

Trash Talk!

A quarterly newsletter from
**Pierce County
Solid Waste Division**

Fall 2006



Recycling goes back to school

During the school year, you and your friends probably spend more time at school than at home, at least on weekdays. So where are you doing most of your recycling? Are you a great recycler at home? How about at school? Do you even recycle at school?



Most of the trash thrown away at school is paper. Paper is easy to recycle. All you have to do is keep it clean and separate it from trash. By recycling paper at school, you are saving resources, helping reduce pollution, conserving energy, and even saving the school money.

Of course, your school recycling program doesn't have to stop with paper, but it's a great place to start.

Are you ready to start recycling or improve your recycling program at school? We're here to help. Have a teacher contact us at (253) 798-2179 or pcsolidwaste@co.pierce.wa.us, or contact us yourself!

Way to go, Pierce County!

You aren't tossing out nearly as much garbage as you did a year ago. Recyclables that were ending up in the garbage are now going into your new, big recycling cart.

Here's the proof:

- 93 percent of residents are taking part in the curbside recycling program.
- 82 percent more paper and cardboard are being recycled.
- Each household is setting out an average of 44.5 pounds of recyclables each month.
- Residents recycled 37,112 tons during the first full year of the new curbside pickup program—that's 3,092 tons each month or nearly 101.6 tons per day!

New to Pierce County

As part of the "America Recycles 2006" celebration, we are happy to introduce some programs we think you and your parents will find helpful:

- **Waste Free Gifts** is a website that is filled with earth friendly gift ideas, environmentally safe decorating tips, gift wrapping suggestions, crafts, and much more. Look for www.wastefreegifts.com this fall.
- **2Good2Toss.com** will help you get rid of those usable items you may find around your home, such as appliances, furniture, toys, games, carpet, windows, and more. Go to www.2good2toss.com to post and browse items that still have life left in them.



Host a worm feast

Did you know that red wiggler worms would like to eat your garbage, especially your lunch leftovers? By creating a yummy diet for worms, you can recycle food waste, produce rich organic compost for the garden, grow your own fish bait, and reduce your waste disposal costs. If you and your teacher are interested in learning how to vermicompost, our Environmental Educators are available to visit your class. We'll even donate a worm bin to your classroom. Or, you and your parents can learn how to vermicompost by attending a class at the Pierce County Environmental Services Building. The class is for children (age 6 and above) and adults; children must be with an adult. To sign up for a class, head to www.piercecounty.wa.org/composting.



Yard waste materials collected at the curb and transfer stations go to the compost factory at the Hidden Valley Transfer Station and the county compost facility at Purdy. These materials are turned into a compost called PREP (which stands for “Pierce County Recycled Earth Products”). PREP is sold at the Hidden Valley Transfer Station, Land Recovery’s Sales Road Facility, Purdy Topsoil and Gravel, Randels Sand and Gravel, University Place Refuse, and Vern’s Topsoil.

Re-leaf

The trees are changing colors. The leaves are about to fall. You know what that means—the chores are about to begin! Talk to your parents about reusing your fall leaves. Here are some reuse ideas:

- Make a pile and jump into it with your friends.
- Save some of the most colorful leaves and press them between sheets of wax paper inside an old book.
- Using a mulching mower, shred leaves and let them stay on the grass. The shredded leaves will provide a protective winter cover and decompose by spring. If you have a lot of leaves, you’ll need to mow often during the weeks with the heaviest leaf-fall.



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- Use your family’s mower to pick up leaves. Simply attach the bagger and collect the leaves. Your mower will shred the leaves as it picks them up, creating a great mulch. Put the leaf mulch on your garden or flower beds, around trees, or on paths.
- Pick up shredded leaves with the mower or rake up whole leaves and add them to your compost pile. If your family needs backyard composting help, visit www.piercecountywa.org/composting.
- Collect your leaves for composting. If you are signed up for curbside yardwaste recycling, place your leaves in your yardwaste bin for pickup at the curb. If you’re not signed up, you can drop off yard waste at the Hidden Valley Transfer Station in Puyallup, Purdy Transfer Station in Purdy, the Prairie Ridge Transfer Station in Bonney Lake, or the Key Peninsula Drop Box near Key Center. The Hidden Valley Transfer Station is open 8 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., every day except holidays. The Purdy and Prairie Ridge transfer stations are open 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., every day except holidays. The Key Center transfer station is open 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday.

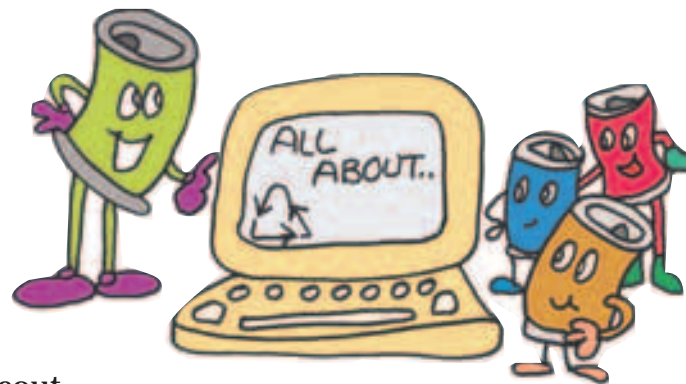


Don’t burn your fall leaves!

Leaf burning releases harmful pollutants into the air. In fact, smoke from just five pounds of burning leaves creates a full pound of pollution. Leaf burning can create health hazards for children, the elderly, and people with breathing difficulties. Burning can also put nearby properties at risk. Be a good neighbor—don’t burn your leaves!

Now presenting...

Now that you’re settled into your new classroom with your new teacher, we’d love to come visit your classroom. We have a lot of fun, hands-on lessons that can introduce you to the wonders of the environment. We are also available to visit scout troops, clubs, after-school programs, and other youth groups.



If your class or club is too busy for a presentation, we have plenty of resources that we can make available to your teacher or club leader. Some of these are available for your school to keep and others to borrow.

For information about lessons or resources, ask your teacher or club leader to contact us at (253) 798-2179 or pcsolidwaste@co.pierce.wa.us, or check our website, www.piercecountywa.org/enviroed.