



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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NORTH CAROLINA OBSERVES AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

RALEIGH – “It All Comes Back To You” is this year’s theme for America Recycles Day, being observed Monday, Nov. 15. The theme illustrates that materials put in the recycle bin today could return in many forms tomorrow.

For example, glass bottles can be recycled over and over again. In North Carolina, glass collected from recycling programs across the state is transformed into new bottles at manufacturing plants in Wilson and Winston-Salem. These bottles find their way back onto grocery shelves and into our homes, where they can again be recycled. A company in Elizabeth City is also using bottles to make a variety of products, including asphalt.

North Carolinians dispose of approximately 10 million tons of waste in landfills each year. Building new landfills has remained controversial, and is one of the driving forces to expand recycling, since much of what is thrown away is recyclable. A recent study by the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance found that North Carolina citizens fail to recycle many materials they possibly could (see <http://www.p2pays.org/ref/26/25999.pdf>). For instance, recyclable paper accounts for more than 20 percent of what is thrown away by the state’s households each year. If recovered, this paper would return around 500,000 tons of materials to recycling companies struggling for supply.

In addition to an array of environmental benefits, which include saving energy, reducing the amount of virgin materials used for new products, preventing air and water pollution and saving natural resources, recycling is also increasingly important to the state’s economy. In North Carolina, approximately 12,000 jobs are tied to the recycling industry. Numerous businesses are involved in the collection of an increasing range of materials, such as construction waste and computers, as well as traditionally collected household recyclables.

Soda bottles are being turned into new plastic bottles, newspaper into insulation, and cardboard into new boxes by North Carolina manufacturers using materials collected from the state’s citizens. A number of facilities are using sophisticated technologies to transform disposables into common consumer products – such as optical sorting of colored plastic chips used in making new detergent bottles.

Last year, North Carolina’s community recycling programs recovered more than 1 million tons of material. However, the average American still throws away 7.5 pounds of trash every day. If all the trash generated daily in North Carolina was placed in Dumpsters lined up side-by-side, it would stretch seven miles. In 47 days, the Dumpsters would cover the distance from Boone to Bald Head Island.

DPPEA invites citizens to help celebrate America Recycles Day by meeting Can Guy, one of the Recycle Guys mascots, Monday, Nov. 15, at the Avery C. Upchurch Government Complex, 222 W. Hargett St., Raleigh, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information about America Recycles Day, go to www.americarecyclesday.org, and for more information about recycling in North Carolina go to <http://www.p2pays.org/> and click on Recycling Information, or call Scott Mouw with DPPEA at (919) 715-6512.

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