

AMERICA RECYCLES

Did you know America Recycles Day was on November 15? Many mayors in cities throughout the Red River Basin, as well as North Dakota Governor John Hoeven, declared November 15 America Recycles Day.

If you didn't hear about it, don't worry, you are not alone. Recycling is important every day; in America and Canada and every country in the world. As stewards of the environment, we are responsible for preserving and protecting our resources for ourselves and for future generations.

You may think recycling is too much work to even consider making it a part of your daily routine. Actually, recycling is really just common sense, and until the "modern era," it was a common household activity. Because of concern for the environment, recycling is again on the upswing.

The world has changed a lot in the past century. From individually packaged food servings to disposable diapers, more garbage is generated now than ever before. This garbage, the solid waste stream, goes mostly to landfills, where it's compacted and buried. As the waste stream continues to grow, so will the pressures on our landfills, our resources, and our environment.

The more we recycle, the less garbage winds up in our landfills and incineration plants. By reusing aluminum, paper, glass, plastics, and other materials, we can save production and energy costs, and reduce the negative impacts that the extraction and processing of virgin materials has on the environment.

There are three parts to the recycling process, each one essential to making the system work: **collection, manufacturing and buying.**

Collection - Don't Send Recyclables to the Landfill

In this phase, materials are separated from the waste stream and prepared to become raw materials. Different cities and municipalities have different systems for sorting and collecting materials that can be recycled. Most communities now have recycling bins for curbside collection, or recycling stations where the materials can be taken.

Manufacturing - Using Recycled Materials Instead Of Virgin Raw Materials

Recovering the materials is just the first step. There must also be a market for it - companies that want the materials and are able to remanufacture them into consumer products. Sometimes these companies have to invest a significant amount of money in adapting their manufacturing processes to accommodate the use of recycled materials in their products.

Buying - "Close the Loop" By Buying Products With Recycled Content

In order to make recycling economically viable, there must be a market for recycled products. If people buy them, companies will be encouraged to make them, and the whole system works.

America Recycles Day was meant to remind us of the importance of recycling. Every community has its own guidelines for what should and should not be recycled, and how the process should take place. Take a few moments to find out these details. Call your local public works department or recycling organization. That way you can be sure that you're doing your part, and doing it right.

For more information on recycling, go to the website America Recycles 2006 <http://www.americarecyclesday.org/home.html>.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)