



Summer 2012

HHW Fund Approaching Goal— Your Help Needed to Ensure Success

Michael Brown
EAC Executive Director

You know the story by now. Nearly five years have passed since the last Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection event in McLean County due to state budget cutbacks. This has left our community and many others across the state with few options when it comes to disposal of yard care chemicals, oil based paints, mercury thermometers, and a huge list of other HHW items. Improper disposal, including dumping down the drain, in a ditch, or throwing away in the trash, can all lead to contamination of our surface or groundwater supplies.

Seeing this critical need going unmet, late last year the Ecology Action Center created a public/private partnership to provide for the first ever locally funded HHW event, planned for September of this year. The catch? We need to raise \$150,000 to cover the costs of this event.

Support has poured in from across the community; individuals, businesses, churches, and our local municipalities have contributed, knowing how important it is that we provide for safe disposal of these items. Current supporters include:

- McLean County
- Town of Normal
- City of Bloomington

- Midwest Fiber
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington–Normal
- First United Methodist Church of Normal
- Mennonite Church of Normal
- Bloomington–Normal Marriott
- McLean County Woman’s Club

As we near \$100,000 raised, or almost 66% of our goal, we are very optimistic about our success. But we aren’t quite there yet, and we need YOUR help to reach that goal. Perhaps you have already made your tax-deductible

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Caitlin Perry
EAC Intern

Recycling (R)evolution

As of July 9, the Town of Normal’s new curbside recycling program will finally be underway. Residents who have signed up and received their recycling carts can now fill them up with all their recyclables and put the cart out for weekly collection.

Normal town-issued recycling carts have been available for purchase since the end of April, and the delivery of these carts began in June. Prior to this program, Normal residents depended solely on drop-off recycling locations throughout the community.

With the McLean County Landfill in Bloomington beginning to reach its capacity, the threat of having to transport waste further away weighs heavily on officials’ minds. Transporting waste is expensive, in addition to being a significant source of pollution due to gas emissions. Because recycling drastically decreases the amount of waste that is put into landfills, offering convenient ways for residents to recycle is a big step toward decreasing the amount of waste generated by the Bloomington–Normal com-

munity.

Normal’s new recycling program features weekly collection on the day of the resident’s usual waste pickup, and residents do not need to sort the recyclables when they put them into the cart as it is a single stream collection.

Currently, Bloomington residents can use any container to put curbside for recycling pickup as long as it is no larger than 33 gallons and is clearly marked as recycling. With the changes to the recycling program, Bloomington will continue to offer its

Mark your calendars!

July 3 Green Drinks

July 11 Rain Barrel Workshop

July 14 Rain Barrel Workshop

August 7 Green Drinks

September HHW Collection Event

September 4 Green Drinks

September 28–29 We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon

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(R)evolution continued from page 1

bi-weekly recycling collection, but the City will replace these small containers in favor of recycling carts, similar to those of Normal. The City is in the process of accepting bids from different companies for the sale of 95-gallon carts. Once an offer is accepted, Bloomington will switch to automated recycling pickup and residents will have the option of signing up for a free cart.

While this is the first time that Normal has had an official curbside recycling program, Bloomington has offered this service to its residents since 1990. Recycling between the two communities began as a resident-driven, volunteer-based event that was held one weekend in February 1971. The event, which was going to be a one-time occurrence, was set up in five locations throughout the Bloomington–Normal area. With the great success of this event, volunteers formed Operation Recycle, which provided recycling services for Bloomington and Normal residents for many years. When the municipalities eventually took over responsibility for the recycling services, Operation Recycle shifted its focus to environmental education and outreach and became the Ecology Action Center.

The community’s response to the upcoming changes to the

recycling programs has been extremely positive. Residents of Normal who were unable to transport their recyclables to a location in town are now able to recycle in the comfort of their home. Making recycling something that is convenient rather than a hassle will hopefully help the community decrease the amount of waste that is put into landfills.

One of the concerns about the changes in recycling that has been expressed by residents is about the fate of the current drop-off recycling locations. Because both Bloomington and Normal will now offer curbside recycling, the drop-off locations were evaluated to see which were being used most often. Funding will be going toward the curbside programs, causing a decrease in the number of drop-off locations. Eight of these locations will remain open, however, and will continue to serve the public as a place to drop off recyclables in addition to the curbside programs.

Additional information about the upcoming changes in the recycling programs can be found on Bloomington’s Public Works website (www.cityblm.org) and Normal’s Public Works website (www.normal.org).

What can I put in my recycling cart?



You can recycle these curbside:

- Aluminum trays and pie plates (clean)
- Books, newspaper, magazines, paper
- Cardboard egg, juice, and milk cartons
- Cardboard (flattened)
- Glass bottles (empty)
- Metal cans (empty), metal lids
- Plastics #1-5, 7, including lids



You cannot recycle these curbside:

- #6 plastics
- Batteries
- Dishes
- Electronics
- Hazardous chemicals
- Mirrors
- Plastic bags or packaging film
- Soiled paper towels or napkins
- Styrofoam or foam packing peanuts
- Window glass



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contribution to the HHW Fund. If so, we can use your help in spreading the word to others. Please tell your friends, neighbors, and coworkers about the return of HHW collection, but that their financial support is needed to make it happen. Show them how easy it is to make an online donation at www.ecologyactioncenter.org or drop a check in the mail to the EAC.

You, the membership of the Ecology Action Center, are being called to action—you are our ambassadors for this critical cause. Please let us know how we can best empower you to spread the word. Suggested strategies include:

- Forward the EAC's HHW Fund website page (www.ecologyactioncenter.org/events/HHW_fund.shtml) by email to friends and colleagues or share it via your social media channels—Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Put up a HHW Fund poster or HHW Fund postcards at your place of work, church,

or other places you frequent; contact Michael Brown at mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org or (309) 454-3169 for HHW Fund materials.

- Encourage your employer to act as a sponsor of the HHW event; both individuals and businesses are eligible for the tax deduction benefits of making a contribution to the EAC as a 501 (c)(3) organization.
- Spread the word about the We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon; this brand new running event taking place in late September will benefit the EAC's HHW Fund. See more details at www.wecaretwincitiesmarathon.org.

Protecting our community and those downstream from us from contamination of our clean drinking water requires broad community support. Please help us meet the need; this will be **your** HHW event, for **your** community, protecting **your** local environment.

By the numbers

8	locations for drop-off recycling will still be available for public use after July
40	percent of Bloomington–Normal residents have been estimated to recycle (expected to increase)
59.91	dollars Bloomington made per ton of recycled materials in July 2011
184	households registered for the Normal curbside recycling program on the first day
18,294	gallons of household hazardous waste was collected in 2007
80,541	tons recycled in McLean County during 2010
134,325	tons of waste McLean County sent to the landfill in 2010
150,000	dollars needed to hold a 2012 household hazardous waste collection event

We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon to Benefit EAC's HHW Fund

Caitlin Perry
EAC Intern

The EAC has partnered with the We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon to bring the community a new running event that will help support the Household Hazardous Waste Fund. On Friday, September 28 and Saturday, September 29, We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon will be holding a 5K, 10K, and half marathon to raise money to support the Ecology Action Center. All profits will go toward bringing a household hazardous waste collection event to McLean County.

The 5K will be held Friday evening, with the half marathon and 10K starting Saturday morning. All races will begin at the Eastview Christian Church in Normal.

Registration for the races is now open. All runners will receive shirts for participating. Food and smoothie samples from Smoothie King will be provided after each race.

Volunteers are needed for this event to help set up, encourage runners, and tear down the events. Registered runners who volunteer to help with an additional race will be given a discount on their registration fee.

More information will be provided and can be found at www.wecaretwincitiesmarathon.org or on the We Care Twin Cities Half Marathon's Facebook page.





Watering Your Landscape with Minimal Water Waste

Caitlin Perry
EAC Intern

Summer is a time for blue skies, puffy white clouds, gardens of multicolored flowers, and yards of lush green grass. Summer is also a time where gardens and plants can suffer due to a lack of rainfall. In the summer months, the Bloomington–Normal area averages four inches of rain per month. Less rainfall can lead to a decrease in plant vegetation, leaving residents with dry, brown lawns.

Oftentimes, some towns will put a water restriction into effect during a drought, enforcing residents to only water their landscape once a week, every other day, or not at all depending on the seriousness of the drought. Even if there is no water restriction put into effect, it is important that you try to minimize your water waste at all times.

Minimizing water waste does not mean you have to sacrifice the beauty of your lawn or garden. There are actually many ways in which you can keep your yard looking vibrant while also being kind to the environment.

Rain barrels are one way to conserve and utilize rainfall throughout the year. The barrels, which collect excess water runoff from gutters and roofs, are an environmentally-friendly alternative to watering your yard with treated city water. Rain water is free and plants grow better with the natural, untreated water rather than chlorinated water that comes from our hoses and wells. In a time when water is scarce, utilizing collected rainfall is a better alternative than wasting good drinking water on your lawn. (Rain barrels are available for purchase at the Ecology Action Center: \$70 for members, \$80 for non-members.)

Some of us tend to set out a sprinkler, turn it on, and forget about it. This can lead to the overwatering of plants and grass and a waste of water that can collect on sidewalks and streets. If you choose to use a sprinkler to keep your yard watered, make sure there are no leaks in the hose or device you are using. Leaks are a significant waste of water, which oftentimes sends water into an area that does not need it. To conserve water, it is best not to set up an automatic sprinkler system since the system cannot judge when and where water is needed—personal judgment is best. Before you leave your sprinklers unattended, make sure they are not hitting any sidewalks, streets, or other areas that do not need water, and turn the sprinkler onto a low volume setting.

Grass and plants have a difficult time absorbing large quantities of water suddenly and can begin to flood instead of absorb water.

If you water your lawn or garden with a hose rather than a sprinkler, again check to make sure there are no leaks. Watering early in the morning, especially on very hot days, is key since heat and wind both cause a lot of water to evaporate before it reaches the ground and is absorbed by the plants.

If you choose not to water your yard during the summer, there are landscaping options that can still provide you with an attractive yard without the water waste. Mulch can be used around trees and plants as a way to trap moisture into the soil. Opting for plants that are low maintenance and require minimal water, instead of thirsty plants that require regular watering, will also cut down on your water waste. Look for plants that thrive in mulch or even beds of stones.

Keep in mind that a healthy landscape is an environmentally-friendly landscape. Avoid using pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and other chemicals that damage both the environment and your health. These chemicals have been linked to cancer, damages to the nervous system, and birth defects. Any chemicals that are used in your yard can contaminate water when they wash away into storm drains and can also kill beneficial microorganisms in the soil.

If you already have an ecologically-sustainable landscape that is free of harmful chemicals, conserves natural resources, and does not pollute the air, soil, or water, consider joining the Ecology Action Center's Yard Smart program. Yard Smart yards work with, not against, nature, avoid pesticides and high-nitrogen fertilizers, and support native diversity in plants and wildlife. By taking the Yard Smart pledge and making a small donation, you can receive a sign to let everyone know your yard is safe for all living things. For more information about how you can make your yard one that is Yard Smart, visit our website.

Odd weather so far this year has our community headed toward drought conditions. Do your part to conserve precious drinking water by using rainwater for your lawn and garden needs as much as possible. The EAC is here to help show you how.



Make Your Own Rain Barrel!

July 11 at 5:30 p.m. • July 14 at 10 a.m.

The Ecology Action Center is holding rain barrel workshops where you can make your own water-saving rainwater collection and storage container. Commercially available rain barrels can range in price from \$75–\$200, but the EAC is offering this workshop at a cost of \$28 for members and \$38 for non-members. All supplies and tools needed will be provided. Register online at www.ecologyactioncenter.org or by calling us at (309) 454-3169.



Mitsubishi “i” Electric Cars Arrive in Bloomington–Normal

Carl Roberts
EAC Volunteer

After months of anticipation, Carol Reitan recently received an exciting phone call. The all-electric Mitsubishi i automobile she had preordered had arrived at O’Brien Mitsubishi in Normal. Carol, the former mayor of Normal, was one of the first people in McLean County to drive her very own i.

“Earl and I bought this electric car to be a good example to others,” Carol said. “Everyone who sees it is interested and wants to talk about it. The i provides a perfect conversation starter for discussing the importance of living an environmentally friendly lifestyle.”

Carol and her husband, Earl, have been committed to protecting the environment for many years. It was Carol, in fact, who was instrumental in the expansion of Operation Recycle (now named the Ecology Action Center) to full time.

“In 1983, when I was the executive director of Community Action, we obtained a



Carol Reitan is one of the first to take delivery of a 100% electric i.

state grant that Operation Recycle used to employ low-income people in recycling,” Carol said. “Also, we offered Operation Recycle the use of some available warehouse space.”

Driving an electric car is a natural step for Carol and Earl. “In 1980, I designed a passive-solar house,” Carol said, “and we lived in that house for 31 years.” Carol explained that a passive-solar structure stays warm in the winter and cool in the summer because “it is super insulated, it is designed with windows in areas that do not receive winter winds and

summer sunshine, and the landscaping blocks out the weather.”

“Besides its great gas mileage, the i drives as well as a gasoline-powered car,” Carol said. “It’s smooth and comfortable and has a lot of power . . . and it’s really fun to drive!” The i can be driven for 85 miles or more before it needs to be charged. “It’s a perfect car for driving in the city,” Carol said. “Because the distance the car can go between charges is not too far, it is best for a two-car family. Or someone with only an i can rent a long-distance car for

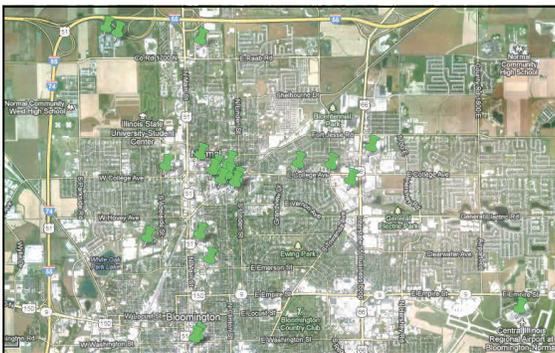
occasional trips.”

The published mileage for the i is the equivalent (since it is all-electric) of 112 miles per gallon. This is more than the published mileage of the Toyota Prius, Chevrolet Volt, or other hybrid car. Since the i is all-electric, there is no gasoline engine.

“Driving a car with no motor sound takes a little getting used to,” Carol said. “Because you don’t hear any sound, it is easy to get going faster than you realize. And you have to be careful because other people don’t hear you coming.” As a precaution, Carol asked the dealer to install a backup beeping sound and a rearview camera.

Charging the i requires the installation of a dedicated power line, meaning that the line cannot be used for anything other than car charging. A full battery recharge takes seven hours at 220 volts (the highest power used by an electric clothes dryer) or 22 hours at 110 volts (the power of a typical household electric line).

Find a Charging Station for Your Electric Vehicle with the EAC’s New Interactive Map!



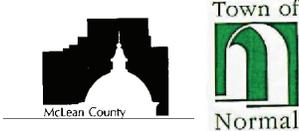
An interactive map of electric vehicle charging stations is now online at the Ecology Action Center’s website. Use the map to find a charging station near you in the Bloomington–Normal area.

Find the map online at www.ecologyactioncenter.org/sustainable-living/EV-charging-stations.shtml



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