



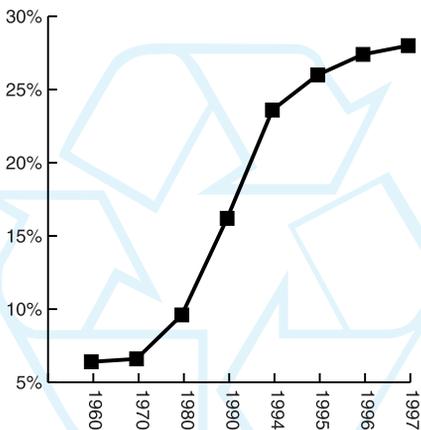
# REUSABLE NEWS



## National Recycling Rate Continues to Rise

**O**ur nation's recycling rate climbed to 28 percent in 1997, according to EPA's new report, *Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste in the United States: 1998 Update*—up from 10 percent in 1980 and 16 percent in 1990. This increase reflects the continued growth of recycling and composting programs across the country. In fact, according to the report, there were nearly 9,000 curbside recycling programs in the United States in 1997, as well as more than 12,000 drop-off centers for recyclables.

### U.S. Recycling Rate Over Time



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## Recycling for Our Future

**B**ack by popular demand, the third annual **America Recycles Day (ARD)** is scheduled for November 15, 1999, with EPA once again serving as a “premier sponsor” of the event. With more than 5,000 local recycling events expected around the country, ARD organizers are gearing up for another big success. This year's theme is “**For Our Children's Future...Buy Recycled Today,**” which emphasizes the importance of buying recycled-content products and recycling in order to conserve resources for future generations.

To date, a total of 45 states—up from 44 states last year—are participating in the event, along with Washington, DC; Puerto Rico; and the U.S. Virgin Islands. “Last year we saw phenomenal growth in participation, with more than 2 million Americans taking part in more than 4,000 local events,” notes Fran McPoland, federal environmental executive and 1999 cochair of the event. “We hope to reach even higher levels of participation in 1999.”

In celebration of the event, organizers are inviting Americans to make a pledge to buy recycled-content products, recycle more, or support a recycling event on November 15th. All pledges will automatically be entered into a drawing for an “American Green Dream House,” a new three-bedroom home valued at more than \$200,000 and built primarily with recycled-content and energy-efficient products.



In addition, families of children who make the ARD pledge will be eligible to win a personal computer, as well as 25 remanufactured computers that will be donated to the school of the winner's choice. Individuals can also win a trip for four to Walt Disney®World including hotel accommodations, airfare, and theme park passes.

Last year's event garnered more than 610 million impressions in the media, including more

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The family of 1997 American Green Dream House winner Sgt. Robert Portillo is given the keys to their new house by Fran McPoland, Federal Environmental Executive, and Bill Heenan, President of the Steel Recycling Institute.

# Waste Reduction Record Setters Show How

Some record setters are busy, rapidly growing cities. Others are small rural towns with populations of less than 10,000. A world apart in many ways, they have one important thing in common: they're taking recycling, reuse, and source reduction to new heights, achieving waste reduction rates ranging from 40 to 65 percent.

In a new report, *Cutting the Waste Stream in Half: Record-Setting Communities Show How* (EPA530-R-99-013), EPA profiles 18 cities and counties with record-setting waste prevention and recycling programs. The report explores each community's program in depth, detailing how the program is structured, what materials are targeted for waste reduction, and how much each program costs to implement and maintain. The report is a result of the 3-year-long Waste Reduction Record Setters Project conducted by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) under a grant from EPA. During the project, ILSR documented the practices of more than 100 communities reporting 50 percent or higher waste reduction levels.

What makes these programs so successful? Although no two communities take the same approach, they tend to include the following elements in their solid waste programs:

- **Targeting a wide range of materials.** All of the record-setting communities target a wide range of materials for recovery, specifically several grades of paper and yard trimmings. Ceramics, textiles, and used oil filters are some of the unconventional materials collected by one community.
- **Composting.** For 10 of the record-setting communities, composting comprises more than half of all residential material diverted from disposal.

- **Establishing participation incentives.** Many of the communities use a pay-as-you-throw program, which provides a direct economic incentive for residents to generate less garbage through source reduction and to increase recycling and composting efforts. State and local mandates also encourage residents to participate in recycling and composting programs.



- **Offering services to multifamily households.** At least four of the record-setting communities serve 100 percent of their households, including multifamily dwellings. Reaching out to this often overlooked population can result in significant increases in waste reduction levels.



- **Maintaining drop-off sites in addition to curbside recycling collection.** Nearly all of the record-setting communities offer drop-off collection in addition to curbside collection of recyclables. Establishing drop-off sites is especially useful in rural areas and for multifamily households.



The record-setting communities use a variety of techniques to promote their programs, including fact sheets and pamphlets, newsletters, recycling guides, utility or tax bill inserts, calendars, hotlines, appearances on local cable shows, and booths at community events. Fundamental to the success of all waste reduction programs are strong education and outreach and securing markets for collected materials.

ILSR is also developing a series of fact sheets on record-setting apartment buildings, food scrap recovery programs, and construction and demolition debris recovery programs. For more information about the project, contact Kelly Lease of ILSR at 202 232-4108 or by e-mail at <recycling@ilsr.org>. To obtain a copy of the report, contact the RCRA Hotline at 800 424-9346. You can also visit ILSR's Web site at <www.ilsr.org/recycling/profiles.html> for short profiles of public and private waste reduction record setters.



## Tips for Success

Below are some waste reduction tips the record-setting communities learned along the way:

- Integrate waste reduction efforts into an existing solid waste management infrastructure rather than treating them as add-ons.
- Pass a local ordinance requiring residents to participate in waste reduction programs.
- Make program participation as convenient as possible.
- Build partnerships with active community members.
- Know how much components of your solid waste program cost.
- Know your recycling markets.
- Investigate dual collection of trash with recyclables, especially when considering replacing an aging trash fleet.
- Consider pilot programs to collect data.
- Target education to new residents.
- Be prepared for resistance to change and anticipate questions.

## National Recycling Rate Continues to Rise

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The amount of waste generated, however, rose in 1997 to 217 million tons, nearly 8 million more tons than in 1996. The amount of municipal solid waste (MSW) generated per person rose as well, from 4.3 pounds per day in 1996 to 4.4 pounds per day in 1997. This rise in waste generation can be attributed to strong economic growth during that time period. Successful source reduction programs—from backyard composting to grasscycling—helped to offset the total amount of garbage generated nationwide.

The report indicates paper and paperboard accounted for nearly half (42 percent) of the total materials recycled—in part, due to increases in the production of newsprint, printing and writing paper, tissue paper, and other paper products. Yard trimmings

were not far behind, accounting for nearly 10 percent of the total. Products with the highest recovery rates included lead acid batteries (93.3 percent), corrugated boxes (67.3 percent), steel in major appliances (64.3 percent), and aluminum beverage cans (59.5 percent).

The report also includes projections of MSW generation and management, forecasting different scenarios for 2000 and 2005. In addition, it includes a detailed discussion of source reduction and reuse, including examples of different waste prevention strategies such as materials substitution and improved product design.

For a free copy of the report (EPA530-R-99-021) and/or the executive summary (EPA530-S-99-021), contact the RCRA Hotline at 800 424-9346.

## Recycling for Our Future

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than 100 television stories in 35 of the top 50 markets. In addition, there were more than 1,200 newspaper articles about ARD, as well as radio coverage. Organizers are hoping to improve upon last year's successful media coverage.

To make a pledge, find more information on how to get involved, or look for local events, visit the ARD Web site at <[www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org)>.



## Buy-Recycled Satellite Forum

**W**hether you are just beginning to buy recycled products or are looking to share your success stories with a national audience, you won't want to miss EPA's upcoming national satellite forum. The event, entitled *Buying Recycled: The Real Story About Cost, Availability, and Quality*, is scheduled for November 9, 1999, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (eastern time). The free, interactive program is designed to provide government agencies, businesses, and other organizations with insights on ways to purchase quality, competitively priced recycled products. The forum, which will feature a panel of nationally recognized experts, is being presented in support of America Recycles Day by EPA's WasteWise program and the Buy Recycled Business Alliance of the National Recycling Coalition. For more information, including sites where the forum can be viewed, visit the WasteWise Web site at <[www.epa.gov/wastewise/wwsf](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise/wwsf)>.

## New and Improved EPA Web Sites

### Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT)

[www.epa.gov/payt](http://www.epa.gov/payt)

On this Web site, you can now view clips from the new PAYT video and obtain a listing of upcoming PAYT events across the country.



### Municipal Solid Waste

[www.epa.gov/msw](http://www.epa.gov/msw)

This new Web site includes information on the various methods to reduce and better manage municipal solid waste such as source reduction and recycling.



### WasteWise

[www.epa.gov/wastewise](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise)

Visit the Web site for WasteWise, EPA's voluntary partnership program for solid waste reduction, to view the latest program results, news, and announcements.



### Environmental Education

[www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/kids.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/kids.htm)

This site features a variety of activities and games for students in kindergarten through grade 6, including a new poster and story book on fun ways to reuse old jelly jars.



### Extended Product Responsibility (EPR)

[www.epa.gov/epr](http://www.epa.gov/epr)

This new site explores the environmental principle of EPR, its benefits to business and the environment, and its growing application worldwide.

### Waste Management in Indian Country

[www.epa.gov/tribalmw](http://www.epa.gov/tribalmw)

In addition to an improved navigational approach, this site now offers the tribal community information on solid waste issues such as construction and demolition debris and hazardous waste management.



# RESOURCES

To obtain a copy of the following publications, contact the RCRA Hotline at 800 424-9346.

## The Rise of Multifamily Recycling

From duplexes to high-rise buildings, multifamily residences can help divert significant quantities of materials from the solid waste stream. *Multifamily Recycling: A Golden Opportunity for Solid Waste Reduction* (EPA530-F-99-010) is a new EPA fact sheet that focuses on the strategies, costs, and diversion rates of successful programs across the country. For more information on multifamily recycling, call Angie Leith of EPA at 703 308-7253.

## Source Reduction Characterization Report

Ever wondered how much waste Americans prevent through source reduction? How about the key factors that contribute to the success of source reduction at the national, state, and local level? All of this information and more is contained in EPA's new *National Source Reduction Characterization Report for Municipal Solid Waste in the United States* (EPA530-R-99-034).

## Accounting Across America

*Full Cost Accounting in Action: Case Studies of Six Solid Waste Agencies* (EPA530-R-98-018) is a valuable new tool for communities establishing or expanding full cost accounting (FCA). In this document, six case studies illustrate the various uses of FCA by municipal solid waste management agencies throughout the United States and focus on the benefits of FCA such as setting fair and equitable user fees and developing competitive bids for solid waste services.

## Get More for Less

Often, collection is the most expensive part of a solid waste management system. *Getting More for Less: Improving Collection Efficiency* (EPA530-R-99-020), a new resource for local communities, explains several important strategies for improving efficiency—which often reduces costs—such as changing collection frequency and

improving routing. The document also includes detailed instructions for adopting each of the strategies, as well as case studies of communities that have reaped the benefits of improved solid waste collection.

## Students Make a Difference

Students from around the country are participating in recycling and waste reduction-related “service-learning” projects—community service or volunteer efforts that emphasize education as well as service. EPA's new booklet, *Service-Learning: Education Beyond the Classroom* (EPA530-K-99-001), profiles more than a dozen of these unique projects, highlighting both school-based and community-based initiatives. The booklet also lists contacts who can help start a project in your local area.



This issue of *Reusable News* is also available on the Internet. Access this and other EPA publications through the World Wide Web at [www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/recycle/reuse.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/recycle/reuse.htm).



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