



# RECYCLING ADVOCATES

www.RecyclingAdvocates.org

April 2007

*Involving people in creating a sustainable future through local efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle*

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions!

By Rhett Lawrence

By now, we've all seen "An Inconvenient Truth" and we recognize the reality of global warming. But did you realize that you can reduce your contribution to global warming by practicing the waste prevention strategies that Recycling Advocates stands for?

DEQ's background papers for the waste prevention strategy it is currently formulating are loaded with useful information. According to the one entitled "Environmental Considerations: An Overview of the Benefits of Waste Prevention and Reuse," waste prevention saves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions in all phases of a product's life cycle. And in most cases, waste prevention actually yields greater environmental benefits than recycling or energy recovery.

By practicing waste prevention, energy use and emissions are reduced through less resource extraction, manufacturing, and transportation. The Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions estimated that most of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by material use in Oregon occurred during the manufacturing phase. Waste prevention also reduces greenhouse gas emissions in the disposal phase from landfills, composting, and incineration facilities.

And the impacts of waste management and prevention can be significant. Between 1990 and 2005, Germany reduced household waste through waste prevention and recycling to save the equivalent of 30 million tons of carbon dioxide a year, which equates to the annual impact of about 2.5 million German residents.

It should be no surprise that waste prevention also saves energy. DEQ relates that Oregon-based catalog retailer Norm Thompson recently began primarily using lightweight shipping bags – instead of boxes lots of empty space – for shipping non-breakable items to customers. Doing so reduced their waste generation by about 627 tons a year and saved them enough energy to equate to about 110,000 gallons of gasoline.

Among the other interesting findings in DEQ's analysis: a Danish study found that using cotton instead of paper tablecloths reduces energy use by 35% and greenhouse gas emissions by 55%. A U.S. study found that maximally-used rechargeable batteries require 33 times less electricity to produce than disposables. And a Korean study of personal computers found that 85% of global warming impacts occur before the consumer receives the product, so waiting longer between computer upgrades can signifi-

cantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

So continue to recycle, but remember that preventing your waste in the first place is always the best option, for you and for the planet.

### Earth Day Celebration Update

Recycling Advocates is helping to sponsor this year's Earth Day Celebration at Woodlawn Park (NE 13<sup>th</sup> Ave and Dekum) on April 21. We are helping to organize all of the recycling for the event. Working with the Master Recyclers, we will be demonstrating event recycling and waste reduction techniques through out the day.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Earth Day event, there will be a volunteer orientation and work party on April 7<sup>th</sup>. The volunteer orientation meeting is from noon to 2pm and the work party follows from 2pm to 5pm(ish). The meeting and work party will be held at Bear eCycling's new offices and warehouse at 4532 SE 63rd Ave. (just south of Foster), next door to the Garden Spout). We will be making signage and constructing the recycling stations and other education materials for the event.

We are still looking for people to do shifts at the Recycling Advocates booth at Earth Day from 11am-1pm and 1pm-3pm on Saturday April 21<sup>st</sup>, and a few folks willing to work on post event recycling on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10am-2pm.

Email [volunteers@recyclingadvocates.org](mailto:volunteers@recyclingadvocates.org) or call the office to express interest or learn more.

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Recycling Advocates is involved with the waste reduction, recycling activities and volunteer support for the following Earth Day events:

Earth Dance

Date: Friday, April 6, 2007

Location: Village Ballroom, NE Dekum & 7th Ave.

Time: 7pm - Midnight

Cost: \$10-20 sliding scale

A Dance Party Fundraiser for the 2007 Earth Day Celebration (event volunteers can get in for \$5). A drum circle will kick off this dance party, followed by a diverse selection of music from a variety of Djs includes ecstatic dance & world beat. Earth Dance is an alcohol free event, all ages are welcome. Snacks will be for sale.

## From the President with Betty Patton



Dear Members,

For most of Americans, motherhood and apple pie define their core beliefs. For Oregonians, it is motherhood, apple pie, and the bottle bill. As I am writing this, our future bottle bill is being debated. There are ideas being presented that could create a comprehensive law that will include all of our beverages in any type of package the manufacturer chooses to create. There are also advocates of a baby step approach of keeping the same structure and adding one kind of beverage in one kind of packaging and maybe increasing the deposit a little bit.

We have had a simplistic but effective container deposit law for 36 years. But it has suffered from neglect. Wouldn't it be exciting if Oregon led the nation again as it did in the summer of 1971 when the original legislation was signed?

As Recycling Advocates, we are an informed group of engaged citizens. We know that bottle bills result in over 80% return rates. We know that curbside collection does not address the millions of beverages that are consumed away from home. We know that inflation has whittled away at that 5 cent deposit so that now it is worth very little. What we don't know is what we can do as individuals to move our bottle bill into the 21st century.

I encourage each of you to contact your legislator and ask for their support in the endeavor to advance and modernize our bottle bill. Write the Oregonian and your neighborhood newspaper supporting a progressive approach to container deposit legislation. In addition to these, I intend to write a thank you letter to Representative Vicki Berger, Republican of Salem, for her efforts in getting this need out in the open and for spearheading this legislative approach. She is truly a champion of our bottle bill. Her father would be very proud.

- Betty

## Katy's Legislative Corner with Katy Daily



No joke, the week of April 1st may be dubbed the Week of Recycling. If all goes well, Recycling Advocates' two priority issues could come out of their respective committees early this week.

The House Energy and Environment Committee held two days of hearings at the end of March for HB 2626, the electronic waste recycling bill, and are poised to hold a work session on the bill on Monday or on Wednesday. With some minor amendments to the phased in landfill ban, opposition to the bill is almost non-existent. The landfill ban for monitors, TVs, computers and laptops is an important environmental component of HB 2626, and its inclusion makes the bill very strong.

Another big issue in Salem is the expansion of Oregon's Bottle Bill. Although there had been hope that we would be able to overhaul the whole system and include all beverage containers, it looks as though there will be a much more scaled back bill which may be heard as early as Tuesday or Thursday. The Senate Environment and Natural Resources committee will be hearing SB 707, whose details still aren't revealed. Indications are that the bill will contain two main components: 1) addition of water bottles immediately and 2) the formation of a legislative Task Force to create a proposal for redemption centers, increasing the containers covered, and possibly raising the deposit. The Task Force will be responsible to report to the 2009 legislature.

Legislative leaders are supportive of broader expansion of the Bottle Bill, but the politics around this issue are tricky. They believe that this approach gives the legislature time to fully study the issue and gather the political support for broader expansion.

Although scaled way back, SB 707 still faces stiff opposition. The Grocers have publicly announced their intent to take any expansion to Oregon voters in the form of a ballot measure, and will do anything they can to try to defeat it during this legislative session. We will need to work just as hard to remind legislators how much Oregonians love their Bottle Bill.

## Center for Earth Leadership class: How to Be an Agent of Change in Your Circle

Tuesdays, April 10 - May 1 with a follow-up on May 29, 7:00 to 8:45 pm

Presenters: Jeanne and/or Dick Roy

This class covers the theory, practice, and tools of an agent of change working within a chosen circle of influence: neighborhood, workplace, school, church, interest group, or professional organization. Each participant will select one circle of influence, develop a strategy and plan for change, and take steps of early implementation, in consultation with other members in the class.

This class is intended for motivated individuals who seek to create a sustainable future. There is no charge for this class, but advance registration is required. To reserve your space, contact Meghan at 503-227-2807 or meghan@nwei.org.

## Batteries, Batteries Everywhere!

The focus on producer responsibility for electronic products, with the real potential that Oregon will be the fourth state to adopt a comprehensive electronics recycling law, has increased our interest in the recycling of batteries. We are a wireless society, and rechargeable batteries are an ever-present necessity of life in power tools, cordless and cell phones, computers, toothbrushes, PDAs, you name it.

We bet that you have one, or perhaps many spent rechargeable batteries sitting in a drawer somewhere that you would like to get rid of. But you don't know how to.

It is interesting that not many of these batteries are being thrown away in trash. A national study shows that they comprise only a little over one one-hundredth of one percent of our solid waste. Even so, rechargeable batteries are one of the largest sources of toxic cadmium that is going into our landfills. And for no good reason, for they are highly recyclable and there is a national, very convenient recycling program for them.

Rechargeable batteries come in four main chemistries, but nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) batteries are the chief environmental culprit. That is the kind of battery that you most likely have in a power tool, since they deliver a strong current. However, as technologies improve they are being increasingly replaced by lithium ion batteries which are lighter and far more environmentally friendly.

In response to a multi-state threat to outlaw Ni-Cd batteries, the industry established in the early nineties the first national producer responsibility TPO – a third-party organization that is industry-financed and runs a recycling program. The TPO is called the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation (RBRC). That organization now recycles all rechargeable batteries, as well as cell phones.

RBRC has collection stations in most Home Depots, Lowes, Radio Shacks, and other stores that sell rechargeable batteries or products with such batteries. And RBRC pays for it all. It is no-cost to the retailer, and for the consumer recycling is as convenient as buying. And RBRC has a wide advertising campaign to promote recycling.

However, the recycling rate for rechargeable batteries is disappointingly low. Why? Because few people know about the recycling options. The recycling boxes are often not obvious in stores, and sometimes not there at all. And we are so inundated with advertising that we tune out even information that would be helpful. Thus most people end up hoarding their spent batteries.

How can we change this? California and New York City have passed laws that require stores

to have recycling centers, and to display signs prominently. Oregon House Speaker Jeff Merkley (D-Portland) is interested in similar legislation here, and we will work with him on it.

Also, Recycling Advocates has requested a private grant to provide additional education and promotion to the public. When we get started on this project, we will ask for volunteers to help.

But what about alkaline batteries? Most are the non-rechargeable kind. Shouldn't they be recycled too? Actually, we don't think it is practical for several reasons. The manufacturers long ago got the toxics – it was primarily mercury – out of alkaline batteries. The general consensus is that they are quite benign in landfills. They are somewhat caustic, and if ground up they can be a slight problem. However, the acidic conditions in a landfill will neutralize them. Moreover, they contain virtually no resource value for recycling. Moreover, they out-number rechargeable batteries more than ten to one in the waste stream, and add considerably to the cost of recycling. We would use far more energy to recycle them than we would gain. Frankly, we believe it's better to dispose of non-rechargeable alkaline batteries in the trash.

But not rechargeables! Let's stop the hoarding and get to recycling our rechargeable batteries.

- Wayne Rifer



a member of Earth Share  
OF OREGON



### RECYCLING ADVOCATES

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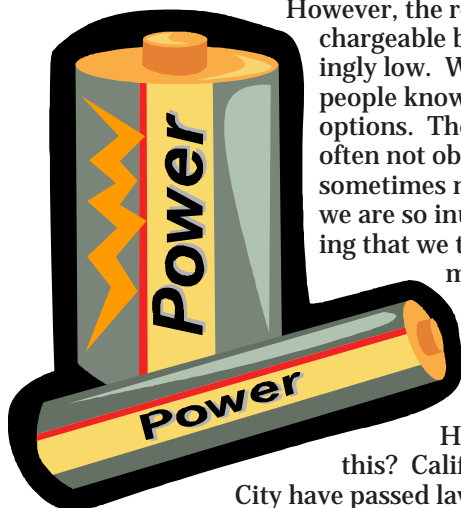
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## Recycling Advocacy Calendar for April 2007

### ◆ Greening Your Event

*Friday, April 13 9:00 am to 4:00 pm*

A One-day workshop in Portland on the basic principles and strategies for building community and promoting local economies through green and sustainable festivals and events. Sponsored by the U of O. \$159 - \$199. Register at <http://festival.uoregon.edu> (click on "more" in the workshops are) or call 800-824-2714.

### Earth Day Celebration, Woodlawn Park

*Saturday, April 21*

*See details page 1.* Woodlawn Park, NE 13<sup>th</sup> Ave and Dekum

### ◆ Earth Day at First Unitarian Church

*Saturday, April 21 6:30 - 8:00 pm*

SW 12th and Salmon, Portland

You are invited to an Earth Day Celebration that includes a multi-media nature slide show, music, meditative songs, candle lighting, and quiet reflective time. There will be expressions of gratitude, concern, and hope for our remarkable planet.

### ◆ Dinner for the Environment

*Friday, April 27*

Oregon League of Conservation Voters' annual dinner, in Portland. Key-note speaker is Jerome Ringo, president of the Apollo Alliance. For more information about Mr. Ringo, go to [www.AppolloAlliance.org](http://www.AppolloAlliance.org). Purchase tickets at [www.olcv.org](http://www.olcv.org).

### ◆ Recycling Advocates board meeting

*Monday, April 23, 7:00 p.m.*

For location and information call 503-777-0909



### Join us as a Member of RECYCLING ADVOCATES

\$25 Advocate    \$50 Friend    \$100 Sustainer    \$10-24 Living Lightly

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