



Winter 2012

## BN Community Diverts 161,640 pounds of HHW from Local Landfills!

**Michael Brown**  
*EAC Executive Director*

Over one year ago I asked each of you as part of the greater Bloomington-Normal community for your help on a special project. I knew that it would be challenging, but I had great confidence that you would all come through and help make it happen. And come through you did.

The call to action to donate to the McLean County Household Hazardous Waste Fund was heard loud and clear and the community responded in kind. Over \$143,000 was raised through donations from over 2,000

households and individuals, sponsorships and contributions from 19 businesses, 11 municipalities, and 4 churches, and fundraising events. With this funding, the EAC was able to hire a licensed contractor who safely disposed of 161, 640 pounds of hazardous materials.

Approximately 80 volunteers worked 350 hours to facilitate the flow of 2000 cars carrying the wastes of more than 3000 households through the event. It was only with broad community support, including the many volunteers, that the event was such a success.

The real results of this event include not just the 81 tons of

HHW that was diverted from the landfill and prevented from contaminating our drinking water supplies. But in addition, as the best-promoted HHW event our community has ever seen due to our multiple media sponsors, this event created an unprecedented level of awareness. This awareness means that more local residents now know of the need to dispose of these items in a proper fashion, rather than dumping them in the trash or down the drain.

The other part of increased awareness is the indisputable need for this service on a more frequent basis as evidenced by cars backed up down Market Street for most of the day on September 29.

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## Greening the Holidays

**Kelley Jazdzewski**  
*EAC Intern*

### Greener Gifts

With the holidays coming up, make sure the gift you give is a practical one that your family, friends, or co-workers will enjoy. Too often people give gifts that stay in the packaging and never get used.

Here are some great environmentally friendly gift ideas:

- If you consider yourself a creative person, make your own gifts. DIY gifts are a great way to show people how much you

care. They cost less money than traditional gifts, plus you can use recyclable materials like old magazines and photos.

- Donate to a charity or organization in their name or become a member. Choose a cause that addresses an issue that you and your friends and family members care about and support.
- Buy gift wrap bags from the EAC, which is a better option than wrapping your gifts in

wrapping paper. Each bag comes with its own unique code that can be entered in online so you can see where your bag has traveled.

- Instead of spending money on commercial goods, give the gift of your time and talent to loved ones. Offer to make them dinner, help with home repairs, walk their dog, or just spend some time together.
- Why not buy a gift that both the earth and your friend or family member

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Mark your calendars

**December 24, 25, 31 & January 1** EAC Closed

**January 8** Green Drinks

**January TBA** Vermicomposting Workshop

**February 5** Green Drinks

**April 13** Illinois Sustainability and Wellness Expo

**April TBA** Rain Barrel Workshops



### Greening the Holidays continued from page 1

- can enjoy. Buy a rain barrel from the EAC. Your friend or family member will save money when the weather is warmer by collecting their own rain water.
- Donate your time or money volunteering with friends to a local charity or environmental group. There are countless ways to help improve your community.
- If you're giving toys to children, make sure that they are made without toxic PVC (polyvinyl chloride), which can be found in everyday plastics. Vinyl chloride is a known human carcinogen and it is the chemical used to make PVC. Other additives such as cadmium and lead are sometimes added to PVC and can be very dangerous (Greenamerica.org).
- Make your own cards, which will save you money and you can express how you truly feel. There are also electronic cards that you can send online without having to use any paper. Holiday cards require the harvesting of nearly 300,000 trees, and that's not including all of the wrapping paper and packaging for gifts that gets thrown out too (Eartheasy.com).
- Finally, shop local to support your community. This reduces any energy that would be otherwise wasted if you went to a large retail store or ordered a gift online.

### Energy Savings

- Use LED (light-emitting diode) or solar-powered lights. They look brighter and can save you \$30 or more on your winter electric bill.
- Make your own decorations by using household items like wine corks, or use potpourri blends to spice up centerpieces. Take a walk and look for flowers, pinecones and other seasonal foliage to turn your holiday green (Organic Authority).
- Put your lights and decorations on a timer or turn them off when you are not home. This will save a lot of energy from being wasted.

### Trees

- An artificial tree might be considered green since you reuse it every year, but many artificial trees contain PVC and use up resources to both manufacture and ship. Also, research shows that artificial trees are discarded after repeated uses, which make them less attractive; these discarded trees are sent to the landfill where their plastic content makes them last forever.
- Instead of using an artificial tree, use a living tree. These potted Christmas trees are usually smaller than cut trees and should only be kept in the house for about a week, so they don't start sprouting new growth. You can keep the tree outside, haul it in to enjoy it at Christmas time for several years, and then eventually plant it in the yard or give it away. These can also make great gifts for your loved ones.
- If you do choose a full-grown tree, try to find a tree that is pesticide-free. Also, recycle your tree because each year 10 million Christmas trees end up in the landfill (Sierra Club). The Normal and Bloomington have curbside recycling for your trees after Christmas.

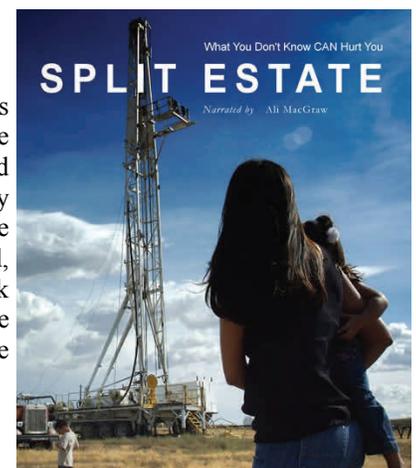
### Waste Reduction

- Many gifts come with excessive plastic and paper packaging. Make sure to recycle these items properly when or better yet look for items with the least amount of packaging to reduce your waste during the holiday season.
- Wrap presents with newspaper, a scarf, or bags you already have. If every family wrapped just three gifts this way, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields (Sierra Club).  
\*Note: Wrapping paper can be recycled (unless it contains plastic or metallic substances) but our aim is to REDUCE and REUSE as much as we can.
- If you do not have curbside recycling there are drop-off locations throughout Normal (check our website for more information).

## Educate yourself on Fracking: *Split Estate*

Last month there was a public meeting on fracking in McLean County held by the Illinois People's Action. If you missed this meeting, the documentary that was viewed as part of the meeting is available at the EAC's DVD library. *Split Estate*, a "compelling Emmy Award winning documentary shows the dirty side of hydraulic fracturing and natural gas, an energy source the industry touts as a clean alternative to fossil fuels" ([www.splitestate.com](http://www.splitestate.com)). The practice of fracking injects thousands or even millions of gallons of a mixture of water, sand, and highly toxic carcinogenic chemicals into the ground at high pressures to fracture the rock and force out natural gas. In addition to the chemicals companies use in their formulas, methane and other hydrocarbons, salts, heavy metals, and radioactive elements are unleashed from the shale, which can have consequences for both the environment and our health.

Come by the EAC to check out *Split Estate*.





### 161,640 pounds continued from page 1

The EAC is on the job, refocusing our efforts to the new priority in finding a solution to providing a more frequent HHW service for our community. We are talking with our partners and brainstorming new ideas; we welcome your input as this is all about protecting water supplies for your community.

Ultimately the solution lies in addressing the core issue head-on, instead of simply focusing on this as a question of waste management. The real problem of course is that collectively, we have become too accustomed to consumer goods and products that are hazardous in nature or contain hazardous components. If we could take a series of short trips back in time -- 25 years, 50 years, 75 years, and 100 years, we all know we would witness an almost exponential decrease in the amount of hazardous materials produced, used, and disposed of by our nation. While many of these materials were critical to building our industries, our modern infrastructure, food

systems, and more, we are now approaching a day of reckoning.

From the workers that produce or handle hazardous materials, to the exposure to our families and pets in our homes and workplaces, to the threat to our water supplies when they are no longer needed, we can no longer hide from the reality that hazardous materials are all around us and pose a threat to our safety and well-being. But we have a choice - we increasingly have the knowledge and technology to create less-harmful alternatives. However, it is up to **each one of us** as consumers to make the proper choices and vote with our dollars for the type of products we want -- organic foods, natural lawn fertilizers, traditional pest deterrents, safe and green cleaners, and less-toxic electronics.

Thank you for your support of the HHW Fund in 2012; let's work together in 2013 to REDUCE HHW!

## 2012 HHW Fund: Sponsors, Commercial Donors, & Event Partners

- McLean County
- City of Bloomington
- Town of Normal
- Allied Waste
- State Farm
- Radio Bloomington
- WGLT
- The Pantagraph
- Midwest Fiber
- Country Financial
- Growmark
- Connoisseur Media
- Home Sweet Home Ministries
- U of I Extension
- McLean County Farm Bureau
- Springfield Electric
- Bloomington-Normal Marriott
- Prairie Oak Veterinary Center
- Africano Studios
- Heartland Bank
- Zimmerman and Armstrong Investment Advisors
- First United Methodist Church of Normal
- Mennonite Church of Normal
- New Covenant Community Church
- Unitarian Universalist Church of B-N
- Village of Towanda
- Village of Carlock
- Village of Cooksville
- Village of Hudson
- Village of Gridley
- Village of Downs
- Village of Heyworth
- City of Lexington
- McLean County Woman's Club
- Kevin Collins Design

## McLean County Freecycle

McLean County Freecycle is an online exchange opportunity for residents of McLean County. It is open to all people who want to find a home for those items that can still be used so that they are kept out of the landfill. Whether it's a chair, fax machine, piano or an old door, feel free to post it. Or maybe you're looking to acquire something yourself. Either way post it and members of the local community will help you out as much as they can. If you would like to join McLean County's Freecycle network, go to [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) and type "McLean County Illinois" in the search box. This service is moderated by the Ecology Action Center with help from volunteers.

This network is brought to you by The Freecycle Network, a grassroots and nonprofit movement whose mission is to "build a worldwide gifting movement that reduces waste, saves precious

resources, and eases the burden on our landfills while enabling our members to benefit from the strength of a larger community" ([freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org)). Sounds a little like the EAC's mission... By giving freely with no strings attached, members of The Freecycle Network help instill a sense of generosity of spirit as they strengthen local community ties and promote environmental sustainability and reuse. People from all walks of life have joined together to turn trash into treasure.





## What's the Deal with Salting our Sidewalks?

**Kelley Jazdzewski**

*EAC Intern*

With winter fast approaching, the temperature is getting colder and snow will soon be falling. A common but dangerous response to ice and snow is to spread chloride salts to prevent icy conditions where pedestrians and vehicles need to walk and drive. While safe surfaces are important, there are some downsides to this strategy too. The problems with salt:

- Excess salts build up in the soil and can become toxic to plants by preventing them from absorbing moisture and nutrients.
- Salts eventually make their way into our water supplies via storm water runoff.
- Salty runoff can poison fish, aquatic organisms, and kill sensitive vegetation.
- Over time salt can damage concrete and metals, including cars.
- Salt can attract animals and burn our pets if it lodges in their paws.

Salt is effective in melting snow, but there are more efficient, environmental friendly ways! Remember, everything you put on the ground eventually runs off into the street, down the drain, and into lakes and streams.

- Scatter sand or birdseed for traction, but not too much. The grains won't melt snow or ice, but they will give you more grip on icy surfaces. \* Note: Do not use kitty litter or wood

ashes.

- Minimize snow and ice by shoveling—the sooner the better. Or pay a neighborhood kids a few dollars to shovel if you can't.
- If you prefer to use a snow blower, use an electric model.
- Use sugar beets deicers, which are 100% organic formulas that are just as good as salt but they are much less corrosive. Plus sugar beets are a renewable resource. The city of Chicago has been experimenting with a mixture of salt and sugar beet extract. The mixture works better than pure salt at cold temperatures—regular salt works best above 25 degrees, while adding beet juice extends the range down to minus 25 degrees (The Daily Green).
- If you want to invest and spend money, lay down electric wires to heat the driveway from below and radiate heat upwards. You do have to pay for electricity, but it may be better than using chemicals that pollute the water and endanger plants and pets
- If you do use salt, choose carefully. Sodium chloride may contain cyanide, while calcium chloride's run-off increases algae growth, which clogs waterways. Potassium chloride is another salt to avoid.

For more information check out [www.thedailygreen.com](http://www.thedailygreen.com) and [www.ehow.com](http://www.ehow.com).

## Thank you for your support!

2012 was a big year for the EAC and **you** were a critical part of making that happen. We embarked on one of our biggest challenges ever, to raise the necessary money for a locally-funded Household Hazardous Waste Collection. While we worked hard to raise awareness, it was all of you that made it happen, through your donations, your volunteer time, or through your participation in the event itself, which saw an unprecedented turnout.

Without your support this important community service would not have happened this year; in fact, it may not have happened at all. Looking forward to 2013 and beyond, the Ecology Action Center intends to continue to raise the bar in meeting the needs of our community. If you see specific environmental needs that are going unmet in our community, please bring them to my attention at [mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org](mailto:mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org) or by calling me at (309) 454-3169.

But to continue to grow our organization, we need your help to make this happen. While the EAC is dedicated to providing services in a cost-effective manner, adding to what our small and dedicated staff already does requires additional resources. Our funding traditionally comes from a variety of sources -- membership dues and donations, commercial sponsorships, grants from public and private sources, and contracts for specific services with local government agencies. While all of these sources may be strained when times are tough, we are grateful for any and all donations at any time. As a 501c(3) nonprofit organization, contributions to the Ecology Action Center are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law. As we approach the end of 2012, please consider making an additional contribution as you are able which will help support EAC's growing environmental education and outreach efforts.

Thank you for your support, past, present, and future,

Michael Brown, Executive Director



## E-Waste Recycling

During the holiday season friends and family come together to celebrate, buy presents for one another, and decorate their houses. Unfortunately a lot of waste is generated during this time of year. With this comes a strand of lights that no longer work, old electrical cords, and old batteries. Sadly these items often get put in the garbage—not only is this a huge problem, but it is also now illegal to landfill most consumer electronics in Illinois. The good news is that there are several places around town where you can recycle your electronics properly.

Below find only a partial listing, many more options exist and are listed at our website. Some locations may charge a fee for recycling of electronics (all of those listed below are completely free) but are required by state law to give you something of equal value in return, such as a coupon. Please note that all of these locations listed below only accept residential electronic and battery wastes as these are programs subsidized for residential waste only. Businesses often must pay for these services; please contact Michael Brown at [mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org](mailto:mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org) for more information.

### **ELECTRONICS RECYCLING**

Normal Public Works Garage

1301 Warriner Street, Normal

Monday-Friday 7am-2pm

First Saturday of each month 8am-12pm

Accepts: Computers, monitors, TVs, phones, radios, VCRs, microwaves, cameras, CDs, DVDs, floppy disks, and small electronics in working or non-working condition

Home Sweet Home Warehouse

1704 W. Washington Street, Bloomington

Monday-Saturday 9am-8pm

24-hour drop-off shed in parking lot

Accepts the same items as Normal Public Works Garage

Habitat for Humanity Restore

1402 W. Washington Street, Bloomington

Tuesday-Friday 10am-5pm

Saturday 9am-4pm

Accepts the same items as Normal Public Works Garage

### **HOUSEHOLD BATTERY RECYCLING**

Batteries Plus

(309)663-2200

2109 Veterans Parkway, Bloomington

Monday-Friday 8am-8pm

Saturday 9am-6pm

Interstate Batteries Center

(309)663-5911

1115 E. Lafayette Street, Bloomington

Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:30pm

Saturday 8:30am-2pm

Check out our website for other places to dispose of electronics and other items properly.

## Recycle that Energy Hog and get paid \$50!

In most homes the refrigerator is the second-largest user of electricity (13.7%), right after the air conditioner (16%) (Department of Energy). For every residential fridge or freezer you recycle through ActOnEnergy you will receive \$50 and the Ecology Action Center will receive a referral bonus. If you schedule a free pick up on or before December 31, 2012, the program will give the EAC a double bonus--\$20 per unit! When you call to schedule your free pickup all you have to do is give the Group ID number: RR11-949 to your customer service representative. It's that easy!

Are you eligible? Ameren Illinois must deliver your residential electricity (your electricity supplier can be a different company) and the refrigerator or freezer must be full size (10-27 cubic ft.) and in working (cooling) condition. Also, the unit can be any age.

Call (866) 899-9088 to schedule your free pickup and help us raise funds this holiday season. Thank you!





Ecology Action Center  
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www.ecologyactioncenter.org  
309-454-3169



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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