

## Recycle it, don't toss it

'Reduce and reuse' creates a healthier planet

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As Don Barda is tossing boards and drywall scraps out of his truck at the Wood County landfill, two dinosaur-sized garbage trucks lumber up on either side of him and tip their mighty loads.

Beer bottles crash and soggy cardboard collapses on the stinking mound, joining plastic bags, chunks of foam, mattresses, and flattened water bottles. A lot of what was dumped could have been recycled.

"I just think people are lazy," Mr. Barda, a team leader for 1-800-GOT JUNK, a disposal company that quickly learned the value of recycling.

In a year, its owner, Ryan Knight, reduced his dumping fees dramatically by figuring out where to recycle or resell 60 percent of everything his crews collect as they clear out homes and businesses. One thing he couldn't find a use for: an old centrifuge. So his staff dismantled it and took its components to a metal recycler. During the Great Depression and World War II, the phrase "reduce, reuse, recycle," became a patriotic mantra. The contemporary version, considered patriotic by some, might be "buy, consume, dispose."

Reducing trash is good not only for the planet's health but saves money because construction of landfills is enormously expensive.

Recycling, of course, carries costs, too.

"You can recycle a lot of things. The question is, do you want to pay for it?" said Ken Rieman, director of the Wood County Solid Waste District. His business card is printed on recycled paper. "When you throw it in a landfill you're paying to store it forever."

But most of the rubbish that ends up in stinking heaps doesn't have to.

A team from the Ohio department of natural resources that sorted 31 loads of trash at Toledo's Hoffman Road landfill in 2003 determined that the largest component was paper, followed by yard waste, plastics, and food.

Despite having free, curb-side recycling that hauls off all cardboard and paper, glass, cans, and bottles, Toledoans are not good recyclers. About 19 percent of the city's 114,000 households recycle, up from 17 percent last year when the city added to its biweekly pickups cardboard, junk mail, and magazines, all of which is trucked to Cleveland and reborn as insulation. Toledo's recycled glass, plastic, and cans are sent to recycling heaven - Ann Arbor - and sold for the going rate.

In Ann Arbor, more than 95 percent of households recycle. Good participation rates are 60 to 80 percent, said Andrew Booker of the Ohio EPA.

So what's the best way to get people recycling?

Charge them for what they pitch, known as the "pay as you

## WHAT TO RECYCLE

- Cardboard (all types, flattened to about 2-by-2-feet), junk mail, paper, phone books, newspapers, magazines, bottles, metal cans, and No. 1 and 2 plastic containers can be recycled at the curb in Toledo and most Lucas County municipalities. Cardboard/paper must be in a bin, bundled, tied, or in paper bags. You'll need a bin for glass, cans, and plastic. Toledoans provide their own bins, which must be identified with recycling stickers, available by calling 419-936-2489. Many suburban municipalities provide bins. In addition, recycling bins are located behind many Kroger stores, at Pearson and Secor metroparks, at Lucas County Recreation Center, and many other locations.

- To recycle electric items (computers, TVs, stereos, small household appliances), paint, all types of batteries, fluorescent bulbs, chemicals, and other materials, call 419-213-2230 to make a drop-off appointment Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays, 8 a.m. to noon at the Lucas County Solid Waste Management District (LCSWMD) facility. If you aren't sure what they'll take or if there's a fee, ask.

You'll be asked what you have, and told where to take it. The address is not published because county officials are concerned people will use the location as a dump.

- Batteries: All kinds are recycled at the LCSWMD facility.

- Books (but no textbooks, old magazines, or moldy books), newer magazines, video and cassette tapes, CDs, and records are accepted at some used bookstores and many libraries, including all branches of the Toledo-Lucas County Public Library. They're given to prisons, or sold at the Main branch's gift shop, and at big sales four times a year, organized by the volunteer Friends of the Library. Unwanted books are hauled away and shredded. Next sale: June 10, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and June 11, noon to 4 p.m. at 546 Southard St. between 12th and Canton streets in downtown Toledo. Information: 419-259-5455 or e-mail at [friends@toledolibrary.org](mailto:friends@toledolibrary.org).

There's still lots of old textbooks, shabby tomes, and outdated encyclopedias nobody wants. Books are shredded (and live again as insulation) at State Paper & Metal (1118 West Central Ave., 419-243-4841) and the Bowling Green Recycling Center has an efficient book debinder.

- Computers and related equipment: Some shops purchase newer, used computers for resale or parts. Free recycling is done at Reboot Computers (419-691-4792, also takes other

throw" plan. "It's the single most effective program that's available," said Mr. Booker. It's also equitable, he notes, because people who don't generate lots of trash have low bills, much as consumers who conserve electricity will have lower electric bills than consumers who don't.

Ohio counties are required to have a plan to recycle 25 percent of residential and 66 percent of industrial junk. Lucas County's residential recycling rate is about 12 to 14 percent, said Jim Walters, manager of the Lucas County Solid Waste Management District.

The high water mark for recycling standards, as with many environmental issues, is the West Coast.

California law requires cities to recycle half their trash. San Francisco, which diverts 60 percent of its trash from landfills and is aiming for 100 percent by 2020, is piloting a program to recycle pet waste. Owners put Fido's doo in a biodegradable bag and drop it into waste carts at city dog parks. The methane-rich material is collected and will be used to generate energy.

Toledo's curbside recycling is free, but is hamstrung because the city doesn't provide bins to all residents.

That would cost a lot, said Kelly DeBruyn, city manager of public services. Moreover, the city will haul away one, five, or 25 bags - as much trash as people set out - and that provides no incentive to develop the habits needed to be mindful about recycling, she added.

And, like most big cities, Toledo has large areas populated by people with low incomes, which often correlates with low recycling, she and other recycling professionals noted.

But tight municipal budgets aren't stopping ideas and small initiatives.

Two nonprofit reuse stores have opened in recent years - the Restore, affiliated with Habitat for Humanity, and the Furniture Bank. And a Toledo mom plans to open an art-scrap store called Scrap 4 Art, in downtown Toledo this summer (see related article).

Lots of stores and even groups raising funds recycle rechargeable batteries, cell phones, and ink jet cartridges.

Lucas County has recently added electronic items, from computers to microwave ovens and MP3 players, to what it collects at its North Toledo facility. And recycling officials at the county and city want to add a second drop-off location. They're also hopeful about a longer-term plan, that would develop a "super drop off," a one-stop shop where people could take lots of stuff.

The Wood County Solid Waste District pulverizes recycled glass, which has very little resale value, and mixes it with ground asphalt to grade its haul road and dumping area.

And tennis-style shoes are collected and stored until they number 10,000 pairs at the Ottawa-Sandusky-Seneca Joint Solid Waste District. They'll be picked up by Nike and trucked to the state of Oregon where the shoes will be transformed into a material used for running tracks, said Jim Darr, recycling specialist. The district has collected 5,000 pairs so far.

Contact Tahree Lane at:  
tlane@theblade.com or 419-724-6075.

electronics), Computer Discount (419-475-9888), and Office World (419-873-0900). At Computer Renaissance (419-475-4695), the machines are stripped for usable parts, but unusable parts are not recycled. Lucas County fees for recycling electronics include desktop computer (\$5), monitor (\$3), printer (\$3), peripherals (\$2), floppy disks (\$1).

- Eyeglasses: The Sight Center (419-241-1183), The Pharm Stores (collection boxes are near the pharmacy), Pearle Vision (419-866-5766), and Lenscrafters (419-473-1500).

- Hearing aids and hearing aid batteries: Easter Seals (419-241-2600).

- Medicines: Toledo Area Humane Society (419-891-0705) accepts diabetic supplies, insulin, antibiotics, unopened bags of IV fluids, exam gloves, clean towels and blankets, bleach, detergent, and more ([www.toledoareahumanesociety.org](http://www.toledoareahumanesociety.org)). Open daily, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 1920 Indian Wood Circle, Maumee.

- Plastic grocery bags: Barrels in the entrance of Kroger stores.

- Rechargeable batteries, cell phones, and ink-jet cartridges are recycled at many stores, including Office Max, Office Depot, and Best Buy. Some stores give a ream of paper or coupon in exchange for a cartridge. Home Depot and Lowes stores accept rechargeable batteries.

- Styrofoam packing peanuts and sometimes square blocks can be recycled at most packing/shipping stores. Info: 1-800-828-2214.

- Thermometers, household thermostats, barometers, and blood pressure units often contain mercury, which has highly toxic vapors. Mercury also is sometimes found in home workshops. They're accepted at the LCSWMD facility, or by calling Toledo's division of environmental services, 419-936-3015. In Wood County, call Dave Heinlen, safety and health coordinator at Bowling Green State University, 419-372-2173, or check [www.bgsu.edu/offices/envhs/mercury.htm](http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/envhs/mercury.htm). Since 1998, the BGSU program has recycled almost seven tons of mercury.

- Wire hangers are reused by many dry cleaners, and some, such as Adams Cleaners, reuse plastic cleaner bags.

- Yard waste won't compost if dumped in a landfill due to a lack of oxygen. Take it to Clean Wood Recycling, 6506 West Bancroft St. or another site in the Keep Toledo/Lucas County Beautiful brochure, or compost it in your own backyard.