

Recycle Rockbridge

Edition 7

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Paper or Plastic

No Thank You!

Have you ever stopped to think about the number of plastic and paper bags your household uses in a year? I recently read that the average American uses between 300 and 700 plastic bags per year. If Americans were to tie their annual consumption of plastic bags together in a chain form, it would reach around the Earth 760 times! Wow, that's scary and to thank all that plastic is made from petroleum. Another fact, according to the American Forest and Paper Association, in 1999 the U.S. alone used 10 billion paper grocery bags. This required 14 million trees to be cut down. What a waste.

Most bags both plastic and paper are not even recycled. They end up in our landfills, waterways and trees. The plastic bags are of particular concern to the environment because so many of them do end up in waterways and loose in the environment. I know from being at our own landfill, here in Rockbridge County, that these bags are a real annoyance. Take a visit to Landfill Road after a slightly windy day. You too will see the problem. The entire area will be decorated in plastic. What happens is trash is delivered to the landfill by truck. It is then dumped onto the ground and covered with dirt. In between dumping the trash and getting it covered the wind catches these bags and distributes them throughout the landscape. Some of these bags are retrieved by cleanup crews but many escape. Not only is this an eye sore but it is an environmental hazard. Bags that end up loose in the landscape cause many problems for wild life and marine life. Animals can get

tangled in the bags and injure their selves or suffocate and birds and marine life often mistake the bags for food and die from eating the plastic, it is not digestible.

There are simple solutions to these problems. One very obvious solution is to make sure all bags both paper and plastic is recycled. Paper bags can go into the mixed paper category at the recycling center. Plastic bags have to go back to the store for recycling. Walmart, Food Lion and Kroger all have plastic bag recycling containers at the entrance to the store. Another, even better, solution is to not use these bags at all. When you go to the store take your own reusable bag. Many stores offer reusable bags for a small price or you can purchase a few of your own preference to use at any store. Most merchants are very accustomed to the reusable bags and prefer them. Remember merchants must pay for those paper or plastic bags that they are using so you are saving them money. Also, I will say from my experience once you have gotten used to taking your own bags you get so you just don't care for the disposable bags. Reusable bags are easier to care and unload, they don't dump out all over the car and they do not rip on the way into the house (I know everyone has had that happen at least once and it never fails there is always something breakable in that bag).

The next time you go for groceries or shopping take along a reusable bag. It makes unloading easier and it feels good knowing that you are doing something good for the environment and the economy.



HHW Day

September 27, 2008

Don't forget that on Saturday, September 27, 2008 Rockbridge County will be holding the annual Household Hazardous Collection. This event will be held at the Rockbridge County Maintenance Garage, 228 Greenhouse Road from 9am until 2pm. This event will be held come rain or shine.

Items being collected are:

Solvents Used Oil
 Antifreeze Fuel
 Herbicides Pesticides
 Car Batteries Oil Based Paint
 Lead Acid Batteries
 Fluorescent Light Bulbs
 CFL's

Other items may be accepted upon approval from staff. Bring the item to the collection site for approval. No latex paint will be accepted. Latex paint should be dried out and disposed of with regular trash. To speed drying time add some cat litter to the paint.

This event is for households only. No businesses will be allowed to participate in this collection. If your business has hazardous waste products that need to be disposed of please contact the Recycling Office at 463-2437 for assistance. This event is for all residents in Buena Vista, Lexington and Rockbridge County. This event is being sponsored by The County of Rockbridge and the collection/disposal is being handled by *RKM Enviroclean*.



Fairfield

Anyone living in the Fairfield area has seen the changes taking place at the Fairfield Recycling/Dumper site. The site is being converted into a convenience center. We have come a long way in the renovation and expect to be finished within the next couple of weeks. Rockbridge County Recycling would like to thank everyone for their cooperation during this time of construction. When the site is complete, we will have a grand reopening event at the site. This will be a good time to learn about the new site and the services available. We will announce the reopening event as soon as a date has been picked. I hope to see you there.



Education

Rockbridge County Recycling is dedicated to the environmental education of the community. Educational material is available to the public and may be obtained at the Recycling Centers or the Recycling Office located at 150 South Main Street. The staff is available to do group presentation and is always happy to assist in community events. If you wish to schedule an event please call the Recycling Office at 463-2437.



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