

## Recycling Benefits

### WHY RECYCLING MATTERS!

#### RECYCLING...

Prevents pollution  
Reduces greenhouse energy  
Prolongs the lifespan of landfills  
Conserves natural resources and energy  
Creates jobs and increases economic development  
Creates cost savings for everyone  
Provides a sense of community  
A win-win for everyone

### RECYCLING FACTS ARE HARD TO IGNORE!

*(Based on 2012 Municipal Solid Waste Report)*

- In 2012 Americans generated 250,890,000 tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW).
- Americans discarded 164,270,000 tons of MSW and recovered (for recycling, reuse) 86,620,000 tons of MSW.
- In 2012 Americans only recycled 34.5% of their MSW.
- Virgin materials use more energy and incur extra extraction and transportation costs than recycled materials.
- Additional energy savings from recycling occurs since the materials have already undergone the manufacturing process.
- Recycling also helps America reduce its reliance on oil.

#### PLASTIC

- Nearly 92% of the plastics generated in 2012 ended up in our landfills.
- Plastic made up 12.7% of the total MSW generated in our country, but made up 17.6% of the total MSW discarded into our landfills.
- Plastic consumes landfill space quicker than other waste items.
- Plastic is virtually non-biodegradable....what goes into our landfills stays in our landfills.
- Plastic is one of the most harmful materials to our environment, yet the least recycled.

**Recycling one ton of plastics saves:**

- 500 gallons of gasoline
- 76 Million BTU's of energy
- 7.4 cubic yards of landfill space
- 70% less energy is consumed when using recycled plastic plastics than virgin materials.

## **FIBER (Cardboard/Paper)**

- Nearly 35% of the fiber generated in 2012 ended up in our landfills.
- Fiber made up 27.4% of the total MSW generated in our country, but made up only 12.7% of the total MSW discarded into our landfills.
- Fiber is one of the most recyclable and recycled waste commodities.
- Fiber in time will biodegrade...making it more environmentally friendly.
- Fiber is one of the least harmful materials to our environment, yet the most recycled.

## **PAPER**

- Americans use 85,000,000 tons of paper a year, about 680 pounds per person.
- The average American uses seven trees a year in products, which amounts to 2,000,000,000 trees per year.
- Approximately 1 billion trees worth of paper are thrown away every year in the U.S.
- Every day American businesses generate enough paper to circle the earth 20 times.
- To produce each week's Sunday newspaper, 500,000 trees must be cut down.
- If all newspaper were recycled, we could save about 250,000,000 trees each year.

### **Recycling one ton of paper saves:**

- 17 trees
- 275 pounds of sulfur
- 350 pounds of limestone
- 7,000 gallons of water
- 380-463 gallons of oil
- 3.3 cubic yards of landfill space
- 4,000 Kilowatts of energy
- 40-64% less energy is used
- 58% less water is used
- 60 pounds less air pollution is created

### **Recycling one ton of cardboard saves:**

- 390 KWH of energy
- 1.1 barrels (46 gallons) of oil
- 6.6 million BTU's of energy
- 9 cubic yards of landfill space

**METALS**  
**(steel, aluminum, other non-ferrous)**

- Nearly 15% of the metals generated in 2012 ended up in our landfills.
- Metals made up 8.9% of the total MSW generated in our country, and made up 9% of the total MSW discarded into our landfills.
- Metal is one of the most attractive materials to recycle because it can usually generate income for the recycler. Fiber is one of the most recyclable and recycled waste commodities.
- Metals slow if not impossible to biodegrade.
- Metals stay in landfills for decades and take up valuable landfill space.

**Recycling one ton of metals saves:**

- 2500# of iron ore**
- 1400# of coal**
- 120# of limestone**
- 75% less energy is used to make recycled iron.**