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May 2017 Newsletter



NEBRASKA RECYCLING COUNCIL

No More Mister Wistful

Are you a wistful recycler? Have you ever wondered if a material was recyclable, and not knowing for sure, put it in the recycling bin anyway? Me too! Lesser of two evils, right?

Oops, your well-meaning gesture is creating a big **contamination** problem.

This year at Earth Day in Lincoln and Omaha, we offered a Recycling Challenge. A bag of about 13 materials was provided for the intrepid recycler to test their knowledge. Admittedly, there were some "trick" items, such as the

Pepsi bottle containing a little bit of soda, and the pizza box with grease spots. Most people placed the majority of their materials in the correct bin; however, our little challenge confirmed what we already know: virtually all of us are confused about what can be recycled and/or how materials must be handled before recycling.



All this points to the need for standards up and down the value chain. Manufacturers need to keep the end in mind when they design packaging. We need standards for haulers and processors so users can receive consistent messaging on what and how to recycle. Product users need to check for recycling symbols, inform themselves about what is accepted by their recycler, and take an extra moment to rinse off food residue. Uniformity in signage and bin configuration is needed so that recycling can become second nature to all of us. There is no excuse for a stand-alone trash bin without a recycling companion by its side.

No more being wistful. Does your community or organization need assistance designing your recycling and outreach program? We can help. We use the latest information and research on recycling to inform our recommendations. For answers to your recycling questions, give us a call, or consult the Nebraska Recycling Guide on our web site, www.nrcne.org.

Now let me reiterate, let's rededicate ourselves to reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle, and re-soil (compost) repeatedly!

All my best,

Julie

Announcements:

My contact information has changed. Email me at jdiegel@nrcne.org or call 402-436-2384 x1000.

Applying for a recycling equipment grant? Contact Megan Jackson, grants manager, at mjackson@nrcne.org or 402-436-2384 x1004 for more information.

2017 Nebraska State Fair Sustainability Pavilion

Do you have an environmentally friendly message that you would like to share at the State Fair? If so, then you may qualify to participate in the 2017 Nebraska State Fair Sustainability Pavilion.

The 2017 Fair is August 25 through September 4. The Sustainability Pavilion is a great place to reach out to State Fair guests with an activity, a "make & take" project, a demonstration, or a presentation. The Sustainability Pavilion is focused on sharing with and encouraging the public to make better environmental choices.



A classroom of kids stop by the NSF Sustainability Pavilion to make a recycled plastic bag parachute during the 2016 State Fair

In 2017, the Pavilion will feature natural resources, recycle sorting, alternative energy, and energy efficiencies. Transportation is a key component this year, and the Nebraska Automobile Recycling Association is bringing a pieced out vehicle with the car parts identified as recycled or recyclable.

For more information, please visit <http://www.statefair.org/p/other/state-fair-cares/459> or contact Jaime at jparr@statefair.org or 308-382-1606.

Help make Lincoln a Winning City



Mayor Chris Beutler joined recycling advocates in kicking off a new campaign to educate residents on how to "recycle right." The "Be a Recycling Champion" initiative is aimed at reducing the

number of unacceptable items that are tossed into recycling bins. The campaign is funded with a \$68,000 grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality.

The campaign urges the public to take three steps to "Be a Recycling Champion":

- Follow the basics by recycling paper, cardboard, tin and aluminum cans, and plastic bottles and tubs.
- Learn the recycling guidelines by visiting recycle.lincoln.ne.gov.
- Remember that many curbside recyclers do not accept plastic bags or glass bottles. To make sure these stay out of the landfill, take clean plastic bags to local grocers and take glass bottles and jars to one of the public drop off sites.

The City and recycling collectors see a wide variety of unacceptable items in curbside containers and at the 29 public drop off sites. Those include non-recyclable items such as Styrofoam and metal cookware as well as cans and bottles with food and drink residue. Other problems are broken glass in curbside containers and plastic bags that can cause problems with machinery at processors.

As part of the campaign, participating curbside recycling collectors will leave notes on recycling containers listing the unacceptable items residents have placed in them. Their curbside recycling subscribers will also receive a postcard encouraging them to recycle right.

For more information visit recycle.lincoln.ne.gov.

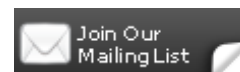
Become a Member!

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Nebraska Recycling Council is a statewide 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, whose mission is to maximize the economic and environmental benefits of resource recovery in Nebraska. Visit our website at www.NRCNE.org and become a member or make a donation today.



Nebraska Recycling Council
402-436-2384
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