

ecology action center news



Volume 11, Issue 4

Winter 2013

Green Resolutions for 2014

By *Kris Hall, Assistant Director*

Happy New Year! At this time of year, many people think about making resolutions. It's good to set goals and try to improve our health and change habits. But there's nothing magical about doing this only at one time of year. I visit nearly all of the fourth grade classes in McLean County throughout the year to discuss solid waste issues. At the end of each class, I challenge the students to talk to their families about what SPECIFIC things they can do to reduce the amount of trash they send to the landfill.

Here are some of their ideas:

- “We will try to buy eggs only in cardboard cartons and not Styrofoam.” (Cardboard cartons are made from recycled material and they are recyclable themselves. Styrofoam is neither.)
- “We will buy rechargeable batteries instead of the ones you have to throw away.” (Of course, we don't throw away batteries – all types are recyclable at Batteries Plus and Interstate Batteries.)
- “We will try not to waste food.” (The discussions with the 4th graders about all the resources involved in bringing a simple pizza to their table makes them realize very quickly how absurd it is to throw away ANY of that food.)
- “We will stop using disposable stuff for eating – Styrofoam plates, plastic forks, paper cups – and we will help wash the real dishes we use.” (I hope they really have helped with the dishes!)
- “We will be sure NOT to throw any electronics away – we will recycle instead.” (It has been against the law in Illinois to dispose of electronics in landfills for two years. Check our website for details.)
- “I will carry my Gatorade bottle home from basketball so I can recycle it.” (Sometimes there's not a recycling opportunity where we generate the material!)
- “We will buy less stuff.” (The concept of REDUCE is tricky for the 4th graders, but occasionally, I'll have a student who really gets it: if you buy less stuff in the first place, it doesn't matter if that unbought item was reusable or recyclable – it's not yours to deal with!)

The students can see that if we ALL commit to do SOME things, the net result would be far less waste in our landfills. Why does that matter? Because when the McLean County landfill is full and closes in the coming decade, our trash will have to go on a road trip to Clinton or Pontiac. That will mean more trucks, more drivers, more fuel, more pollution. We ALL need to do ALL we can to reduce the amount trash NOW to extend the life expectancy of our landfill. With over 7 billion people on our planet now, it simply doesn't make sense to use our limited land to store more and more trash. So what steps has YOUR family already taken? What new resolutions can you make? Please email your suggestions to me, and I will share the best ones in our next electronic newsletter. You can reach me at khall@ecologyactioncenter.org. Thanks!

Mark Your Calendar

January 7 Green Drinks: Presentation by Green Top Grocery

February 4 Green Drinks: Presentation by Bike BloNo

March 4 Green Drinks: Presentation by Evergreen Home Energy Consultants

April 12 Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo

In This Issue

- Green Resolutions
- Green Holiday Guide
- Gifts that Give Back



WANTED

Energy Hogs Posing as
Refrigerators and Freezers



Holiday/Winter Green Home Guide

Waste Reduction

1. Purchase gifts with minimal or at least recyclable packaging.
2. Use recycled content gift wrap, a reusable gift bag, or even the funnies pages of the newspaper to wrap gifts.
3. Recycle everything possible.
 - Most wrapping paper (non plastic, non metallic) can be recycled. Cardboard and paper board--recyclable.
 - Plastic bags--recyclable with grocery store bags at the grocery store.
 - Styrofoam--only recyclable through mail back programs Avoid it.
 - Old computers, electronics, and TVs--recyclable through e-waste drop-offs around Bloomington-Normal. See the full list at ecologyactioncenter.org.
 - Holiday lights, cords, and cables--full of copper and recycable at Behr Metals (formerly Morris-Tick) or at a e-waste drop-off.
 - Old clothes, sheets and towels (in usable or worn condition) that have been replaced by new gifts can be recycled at Home Sweet Home Ministries Warehouse on West Washington. Or take advantage of the new HSHRenew program, with clothing drop-off boxes located around the community. High quality items should be taken directly to the Mission Mart store at 303 E. Oakland in Bloomington for resale.
 - Christmas Trees will be collected curbside for Bloomington and Normal residents after the holiday for chipping into mulch. Residents living outside these municipalities can take your tree to Twin City Wood Recycling at 1606 W Oakland Avenue in Bloomington to be properly mulched for a nominal fee.

Local Food

1. Shop at the Winter Farmer's Market at the McLean County Museum of History, 200 N. Main Street, in Downtown Bloomington from 10 am - 12 pm on each third Saturday of the month through April. Live entertainment, local goods and free access to the Museum!
2. Take advantage of restaurants that focus on locally grown foods like Station 220 in Bloomington or the Harvest Café in Delavan or shop at the source by visiting places like the Ropp Dairy Farm on Ropp Road in Normal.

Energy Conservation and Efficiency

1. If you are in the need for new lighting, check out the current selection of CFLs. The technology continues to evolve so CFL are now available for dimmers, 3-way lamps, outdoor usage, and more. Better yet, check out the new LEDs, which can save as much as 90% of the energy used by a conventional incandescent bulb! While they are more expensive than CFLs, they are quickly coming down in price--you can now find a 60 Watt equivalent LED bulb for \$10 or less. With a lifespan of 20 years or more, you can save significant energy and significant money for years to come.
2. Install a water heater blanket--cheap, easy to do, and it will quickly pay for itself.
3. Weatherize your windows. If you have older windows, chances are they can be drafty or at least let out more of your warm air (\$\$\$) than you would like. A simple window weatherization kit found at any hardware store can quickly make your windows more airtight and save you money. If you take your time and install them well, you can leave them on year-round, and they will help save you money during the summer too!

Water Protection and Conservation

1. Minimize usage of salt on your sidewalk and driveway as it contributes to stormwater runoff pollution. Save it for when you really need it. Shovel promptly before compacting snow on your driveway or sidewalk to prevent the need for it. Sand may also be used as an alternative to provide traction on the snow or ice, but it should also be used conservatively as it will also contribute to stormwater runoff pollution.
2. There's snow on the ground but **we are still in a drought!** Please conserve water wherever possible to reduce your impact on the availability of drinking water later on in the year when we really need it. And while this issue is generally thought to be in reference to Bloomington and Hudson residents who are dependent upon the surface waters of Lake Bloomington and Evergreen Lake, a drought also impacts those of us in Normal and other local communities using groundwater supplies. In the same way that reduced precipitation

results in a lower level of water in our surface reservoirs, it also reduces the recharge rate of the Mahomet Aquifer.

- Check all faucets, pipes, and toilets periodically for leaks. A faucet drip or invisible leak in the toilet will add up to 15 gallons of water a day, or 105 gallons a week, which adds up to 5,475 gallons of wasted water a year. Check your flapper periodically to make sure it's a tight fit.
- Install water-saving shower heads. Low-flow shower heads deliver 2.5 gallons of water per minute or less and are relatively inexpensive. Older shower heads use 5 to 7 gallons per minute.
- Take shorter showers. Simply taking shorter showers will save gallons of water.
- Install a 1.6 gallon low-flow toilet or better yet, a dual-flush toilet. Ultra low-flow toilets use only 1.6 gallons of water per flush; a dual-flush can use even less on the lower-flush setting. Using these could cut indoor water use by as much as 20%. Older toilets use 3.5 to 7 gallons per flush.
- Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket. Using a wastebasket instead of the toilet for tissues and other bits of trash will save gallons of water that are otherwise wasted.
- Install high efficiency, low-flow faucet aerators. Older faucets use between 3 and 7 gallons per minute. Low-flow faucet aerators use no more than 1.5 gallons of water per minute. The aerators can be attached to most existing faucets.
- Fix leaky faucets immediately. A leaky faucet may simply need a new washer. Small faucet leaks can waste 20 gallons of water a day. Large leaks can waste hundreds of gallons.
- Turn off the water while shaving, brushing teeth, etc. Don't let the water run when you brush your teeth, wash your face or hands, or shave. This can save 3 to 7 gallons per minute.
- Fill your dishwasher. Your dishwasher uses the same amount of water whether it's full or just partially full of dishes, so be sure to fill it. Many dishwashers have a water saver cycle to save even more water.

Bonus Programs

- Recycle your old fridge and get money back! We are a registered nonprofit participant of the ActOnEnergy® Recycling Referral Bonus Program. This means that you can get \$50 for yourself and donate \$20 to the Ecology Action Center simply by making a phone call!
- Open to residential customers who receive their electricity from Ameren Illinois. Fridge or freezer must be full-size and still working. Call 1.866.899.9088 to schedule a FREE pickup of your fridge or freezer. Tell your customer service person that you want to donate a \$20 referral bonus to the Ecology Action Center. They will ask for our Group ID Number, which is RR11-0949.
- It's that easy to help us raise funds! You'll receive a \$50 Reward within six weeks from the date your appliance is picked up. It's good to know that 95% of your old appliance will be recycled, with much of the aluminum, plastic, foam and metal going to create new products, while the harmful chemicals will be safely disposed of.

The gift that gives back

Please consider an additional contribution before the end of 2013 to help support the EAC's important environmental programs. In early 2014 we hope to announce one or more new program areas that your donations help make possible.

Keep in mind that while much of our funding comes from contracts with local government agencies to provide specific services for our community, we believe it is important to go above and beyond the written agreements with these entities to continue to increase our impact in protecting our local environment. But it is only with the help of generous contributors such as yourself that we are able to do so.

The Ecology Action Center is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; as such donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law. Please make your year-end contribution online at www.ecologyactioncenter.org or by mail to Ecology Action Center, 202 W College Avenue, Normal, IL 61761.

Radon Reminder

Give the Gift of Health. Protect loved ones by reducing radon in your home this holiday season.

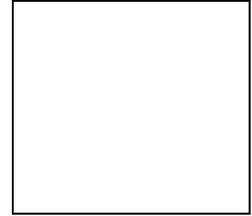
If you have an elevated radon level in your home, take steps today toward changing this situation. Reduce your family's risk of radon-induced lung cancer. Elevated radon levels can be fixed and can almost always be reduced to below 4 pCi/L. Happy Holidays.

Radon test kits are available at the EAC for \$10.00 each. These 5 to 7 day tests are simple, reliable, easy to use and you will get test results in 10 days after mailing in. Contact Ruth Ann Lipic, Radon Program Coordinator at 309-454-3169 with your questions and concerns.





Ecology Action Center
 202 W. College Ave.
 Normal, IL 61761
www.ecologyactioncenter.org
 309-454-3169



Printed on Recycled, Chlorine-Free Paper, Of Course!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

EAC Staff

EAC Board of Directors 2013–2014

Michael Brown
Executive Director

Kris Hall
Assistant Director

Larissa Armstrong
Program Assistant

Ruth Ann Lipic
Radon Program
Coordinator

Gary Kamplain
Program Assistant

Sarah Hinch
Administrative Assistant

Laurie Fuller
Program Assistant

Caroline McAlonie
EAC Intern

Emma Byall
EAC Intern

Ellen Cornelius
EAC Intern

Carlo Robustelli
President

Kari Sandhaas
Past President

Charlotte Brown
Vice President

Nancy Armstrong
Treasurer

Charles Bristow
Secretary

Wayne Aldrich
Ex-officio Normal

George Kutz
Ex-officio Bloomington

George Gordon
Ex-officio McLean
County

Myra Gordon
Charlotte Brown
Carl Teichman
Laurine Brown
Anand Bhendi
Tim Golliday
Ken Springer
Missy Nergard
Maurcio Sadicoff
Adrienne Ohler



Find, friend, fan, follow, and have fun with us via social media. Find direct links at www.ecologyactioncenter.org