’d like to find out how to get a bin, call the Recycling Hot Line, 625-6800. You can also check the Recycling & Garbage Guide in the front of your Dex phone book for other places to take your recyclables.



The Safer Way: Guidelines to Disposing of Unwanted Household Medicines

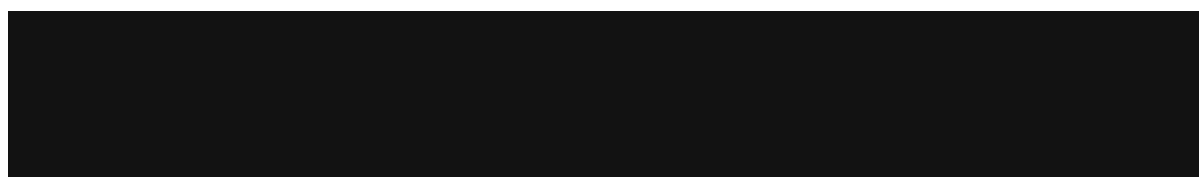
In the past, consumers were often told to flush their unneeded medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter, down the toilet or drain. Now that it has become apparent that this practice adds to pollution in our local waterways, alternative solutions have been created by organizations and agencies concerned about drug abuse, accidental poisonings and environmental contamination.

The best and safest method to dispose of unwanted medicines is to use a community drug take-back program. The Medicine Return Program has 37 locations in six counties in Washington, including four locations in Spokane County. By disposing of your medicines at one of these locations, you prevent them from being consumed accidentally, being stolen from the garbage, or polluting our environment. For locations and types of items accepted, go to www.medicinereturn.com.

If a collection program is not available or convenient for you, mix medicines with an undesirable substance, such as cat litter or used coffee grounds. Conceal or remove any personal information and place the sealed container in your trash, making sure that it cannot be retrieved by children, animals, or those who may be looking for drugs.

You can also bring your unwanted medicines to the Household Hazardous Waste areas of the recycling centers at the Waste to Energy Facility, the North County Transfer Station or the Valley Transfer Station where they will be disposed of appropriately.



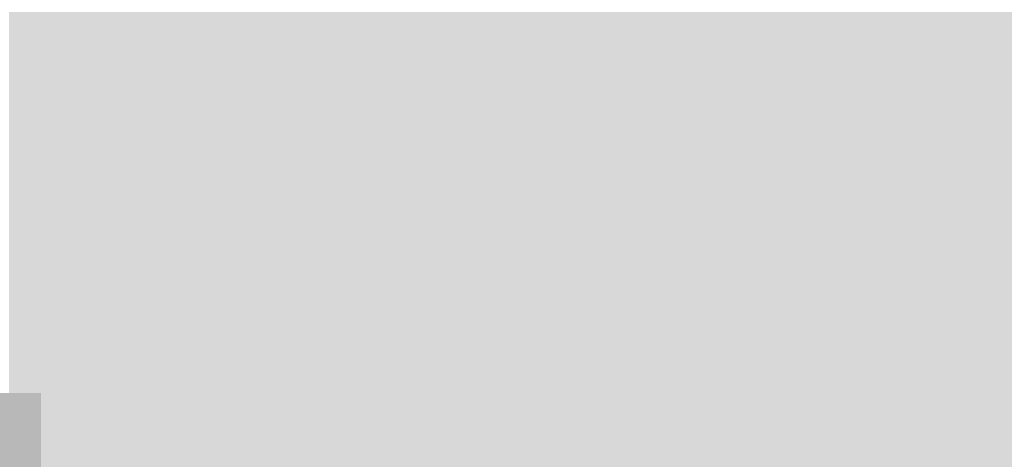
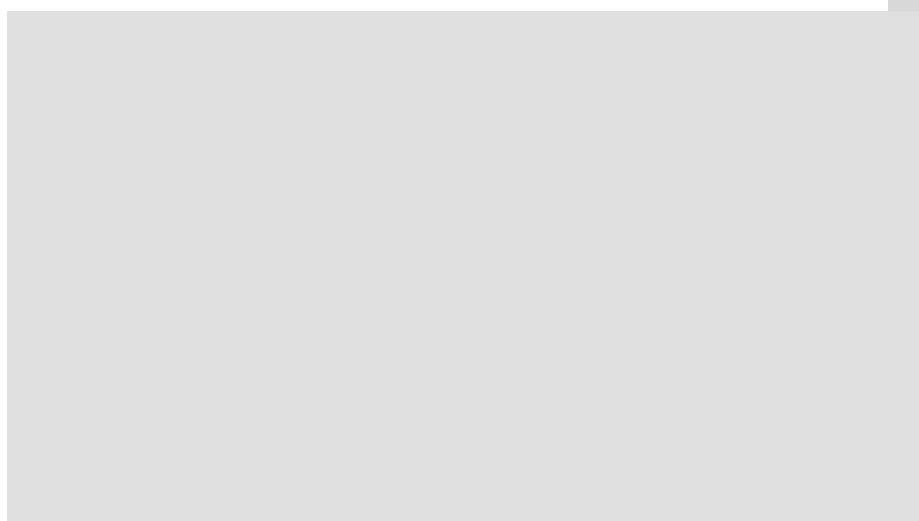


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WHAT'S UP?

Holiday Trees

If you have not yet disposed of your holiday tree, remember that trees free of ornaments, lights, tinsel and flocking can be disposed of as Clean Green. (Don't forget to remove the stand!)



Fresh-cut holiday trees may be placed in Clean Green yard debris carts for curbside pick-up—just call your garbage hauler for more information. Trees may also be dropped off at the Waste to Energy Facility, the North County Transfer

Station or the Valley Transfer Station as Clean Green debris and they will be composted.

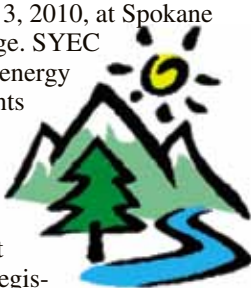
All trees that are discarded, either as Clean Green or with your garbage (or next to the container), must be cut into less than 6' lengths. Please call your garbage hauler first for details as collections, fees and tree preparation requirements may vary. Call the Recycling Hot Line, 625-6800, if you need hauler contact information.



13th Annual SYEC

The next Spokane Youth Environmental Conference (SYEC) will be held on Thursday, June 3, 2010, at Spokane Community College. SYEC is a one-day, high-energy event where students in grades 7-12 can showcase their environmental science projects.

Teachers must complete the pre-registration form, due Friday, Feb. 26, 2010. Students must complete the project abstract form, due Friday, April 23, 2010. All forms are available at the conference website: www.syec.org.



We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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CONTENT, USING SOY INKS**

Become a Master Composter and Reap the Rewards

If you live in Spokane County and want to learn simple, natural ways to build and retain healthy soil, reduce waste and pollution, as well as make a valuable contribution to your community, the Master Composter Program is what you're looking for!

The Master Composter Program has two components—training and volunteering.

Training

Six sessions, taught by veteran Master Composters and Spokane Regional Solid Waste System staff, will be held this spring. Training will conclude with participation in the Compost Fair at Finch Arboretum's Arbor Day celebration on Saturday, April 24. There is no fee for the training or the written materials provided. Those who complete all class sessions will receive a compost bin.

Here is the class schedule:

- Monday, March 22, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., WSU/Spokane County Extension, 222 N. Havana – Program overview; materials and benefits of composting; municipal composting
- Saturday, March 27, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., WSU/Spokane County Extension – Hands-



As part of continuing education for Spokane Master Composters, volunteer Bill Wyche explains what he has learned about processing the manure that his four horses generate.

- on pile building and vermicomposting
- Monday, March 29, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., WSU/Spokane County Extension – Pile monitoring and compost science

- Monday, April 5, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., WSU/Spokane County Extension – Pile monitoring, troubleshooting and outreach plans
- Monday, April 12, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Waste to Energy Facility, 2900 S. Geiger Blvd. – A look at the big picture of Spokane's solid waste (including recycling), with a tour of the Waste to Energy Facility
- Monday, April 19, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., WSU/Spokane County Extension – Pile monitoring, testing and presentation skills
- Saturday, April 24, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., The Compost Fair/Arbor Day Festival at Finch Arboretum – Work with veteran Master Composters to share information with the public

Volunteering

Individuals who complete the program agree to volunteer at least 40 hours. You'll help others learn more about composting by giving presentations, working in a fair booth, performing computer work, or other tasks that fit your skills. This is in exchange for your training, written materials, and compost bin.

For additional information and registration materials, call the Recycling Hot Line, 625-6800.

Spokane River Gets a Little Cleaner

More than 750 volunteers turned out on Sept. 26, 2009, a bright and sunny fall day, for the seventh annual Spokane River Clean-Up. These dedicated fans of the river collected "junk" from the shores and riverbeds of the High Bridge and University District areas for about two hours, coming back with 11,240 pounds of garbage and 5,207 pounds of recyclable materials—that's over 8 tons of debris that no longer pollute the Spokane River.

The University District, where approximately 175 of the participants helped, was added this year as part of an ongoing effort to expand the area of the Spokane River that benefits from the event.

Music, food, prizes for the most unusual pieces of garbage retrieved, and a visit from the Spokane Indians Baseball Club mascot, Recycle Man, all contributed to the fun and productive day.

"This year's River Clean-Up was the smoothest and most successful yet," said Steve Faust, executive director of Friends of the Falls, a nonprofit organization. "We're grateful for the contributions of the many other community organizations and businesses who join together each year to help us present the clean-up, and for this year's event sponsors: Avista, the Spokane River Stewardship Partners, Wheelabrator Spokane,

Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Alt 29 Design Group, and the Spokesman Review/DTE.

"We also want to thank the City of Spokane for its continued support, and for the many City employees who helped in the planning and as key volunteers on the day of the event. We look forward to working with all of you again next year, and hope you'll mark your calendars for Sept. 25, 2010, the next Spokane River Clean-Up."

Visit www.friendsofthefalls.org for more information about this event and other ways that you can help with preservation of Spokane's historic waterfalls and gorge area.



Young volunteers sort the various recyclable materials that were salvaged during the 2009 Spokane River Clean-Up event. [Photo courtesy of Russ Nobbs]

WASTE TO ENERGY REPORT CARD

Working Together!

July–Sept. 2009

<p>Garbage In 66,070 tons disposed 66,338 tons processed at WTE Facility 2,050 tons of ferrous metal recovered from the ash for recycling 19,306 tons of ash disposed at Rabanco</p>	<p>Electricity Generation 40,151 MWh produced 7,506 MWh used to run the facility 32,027 MWh sold to Puget Sound Energy Notice of Violation None Revenues after Electricity Transmission Expenses \$2,505,793</p>
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Exchanges Unite Haves and Have-nots

Reuse networks are not just for old sports gear and small household appliances. Many businesses take part in "materials exchanges" that allow them to post a listing of materials which they "have" or "want." These items might be surplus raw materials, off-spec products, unneeded byproducts, office supplies, shipping cartons, pallets, or partially used containers of chemicals or solvents.

Like Craigslist or Freecycle, these exchanges are information services only. The businesses involved post descriptions of the materials they have available or want. The posting and responding businesses make arrangements by email and/or phone, negotiating price, transportation, and other details.

To learn more about materials exchanges that serve businesses and organizations in your area, contact IMEX, the Industrial Materials Exchange, 1-888-TRY-IMEX, or visit www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/imex.

You can also post items for sale in classified advertisements in the local newspaper or online through services such as www.Craigslist.com. If you have items that you are willing to give away (or are seeking items for free), visit www.ThrowPlace.com, www.Freecycle.org, or www.gigoit.org.

Spring House Greening Program Ends with Success

Sometimes something is so effective that it eliminates its own purpose. That's what happened to the annual Spring House Greening program, which has now ended. In the past, seniors and the physically challenged were eligible to receive assistance with pick up and disposal of Household Hazardous Waste during this event. In the 10 years of its existence, the program removed a total of 74.15 tons of hazardous materials from the homes of Spokane-area residents.

Sponsored by the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Spokane Aquifer Joint Board, the Spokane Regional Health District and the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System, and with assistance from volunteers, neighborhood councils, C.O.P.S. and S.C.O.P.E., Spring House Greening was highly successful.

"The need for the program has gone down and down and down the last few years," said Adam Borgman, volunteer coordinator for RSVP. "It has achieved its goal of removing hazardous waste from the homes of people who were not able to take care of it themselves."

Household Hazardous Waste includes

materials such as old batteries, lawn and garden products, oil-based paint, varnish, motor oil, cleaning solvents, poisons and other chemicals. If these products are not disposed of properly, they can be harmful to one's health and cause serious damage to the environment.

Although the Spring House Greening program is over, everyone is encouraged to bring their Household Hazardous Waste to the recycling centers at the Waste to Energy Facility, the North County Transfer Station or the Valley Transfer Station. Many of these items are still useful or can be recycled, and each of the recycling centers has a "reuse table" where you can pick up unused paint and common household chemicals for free after signing a release. Call the Recycling Hot Line, 625-6800, for more information.

"Many thanks go to the sponsoring agencies for their support of Spring House Greening," said Geoff Glenn, disposal superintendent for Spokane's Solid Waste Management department. "We are especially appreciative of, and grateful to, all the volunteers over the years who were the heart of the program."