October 2010

1

Issue #35

Blue Bin News

St. Louis City
Residential Recycling Newsletter

Conducting a Home Waste Audit

Recycling is an easy way to reduce the amount of waste you send to the landfill. But, are you reducing your waste as much as possible? Conducting a home waste audit identifies what's in your waste stream, which will help you make decisions that could reduce your waste even more. To get started, go to http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/documents/homewasteaudit.pdf and download the guide for you and your family to record your daily waste generation.

As you conduct your waste audit, take note of what is being thrown away and try to think of ways that you can prevent that waste from ending up in your trash can. Do you purchase products that are packaged in non-recyclables materials? If so, are any of those products available in recyclable packaging instead? Or maybe some products could be purchased with no packaging at all. For instance, produce is sometimes packaged in a polystyrene (plastic #6) tray and wrapped in plastic. Many times, that same produce is available without any packaging at all, or can be gathered in reusable cloth bags. If you notice this type of unneeded packaging during your home waste audit, you can mark it down as an area that needs improvement. Even recyclable materials should be evaluated. Can you find your product without packaging, or in infinitely recyclable packaging, such as aluminum, glass, or steel?

One of the largest components of our waste is organics, such as food waste. What could you do differently to reduce the amount of food you throw away? Do you plan meals ahead of time, shop with a grocery list, rotate your pantry, or store foods properly so they last longer? What do you do with food that does go bad or that is left over from food preparation? Composting is a great way to return the nutrients from your food waste back to the soil. Details about composting are avilable on our website at http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/compost.html. Upcoming composting classes are listed in the "Upcoming Events" section below.

October 2010 Upcoming Events

Details available at
http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/calendar2010.html

History on the Side Series: Rachel Carson's Silent Spring
October 12, 2010 (Tuesday) - 12pm, www.mohistory.org/node/4637

Native Plant School - October 14, 2010 (Thursday) - 1pm to 4pm
www.shawnature.org/nativeland/NativePlantSchool.aspx

Home Composting Class - October 14, 2010 (Thursday) - 6pm to 650pm
http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/calendar2010.html

Landscape and Garden with Native Plants Class - October 14, 2010 (Thursday) - 7pm to 750pm
http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/calendar2010.html

Indoor Composting: Making Bokashi Buckets - October 18, 2010 (Monday) - 7pm to 830pm
www.stlcc.edu/Continuing_Education/Register_for_Class_Offerings.html Ecology course #11206

Home Composting Class - October 19, 2010 (Tuesday) - 6pm to 650pm
http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/calendar2010.html

Landscape and Garden with Native Plants Class - October 19, 2010 (Tuesday) - 7pm to 750pm
http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/calendar2010.html

Homestead Earth: An Evening with Women Environmentalists
October 19, 2010 (Tuesday) - 7pm to 830pm, www.mohistory.org/node/4614

GPI Reveals LCA

The North American glass container industry has completed the first cradle-to-cradle life cycle assessment (LCA) ever conducted for the industry. A "cradle-to-cradle" LCA includes the entire cradle-to-grave life cycle of a product, plus the recycling of the used product back to its original purpose.

"The LCA confirms the industry is on the right track with the goal to use 50% recycled glass in the manufacture of new glass bottles and jars by the end of 2013," said Joseph Cattaneo, president of the Glass Packaging Institute (GPI). The GPI is working to create more recycling awareness and improve post-consumer glass collection to help boost the cullet (aka recovered glass) content in manufacturing. The study shows increased use of cullet helps reduce carbon emissions, conserve raw materials, extend the life of glass manufacturing furnaces, and save energy.

A leading sustainability consulting firm, PE Americas, conducted the study according to strict ISO 14040/44 guidelines, using data collected from 105 furnaces representing 75 percent of North American glass container production. The LCA also underwent a rigorous, critical, independent peer review.

For the complete report and more information on the North American glass container industry LCA, please visit www.gpi.org/LCA. Adapted from the GPI September 13, 2010 Press Release.

Curbing ABC Gum Litter

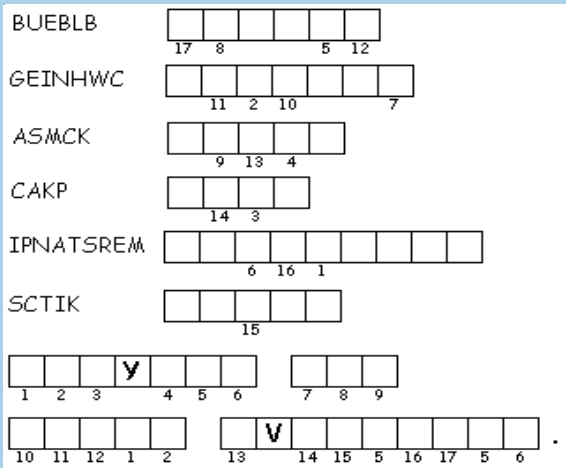
Do you consider spitting gum on the ground a form of littering? What if you learned that 80-90% of gum is not disposed of in a litter barrel and instead ends up on the ground? In 2005, an estimated 650,000 metric tons of chewing gum were produced worldwide, meaning 520,000 to 585,000 metric tons ended up as litter. Contrary to what some people believe, chewing gum is not biodegradable. It is made from a synthetic rubber similar to that which is used to make tires.

Not only are splattered sidewalks unsightly, they are expensive and resource intensive to clean. Commonly, high pressure steam is used to remove gum from concrete, which can erode the surface and shorten its lifecycle, creating more waste in repairs and replacement of streets and sidewalks.

To prevent gum waste from ending up on the ground, Anna Bullus, a 25 year old Brighton University student, developed a method for recycling used bubble gum into a sterile polymer that can be used to make car tires, toys, mobile phone covers, boots, etc. Ms. Bullus has also developed "Gumdrop" bins (made from recycled gum) to collect used gum in public places. Gumdrop conducted their first U.S. trial in Spring 2010 at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, New Jersey. Details about her project are available at www.gumdropbin.com.

Similarly, Gummy Bins (www.gummybin.com) offers collection bins for used chewing gum, but does not recycle the gum yet. Once they are able to collect enough gum, they plan to recycle it into athletic surfaces, such as running tracks.

Double Puzzle



Soldiers' Memorial Requests Donations

Soldiers' Memorial is in need of cotton batting, muslin or old white sheets, and good, sturdy hangers. They would also like sturdy shelves (of any size) such as bookcases; large, shallow drawers (like blueprint drawers); and clothing racks.

If you have any of these items to donate, please contact Katie Powderly at WerkmeisterK@stlouiscity.com and send a picture if possible.

A City of St. Louis Refuse Division Recycling Program Publication

To Subscribe e-mail recycle@stlouis.missouri.org

Archived Issues Available at http://stlouis.missouri.org/citygov/recycle/residentialnewsletter.html

Answers: Bubble; Chewing; Smack; Pack; Spearmint; Stick; Recycle gum where available.