

For more information, contact:

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WATAUGA COUNTY ANNOUNCES RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHTS

BOONE, NC (September 10, 2008) -- Compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) are being used in more homes than ever before and thanks to support from Blue Ridge Electric, Watauga County will now offer residents the opportunity to recycle used CFLs at all ten convenience centers. Blue Ridge Electric has provided the recycling containers for all convenience centers and will fund the shipping and recycling of the CFLs.

“Until now, the only time residents could properly dispose of CFLs was to save them until one of the two collection days held annually for household hazardous waste,” said Watauga County Recycling Coordinator Lisa Doty. “Their use has become very popular and many residents have requested that we provide a more convenient collection process. We are excited about being the first county in the state to offer CFL recycling at our convenience centers.”

Residents should place the used CFL in a zip-lock type bag and give the bag to the site attendant, who will place it in the proper recycling container. Long, tube-like fluorescent bulbs are not accepted at the convenience centers and must be brought to a household hazardous waste collection day (HHWD). The next HHWD collection is set for Saturday, Oct. 11 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

All fluorescent lights require some amount of mercury to be able to function. Manufacturers are making strides in reducing the amount of mercury in the lights but will not be able to eliminate it all together. Carefully recycling CFLs prevents the release of mercury into the environment and allows for the reuse of glass, metals and other materials that make up fluorescent lights.

The use of energy efficient lighting reduces the amount of coal, oil and gas burned in power plants. It also reduces the amount of air pollutants, some of which contain mercury, released from power plants. Because of the significant energy savings, using high efficiency fluorescent lamps to replace incandescent lamps or older fluorescent lamps results in a net reduction in mercury emissions.

CFLs consume 75 percent less electricity than incandescent bulbs and last 10 times longer. One CFL can save more than \$30 in energy costs over its lifetime, reduce coal consumption by 200 pounds, and prevent more than 400 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions. CFL use is increasing because of their promise of energy savings. According to the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency estimate, CFL sales made up a record of 20 percent of all U.S. light bulb sales in 2007 compared to only five percent in 2005.

For more information on Watauga County's CFL recycling program, contact Lisa Doty at 265-4852 or lisa.doty@ncmail.net. For more information on CFLs and what to do if one breaks go to www.p2pays.org/Fluorescent/index.asp.

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