Volume 3, Issue 1 - March 2011

Frederick County Department of Solid Waste Management

Upcoming Events of Interest

April 1-3
Tot Swap Consignment Sale
Frederick Fairgrounds. Promoting reuse of clothing, toys and more. Info at: www.TotSwap.net

April 9
Frederick County Parks & Recreation Dept.'s Nature Fest
11am-4pm
Join us in celebrating the opening of the new Cactoctin Creek Park. Click here for more info.

April 16
Frederick's Earth Day
12pm-4pm
Find the DSWM information booth as part of the festivities along Carroll Creek Park. Click here for more info.

April 30
DSWM & Norseman Environmental's Truckload Compost Bin Sale
9am-3pm: Fredericktowne Mall Get a bargain on an Earth Machine compost bin.

April 30
Grand Reopening of the Habitat for Humanity ReStore
Local resource for reuse of construction and household materials. More info at: 301-662-2988

May 21
DSWM Household Hazardous Waste Drop Off Event
8am-12pm: Public Safety Training Facility, 8349 Reichs Ford Rd . Click here for more info.

What Do I Do With…?

SO, not everything can be recycled. And of what's left for disposal, there are some things that shouldn't just be tossed in the trash. We're here to help! If you have questions about how to dispose of a particular item, email your questions to recycle@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

Even if it isn't recyclable, we can let you know how to properly handle the waste that you have.

This month we're tackling the subject of medical and biohazard waste. What do you do with any bottles of old prescriptions or used syringes that may be in your house? Here's the scoop:*

Pharmaceuticals (medicines)

Pharmaceuticals—especially prescription medicines (for humans and animals)—can potentially be both a health hazard and environmental pollutant; alternate disposal options should be considered before flushing them down a toilet or throwing them out for disposal in a landfill.

These materials can be collected and brought to Frederick County's Household Hazardous Waste Drop Off events, where they will be collected for proper disposal, at no charge. Prescription medicines must be in their original container with the label identifying the contents still intact in order to be accepted. Two drop off events are held each year, in the spring and fall. The next Household Hazardous Waste Drop Off day will be held on Saturday, May 21, 2011, from 8 am until 12 pm at the Public Safety Training Facility, located at 8349 Reichs Ford Road in Frederick. For more information, click here.

Sharps (hypodermic needles)

Improperly disposing of sharps used at home can pose a public health risk. If not properly secured, discarded needles may expose your trash collection crew and other waste workers to potential needle stick injuries and potential infection.

There are two main routes for handling needles and syringes: return/exchange or disposal. Specialized containers may be purchased that allow you to mail or drop off needles at designated private collection centers. For a list of companies that provide this service, contact the Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal at 800-643-1643 or online at www.safeneedledisposal.org. Patients using sharps may also find assistance with exchange or disposal through their primary care physician and may want to ask their doctor's office whether this service is offered.

Otherwise, in Frederick County, residents may place used needles and syringes inside a sturdy, rigid plastic container (not soft plastic, such as a milk jug, which might be punctured) with a narrow opening; good examples would include laundry detergent containers or bleach bottles. Mark the container "DO NOT RECYCLE". When it is full, tape the container securely shut and place it in your household trash for regular disposal.

**It is important to note that this disposal information pertains only to household medical items. By law, businesses have different medical waste disposal criteria.*

Top Tips for Recycling Right

Pop quiz! What are the top 3 things YOU can do to improve the way the recycling program works?

3. Take a look at the picture on the lid of your cart to see what's recyclable and don't put questionable items inside. When in doubt, throw it out! (Or ask us; if you post your question on www.Facebook.com/FrederickRecycles everyone can learn from your inquiry!)
2. Place the cart so that the arrows on the top of the lid face toward the street, and make sure it's at least 4 feet away from obstructions (such as mailboxes or trees) and no more than 6 feet from the street.
1. **Don't set your recyclables out for collection inside plastic bags!** (Except for bags of bags.)

Following these simple guidelines helps keep the recycling program running smoothly and efficiently! Thank you!

Paper, Metal, Glass, Plastic, Corn… Which of These Things is Not Like the Others?

"…it's still a good idea to try to steer clear of single-use, disposable packaging, no matter what it's made of."

Recently, a concerned Fredrick County mother wrote to ask us why the organic yogurt she buys for her child does not have a recycling symbol on the packaging. Did she really have to follow our "When in doubt, throw it out" rule for an otherwise seemingly sustainable product? The answer is, yes. And there's a good reason why the packaging doesn't have a recycling symbol on it—it's not made of plastic, paper, metal or glass. It's made from corn (which isn't recyclable).

There's an alternative to traditional #1 polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic that is slowly becoming more prevalent in the marketplace, from Wal-Mart's produce department to Stonyfield's single-serve yogurt cups. This newer material is called polyactic acid, or PLA, and it is derived from plants. While that may seem like good news at first, PLA's life cycle is as complicated as the petroleum-based products it is intended to replace.

There is a common misconception among consumers that products made with PLA (and other similar materials touted as being biodegradable or compostable) have less impact due to their ability to break down easily. But PLA packaging is designed to be sturdy and is intended for composting in a large scale, carefully controlled environment where temperatures often exceed 140 degrees for ten days or more. At this time, very few such facilities exist that will accept residential food waste (fewer than 30 in the United States.) And NatureWorks, the primary manufacturer of PLA resins, admits that if the material is landfilled it will last as long as traditional PET plastic—perhaps 1,000 years or more. But unlike PET, as PLA slowly breaks down it poses the additional problem of creating methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

There is currently no system in place for traditional recycling of PLA products. To further complicate matters, PLA resin and PET plastic are like oil and water—they just don't mix together. That means that if large amounts of PLA-based materials do get mixed in with regular recycling collections, they can cause a real problem for the recycling industry. Sorting facilities have to pay to find and remove the PLA packaging materials from the incoming recyclables and then pay again to dispose of it.

So what's an eco-minded shopper to do? Whenever possible, it's still a good idea to try to steer clear of single-use, disposable packaging, no matter what it's made of. Sometimes employing long term, common sense solutions can be more eco-minded than buying into short term "green" marketing trends. And yes, "when in doubt, throw it out" is a good general motto to follow when pondering which bin to put your waste in. There are good reasons why many things are not accepted for recycling. If you ever want to know what they are…just ask us! Send your questions to recycle@FrederickCountyMD.gov

For more information on PLA, we recommend this article from

E-Cycling Announcement!

Need directions to the e-cycling drop off center? Map it here!

We're pleased to announce that our electronics recycling program has now expanded the list of items accepted! Any items on the following list can be brought to the recycling collection point at the landfill facilities for a fee of $3.80 per 100 pounds of material.

- computer monitors
- circuit boards
- routers & modems
- desktop & laptop computers
- keyboards & mice
- printers
- network devices
- hard drives
- electronic games
- fax, scanners & copy machines
- docking stations
- telephones & cell phones
- radios & stereo equipment
- CD & tape players
- DVD & VCR players
- iPods/digital music players
- digital cameras
- power and network cables
- televisions
- microwaves
- rechargeable batteries

The Great 'Earth Machine' Compost Bin Sales Event is Back!

To celebrate Earth Day, the Department of Solid Waste Management is sponsoring another one-day-only truckload compost bin sale! Last year's event was a huge success and we know there are plenty more would-be composters out there. Here's your chance to start composting at home by getting a high quality self-contained composting unit for a discount price. Earth Machine bins regularly retail for $100 but will be available for $45 at this event.

Each compost bin comes with a booklet on how to compost. Also available for sale will be compost turners and kitchen scrap collector buckets to make it even easier for you to compost at home.

Earth Machine compost bins are adaptable, but are especially ideal for "cold compost" production, meaning that you can add the right ingredients then sit back and let the decomposition process work at its own steady pace with a more hands off approach. While this does take longer to produce finished compost for your garden, it's a terrific, simple way to divert valuable organic materials from the waste disposal stream each and every day.

The compost bin sale will take place at the Fredericktowne Mall on Saturday April 30, from 9am until 3pm or until bins sell out.

For more information on the sale or about composting, please call 301-600-7405 or send email to: recycle@FrederickCountyMD.gov

For more information about Earth Machine compost bins, visit their website.

Did you know that having 1,000 residents in the community actively composting can divert 600,000 pounds of organic waste from landfill disposal each year?

Just Can't Wait for Great Compost? Get Some Right Now!

OK, sure, we want you to compost at home. But it's spring and your garden is ready to get growing and you need compost—right *now*. Don't worry, we've got you covered! Frederick County's yard waste recycling program has won a national award and we bet our premium compost is as good—or better!—than anything else you could buy. Didn't know we sold premium compost? Well, now you do...it's called ***Revive*** and that's just what it will do for your landscape.

Through our technologically advanced composting process, Revive gives new life to yard waste, then helps bring new vitality to your yard when the rich organic material is added to your lawn, vegetable garden, flowers, trees or shrubs. Revive is a proven soil conditioner that provides excellent results by:

- Slowly releasing nitrogen and other essential macro- and micro-nutrients
- Increasing the ability of sandy soils to retain water and improving drainage in clay soils
- Stimulating root growth by increasing aeration and loosening heavy and compacted soils
- Decreasing runoff and soil erosion
- Improving and stabilizing soil pH

It is available at our Reichs Ford Road composting facility (Monday-Saturday, 7am-4:30pm) in bulk for $8.50 per cubic yard or $15 per ton.

For more information, including a summary of laboratory analysis of Revive compost, click here to visit the County website.

To see the Revive product brochure, click here.

Great, Green Businesses

In each issue we like to feature one local business that has successfully struck a balance between going green and earning green. This month we're savoring what's behind the menu at a.k.a. Friscos.

AKA Friscos, located on Wedgewood Boulevard in Frederick, is best known by local diners for their overstuffed sandwiches and gourmet baked potatoes. But beyond the delicious menu there is something just as interesting going on. Recycling!

Friscos (as the regulars call it) has an excellent recycling program led by owners John and Angie Wolf. The Wolfs quickly realized recycling was not only good for the environment, but could also be good for their bottom line as well. According to John, recycling has saved an amazing $800 annually on their waste collection costs.

"Recycling is a no brainer" said John, "Even for a small kitchen like ours it is easy to do. All our staff recycle as a part of their jobs without giving it a second thought ."

But Friscos doesn't stop just at recycling. Also part of their normal routine is waste reduction. That's right, waste reduction— they work to reduce the amount of waste they generate in first place, before ever having stuff left to recycle. This "green" thinking has even had an impact on the menu— you won't find any fried foods at Friscos! That means less disposable kitchen packaging is used and there are no big vats of grease to get rid of. The result is less excess (and better health too!) Friscos also reuses boxes for deliveries and storing supplies and has reduced the amount of paper napkins that get used in the dining room by not using individual napkin dispensers; customers don't seem to mind and less waste is created.

So, the next time you stop in for one of Friscos overstuffed sandwiches or a deluxe baked potato, feel free to complement them on their recycling program too! Contact info: a.k.a. Friscos at 301-698-001 or visit akafriscos.piczo.com.

Interested in Starting or Expanding a Recycling Program for YOUR Business? Have a Success Story to Share?

Did you know that recycling could actually save your business money? Establishing a recycling program for your business or organization is not only great for the environment, but can also be good for your bottom line.

And did you know that right here in Frederick County there are stores, apartment complexes, restaurants, clubs and all sorts of commercial entities that are already recycling? You could be too! For more information on starting up a new program or expanding an existing one, contact Dave Helmecki, Frederick County's Commercial Recycling Program Coordinator, by calling 301-600-7404, or sending email to: *DHelmecki@FrederickCountyMD.gov*

Is your business already recycling? Way to go! Dave would also love to hear if your business has found success in reducing its waste, reusing items and/or recycling. Let us know about your great, green efforts!

April Showers Bring May Flowers…Especially if You Have A Rain Barrel!

Did you know that high quality rain barrels are being made right here in Frederick? And they are a great example of product reuse! The Scott Key Center provides creative and meaningful employment for adults with developmental disabilities. One of their ongoing projects is converting 60-gallon food shipment casks into handy garden rain barrels. The finished product has a brass spout for attaching a garden hose, a fitted screened top, an overflow hose, and comes with instructions for installation.

Collecting, storing, and reusing rainwater helps to save water resources in your community, which may be especially important during dry summer months.

Rain Barrels are available at the Scott Key Center and each $80 purchase supports the ongoing work of this community resource. The Scott Key Center is located in Frederick at 1050 Rocky Springs Road.

For more information contact Shawn Dennison at: SDennison@FrederickCountyMD.gov

Curbside Recycling Information Supported in New Web Mapping Application

We are excited to announce that Frederick county residents can now locate their recycling collection dates, along with a wealth of other information, in the newly released web mapping application, Frederick County, MD at a Glance, which can be accessed by visiting: **www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/AtAGlance/**

Once on the website, residents will see a detailed map of Frederick County. A "quick search" feature lets citizens easily find their recycling collection schedule in just two simple steps:

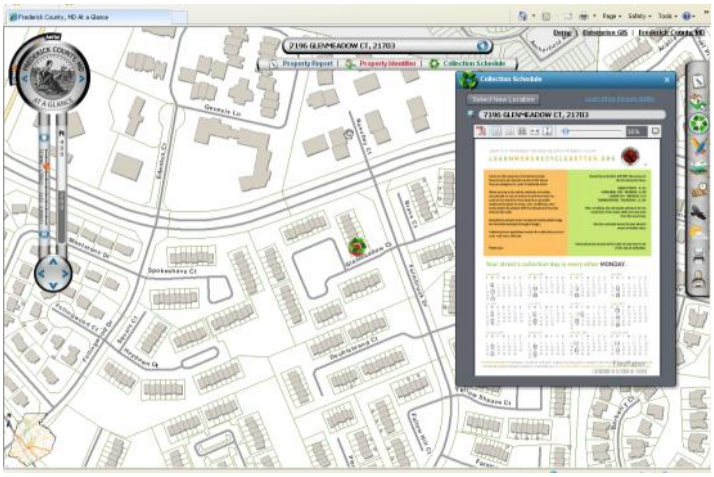
1. Enter the street address in the search bar at the top of the page.
2. Right below the search box, click on the words "Collection Schedule" next to the recycling symbol.

The current recycling calendar for the specified street address then appears on the screen. Recycling calendars can be viewed, exported as a PDF file and/or printed.

Frederick County, MD at a Glance also allows citizens to obtain current information about Frederick County properties, including land plats and real property data, as well as county information such as crime statistics, zoning, water and sewer services, police districts, and locations of schools, libraries and parks. A host of tools to interact with the maps include measuring tools, links to Google Streetview and Bing imagery, local weather forecasts and much more. There is also an archive of historic imagery of the County showing the changing landscape between 1952-2009.

Frederick County, MD at a Glance is a project of the county's IIT Geographic Information Systems team, whose mission is to create, integrate and support highly usable, scalable and interoperable software applications that meet and exceed the needs of Frederick County Government and its citizens. Feedback or questions about this application can be submitted directly on the website by clicking the "Feedback" button on the right side of the page.

(This application requires the free software Adobe Flash version 10 or later installed and is best viewed using Internet Explorer 7.0 with 1024 x 768 screen resolution.)



More Online Resources!

Have you seen *www.LearnMoreRecycleBetter.org*?

It's the easy-to-use online site we created to provide fast access to information about the recycling program. You can order a cart, see program guidelines, ask a question or read our blog. It's a great resource for new recyclers and old "pros" alike!

Got Facebook? Be a Fan of Recycling!

The Department of Solid Waste Management has a Facebook page that is a great community resource for questions, updates and information about all things recycling and sometimes even contests too! It's a great way to stay-up-to-date on anything that may affect your curbside service, from severe weather to road closures to holidays. Find us online at www.Facebook.com/FrederickRecycles.

Frederick County Department of Solid Waste Management

9031 Reichs Ford Road, Frederick, MD 21704

Landfill: 301-600-1848
E-mail: landfill@FrederickCountyMD.gov

Office of Recycling: 301-600-2960
E-mail: recycle@FrederickCountyMD.gov