

Facilities Services Sustainability Work Group



University of Oregon
Campus Operations, Growing Sustainability

Volume 1, Issue 4

Fall 2009

In This Issue

1. America Recycles!
2. Monthly Facts
3. Sustainability Tips
4. No-Waste Holidays
5. Saving Trash
6. Sustainability Superstar
7. Campus Climate Action Plan
8. Reminders
9. Sustainability Day/350

Monthly Facts

- It takes about 450 years for one plastic bottle to break down in the ground!
- Glass never wears out -- it can be recycled forever. We save over one ton of resources for every ton of glass recycled -- 1,330 pounds of sand, 433 pounds of soda ash, 433 pounds of limestone and 151 pounds of feldspar.
- In a lifetime, the average American will throw away 600 times his or her adult weight in garbage. This means that each adult will leave a legacy of as much as 100,000 pounds of trash for his or her children.
- Recycling an aluminum can takes 95 percent less energy than making a new can.

(facts from <http://www.recyclespot.org/faqs.asp>)

America Recycles!

"On November 15 each year, millions of people become better informed about the importance of daily recycling and buying recycled products."
<http://www.americarecyclesday.org/>. "America Recycles Day", celebrating its 12th year, is almost here. A day dedicated to promoting and teaching people about recycling, its importance as well as how and where to recycle. It also focuses on "closing the loop" (<http://www.recyclespot.org/ard.asp>), by purchasing recycled products, which creates and sustains a market for them.



Initiated and organized by Keep America Beautiful, Inc. and the National Recycling Coalition, the national day of action helps and encourages people to find out what and where things can be recycled, and how to properly dispose of electronic waste (batteries, cell phones, etc.). They also encourage people to contact their elected officials and ask them to increase support for community recycling programs. Their website provides links to contact information for this purpose, as well as a list of events in each state.

Landfilling generates Methane, a greenhouse gas 23x more powerful than CO₂. Recycling is just one simple thing that you can do to reduce your carbon footprint.

Americans recycled and composted 82 million tons in 2008, which equates to removing 41 million cars from the road in a year.

Sustainability Tips



- Carry your own personal water container, and refill it rather than buying plastic bottles of water. Buy a water filter, and refill from the tap.



- Carry and refill your own coffee mug.
- Avoid printing out documents that easily can be read and filed electronically.



(<http://www.titanmag.com/2008/sustainability/tips.html>)



- Reduce unwanted mail, take your name off mailing list for items you no longer read.



Use durable products rather than disposable (e.g., refillable pens, lighters, & razors)

(<http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/wasteprevention/residentiaalsector.htm#Questions>)

- Think before you throw it away – it might be reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Put as little as you can into our landfills.



No-Waste Holidays

Americans throw away 25% more trash - an additional 5 million tons - between Thanksgiving and New Year's eve.

GREEN TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

1. Send holiday greetings to family and friends via e-mail.
2. For holiday parties, use reusable glass or plastic ware, and cloth napkins.
3. When shopping for gifts and holiday food, use cloth shopping bags
4. If you buy gifts, look for durable and re-usable items and resist the latest "fad". Purchase gifts from local vendors, or that were made locally.
5. Wrap gifts in fabric, comics or your own decorated, reused paper.
6. Consider alternatives to a cut tree, such as a live tree, decorated house plant, or artificial tree.
7. Give an experience as a gift; make life about quality time and not needless stuff.

Find more tips at:

http://www.uoregon.edu/~recycle/green_holiday_text.htm

Saving Trash

Recycling employee wins Lane County Trashbuster award!

Move Outs are a hectic time of year. Students have too much stuff to pack and not enough time to do it in. In the midst of this chaos, many useful and reusable items get chucked in the trash, because students don't have time, or simply don't want, to dispose of them properly.



Housing Coordinator Robyn Hathcock was recently recognized for her efforts to solve this problem. Her efforts in June 2009 collected 21.8 tons of reusable items that were donated to family's who needed them. That's 21.8 tons of materials that *won't* be taking up space in a landfill, and that can now serve a purpose. Thank you for recycling, Robyn!

Sustainability Superstars of the Month:

Susan Osterman and Paul Blancher

These two superstars are working hard to make sure Facilities is buying sustainable products by ensuring that:

- ❖ Facilities' purchases are items with the lowest possible carbon footprint.
- ❖ items come from a local sources to eliminate shipping wherever possible
- ❖ buying products made with recycled materials.
- ❖ Vendors, and their suppliers, operate sustainably.



This task can be difficult, but it is getting easier. 2 or 3 years ago, no one was thinking about it, but now vendors are coming to Facilities with ideas for more sustainable products and purchases. There are still some vendors with very little concept of sustainability, but they are becoming few and far between.

In order to achieve sustainable purchasing goals, these buyers keep sustainability at the forefront of their conversations. Whenever speaking with a sales representative, the topic of sustainably practices is a focal point of the discussion. Keeping this in the minds of the salespeople has had a ripple effect that is demonstrated by an increasing number of vendors addressing sustainability issues from the start.

Thanks Susan Osterman and Paul Blancher for your hard work in campus sustainability.

Climate Action Plan

Steve Mital, UO's Director of Sustainability, along with the help of two graduate students Ethan Rainwater and Mark Nystrom from the Office of Sustainability, have released the first draft of the Climate Action Plan. This draft can be found at <http://sustainability.uoregon.edu/content/introduction>. The school has pledged to reduce its carbon emissions to zero by the year 2050, and this is the first draft of their plan to achieve that goal. "The CAP is available for review and comment from students, faculty and staff at the Office of Sustainability's Web site. Up until December, the comments will be collected and taken into consideration; then the CAP will be revised by Rainwater and Nystrom and presented to President Lariviere for a second signing." ([Oregon Daily Emerald](#))

It is important that time is taken to read this draft and provide feedback so that it can be improved. Let's make conservation the rule not the exception at the University of Oregon! Also don't forget that reducing consumption and recycling take a bite out of global warming!

Reminders

- Don't forget to utilize R.O.S.E. (Reusable Office Supply Exchange) Available to all faculty, staff, administrators, GTF's, and student groups. Learn more at <http://uoregon.edu/~recycle/rex.htm>.
- On Thursday Nov. 19th 7:00pm, "Tapped". This timely movie looks at the world wide water crisis and will be shown in Lawrence 177. Check out the trailer at www.tappedthemovie.com

Campus Sustainability Day

On October 21st, Campus Recycling and the ASUO hosted a sustainability event in the EMU. Tables presented by Power Shift, Campus Recycling, and more congregated to promote sustainability and 350. With booths promoting reusable mugs, composting, and urging people to stop buying bottled water. Campus Recycling had a booth to promote using reusable water bottles, instead of plastic disposable ones. They also asked people to sign and address postcards to their legislators to remind them about the importance of 350.

350

350 is a significant number, possibly the *most* significant number in the context of global climate change. It is the safe upper-limit of carbon (in parts per million). It's the goal that we, as a world, need to aim for. It is also the day of a global action day to promote awareness about this number, its significance and why it is so imperative that we care, that we do something about it. On October 24, people all over the world joined in to make a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 350 parts per million. See some photos below.



Sarah Elwonger (Student Recycler and Sustainability newsletter editor), urging people to send postcards to their representatives



Karyn Kaplan and Shelley Whitaker taking back the tap



350 in Melilla, Spain

Thanks to Sarah Elwonger, Student Sustainability Assistant and Shelley Whitaker, Campus Ops Administration, for putting together this newsletter!