



# REUSABLE NEWS



## Environment and the Economy— A Winning Combination

**A**s part of the *Jobs Through Recycling Initiative*—EPA's new program to expand markets for recycled materials, stimulate economic development, and create jobs in the recycling industry—California, Minnesota, New York, and North Carolina are establishing Recycling and Reuse Business Assistance Centers (RBACs). Each center will provide a unique mix of technical, business, financing, and marketing assistance to local enterprises using recycled materials.

Recycling Is  
Good for the  
Environment  
and the  
Economy!

In addition to supporting RBACs, the Initiative establishes Recycling Economic Development Advocates (REDAs) in eight states, the District of Columbia, and one Native American tribe (see sidebar on page 7). These advocates will work to strengthen recycling market development within their respective jurisdictions.

Some of the interesting initiatives under way in each RBAC are highlighted in this issue of *Reusable News*. Turn to page 6 for more information.

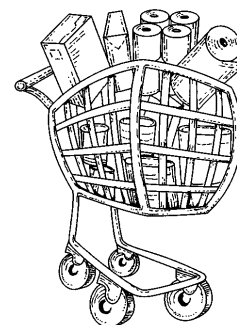
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## Shop 'Til You Drop

Keep America  
Beautiful

## Communities Buy Recycled



**F**rom the Great Plains to the Florida Keys, communities across America are being challenged to “buy recycled”—thanks to the help of Keep America Beautiful (KAB), a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving waste management practices in communities across the country. KAB is empowering its local affiliate organizations—a network of more than 500 community groups across the nation—to spread the buy-recycled message.



With EPA assistance, 15 KAB affiliates are encouraging businesses, government agencies, and individuals in their communities to purchase and use products made from recycled materials. Because of these communities' efforts, markets for local recyclable materials can grow and prosper. Below are four examples of proactive and creative buy-recycled campaigns conceived by local KAB affiliates.



### Buying Recycled Provides Food for Thought

The great thing about buying recycled is that everyone can do it—it can be as easy as a trip to the grocery store! During Earth Week in 1994, the Alliance Clean Community System (ACCS), in Alliance, Nebraska, devised a campaign to teach consumers how to be “green” shoppers. Over 5,000 people learned about buying recycled in one week during ACCS's “Every Day is Earth Day” campaign.

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# Shop 'Til You Drop

## Keep America Beautiful Communities Buy Recycled

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As part of the campaign, ACCS developed tags to be placed on grocery shelves that informed customers which brands of napkins, paper towels, and greeting cards were made with recycled content, and which brands of cake mixes, canned fruits, laundry products, egg cartons, and breakfast cereals came in packaging made from recycled materials.

ACCS also developed posters and flyers promoting the campaign, and ran TV and radio "buy-recycled" public service announcements. Participating supermarkets displayed the posters and stuffed the flyers in shopping bags during the week. Some stores even developed their own store displays to help educate shoppers.

"Customers who shopped at participating stores during the campaign were surprised at how many products contained recycled materials or used recycled packaging," said Norma



As part of a buy-recycled campaign, grocery and retail stores in Alliance, Nebraska, tagged products containing recycled materials.

Kuhlman, director of ACCS. "Many of them made a verbal commitment to buy recycled now that they know how many recycled products are out there. It's not as hard as they thought."

### ☆ Florida Businesses Ride the Buy-Recycled Tide

When you envision Key Largo, Florida, you probably think of palm trees swaying in the breeze, Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, and key lime pie. Residents and businesses of the town of Tavernier, however, concentrate more on recycling.

To encourage and recognize Tavernier businesses that are recycling and buying recycled products, Clean Florida Keys, Inc., created "The Recycling Business of the Week" program. Clean Florida Keys selects one outstanding business each week from a pool of contestants nominated by individuals in the community. The winning business is featured in the local newspaper, and on a local radio and television station. The company also receives a commemorative plaque.

"We've initiated a lot of businesses into the recycling arena," said Executive Director Bill Dalton. "Many of these businesses never recycled or bought recycled products until they saw what other businesses were doing, and then they got inspired."

Since the program's inception in January 1994, winners have included:

- A mortgage corporation that buys recycled notepads, reuses and then recycles used office paper,



Norman, Danny, and Connie Williams of Islamorada Dry Cleaners show off their "Recycling Business of the Week" award for buying recycled garment bags, tissue paper, and hangers.

and donates used office materials to a local daycare center for arts and crafts.

- A law office that purchases recycled file folders, copy paper, and computer paper, when available.
- A lumber company that manufactures plastic lumber from recovered plastic.
- A carpet store that sells rugs made from recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET) soda bottles.

### ☆ Recycled Frisbees Make the Grade

Students at the Texas A & M University learned a new equation during a 1994 Earth Day festival: 3 milk jugs = 1 frisbee. "Cool!" was the students' first reaction to the frisbees created entirely from recycled milk jugs and distributed by KAB affiliate, Brazos Beautiful, at the festival. Brazos Beautiful, located in Bryan/College Station, Texas, brought its traveling display of recyclables and recycled products to show students the benefits of buying recycled.

While the booth features recyclables collected locally and products that can be manufactured from them, none of the products regularly displayed at the booth was

manufactured in Brazos County. Brazos Beautiful decided to manufacture frisbees from milk jugs collected locally. "We liked the idea that the frisbees were not brought in from far away," said Diane Craig, director of Brazos Beautiful. "They came from our refrigerators."

The frisbees were used to attract students to the booth and were flung out as souvenirs. Craig felt that the frisbees and the booth "definitely made students more aware of buying recycled," and as a result she feels the buy-recycled message will stick with them.

Students not only learned about buying recycled from attending the booth, but many got a first-hand glimpse at how recovered materials can be used to manufacture consumer products. In preparation for the event, students collected milk jugs from local recycling programs, and then



One of 3,000 frisbees made from recycled milk jugs for Texas A&M University's 1994 Earth Day festival.

cleaned, ground, and prepared the plastic for manufacturing. The resin was sent to a contractor, where engineering students helped in the manufacturing process. The frisbees contain 96 percent recycled content, all of which is postconsumer.

In all, students helped manufacture some 3,000 frisbees, which used about 9,000 milk jugs that had been collected by the community. More than half of these were given away at the festival, which just goes to show that

the buy- recycled concept is really taking off.

☆  **Buying Recycled Is Kidstuff, Too**

*Recycling is not only essential to our existence on earth, it is helpful to our world.* These are the words of an 8th grader's public service announcement, written as part of a buy-recycled campaign.

Keep the Mahoning Valley Beautiful, a KAB affiliate in Youngstown, Ohio, has campaigned in area schools to help children understand recycling and why buying recycled products is so important. As part of the campaign, Keep the Mahoning Valley Beautiful sponsored a student essay contest. Winning essays were turned into public service announcements. Two hundred and ninety students in grades 7 through 12 participated in the contest, and responded to the following question: *If I were America's representative to an Earth Summit on recycling, what issues would I address?*

The three winning essays, which came from grades 7, 8, and 9, were read on a local television program called "Talk-Back." Each winner received a \$100 U.S. Government Savings Bond.

The campaign also included a waste audit program where 7th grade student audit teams surveyed 14 local businesses to evaluate their recycling and procurement practices and recommend additional measures. "People listen to kids," said Marie Viglio, a teacher at St. Christine's Grade School in



Students do some dumpster diving while waste-auditing a local business.

Youngstown. "This program has really had an impact on the local waste stream," she added. "Some businesses we audited are now big on buy-recycled." ♻️

## Spread the Word on Buying Recycled!

**K**AB, with assistance from EPA, has developed a training package to assist communities that want to promote the buy-recycled ethic. The package includes a video featuring EPA Administrator Carol Browner. She answers questions about the importance of "closing the loop" and the need to educate the public, as well as about the role of business, industry, and the government in stimulating markets for materials recovered from municipal solid waste. The package also includes a "how-to" program manual that has information about the 15 KAB buy-recycled pilot projects and camera-ready brochures. It is available at a cost of \$40. To order the package, call KAB at 203 323-8987.



# Tapping Into ReTAP

It's not as easy as you may think for manufacturers to become "green." While many manufacturers want to be more environmentally conscious in their operations, they often do not have the technical know-how to change their practices or materials. To help manufacturers across the country get the information they need, EPA is supporting the Recycling Technology Assistance Partnership (ReTAP) National Network.

ReTAP is a joint effort of the Clean Washington Center (CWC), the National Recycling Coalition (NRC), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)—a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce—and EPA. NIST's support of ReTAP is part of President Clinton's technology reinvestment project, which assists defense industry businesses in adopting new technologies to become more competitive.

ReTAP has two distinct goals:

- To provide technical assistance to companies in the State of Washington interested in producing or using recycled feedstocks
- To disseminate recycling technology information across the country through a national network.

To accomplish its first goal, ReTAP engineers visit companies to evaluate their recycling technology needs, identify barriers to recycling, and find solutions. ReTAP's services are customized to meet the needs of each individual company. For example, assistance might entail teaching a firm how to substitute recovered materials for virgin materials or helping a company locate markets for materials being sent to a landfill. An example of the type of ReTAP success stories achieved to date is introducing recycled resins from milk bottles into an injection-molded product. As a result, the

product's performance was enhanced, and the company realized a significant cost savings.

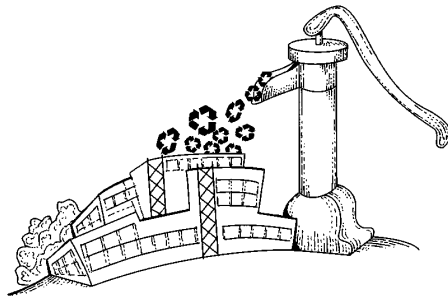
To create a national technology information network for manufacturers, ReTAP will start by forging an electronic link among NIST's manufacturing extension centers. NIST will establish 100 such centers in communities across the country by 1997 to help small manufacturers become more competitive. ReTAP will also join with EPA's *Jobs Through Recycling Initiative* to develop targeted resources, such as a technology tool kit and a series of 10 "best practice" manuals. These resources will help

both the companies using recovered materials and individuals providing technology services to these firms.

The tool kit was designed specifically for engineers

and specialists who interact with companies. It will include such items as case studies and models for program structuring, protocols to assess the use of recycled feedstock, and software programs to track and evaluate progress. The manuals will help companies learn how to effectively use existing technologies for recyclable commodities, such as glass and scrap tires. Another key component of the network will be an easily accessible database on recycled use practices, new technological developments, and innovative applications for recovered materials.

If you are interested in tapping into ReTAP's onsite services (in Washington state only), call Viki Sonntag of the Clean Washington Center at 206 464-6009. If you are interested in information available through the National Network and other available services, call Gordon Davidson of the National Recycling Coalition at 202 625-6406. ☐



**WASTE** Newsletter  
**WiSE** Now  
Available



The first issue of a newsletter dedicated to the WasteWiSe program is available free of charge to any interested party.

WasteWiSe helps businesses take cost-effective actions to prevent waste, collect materials for recycling, and buy recycled. To receive the *WasteWiSe Update*, call the WasteWiSe Hotline at 800 EPA-WISE. ☐

Thanks to you, all sorts of everyday products are being made from the paper, plastic, metal and glass that you've been recycling.

But to keep recycling working to help protect the environment, you need to buy those products.

**BUY RECYCLED.**



**AND SAVE.**

So look for products made from recycled materials, and buy them. It would mean the world to all of us.

To receive a free brochure, write *Buy Recycled*, Environmental Defense Fund, 257 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010, or call 1-800-CALL-EDF.

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# Recycling Is Becoming Part of the Package

Imagine how many foam peanuts you would need to fill the Empire State Building. Would you believe that it would take about 23 million pounds? That's the amount of peanuts and other expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam packaging that the Association of Foam Packaging Recyclers (AFPR) and consumers collected for recycling in 1993.

In just three years, the recycling rate of EPS foam packaging has grown from almost nothing in 1991 to nearly 11 percent in 1994, according to a study conducted for AFPR. As a result, EPS foam—which you might also think of as the large white molded shapes used to cushion appliances and equipment—is now the third most commonly recycled used plastic after soda bottles and milk jugs.

All of the foam collected is considered “postconsumer,” as it has served its intended purpose. Most (approximately 90 percent) of the EPS foam collected for recycling comes from industry. EPS foam is used to transport parts to equipment manufacturers and finished products to retailers. In the past, the foam was discarded after shipments were received. Now, after the foam has transported materials safely, companies can send delivery trucks full of the foam back to foam manufacturers for recycling, which can save companies the cost of disposal. Foam manufacturers grind up the used foam and either make new foam out of it or market the ground-up materials to other

companies for use in making plastic products such as videocassettes or desk organizers.

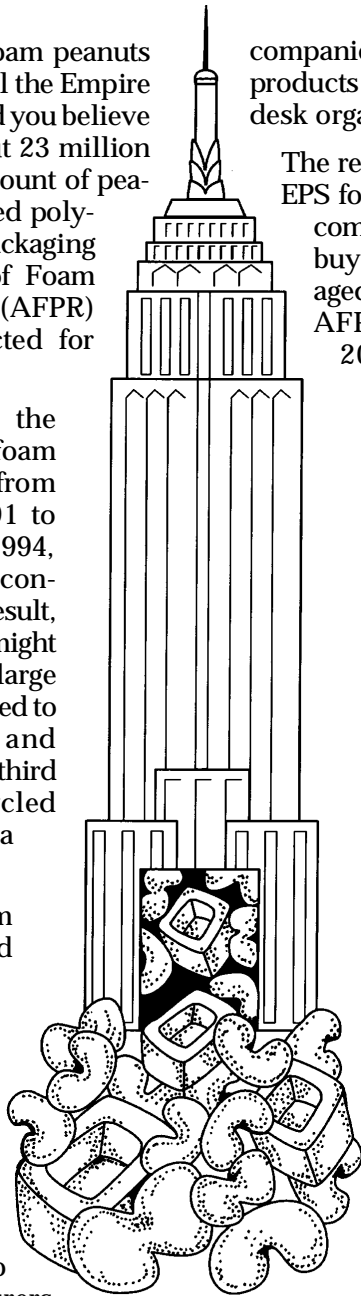
The remaining 10 percent of the EPS foam collected for recycling comes from consumers who buy products that are packaged in foam, such as stereos. AFPR has established over 200 consumer collection sites in 39 states at AFPR member plant locations, recycling companies, Army depots, grocery stores, and other sites.

Most consumers first learn about EPS foam recycling from inserts developed by AFPR, which many manufacturers are now enclosing in their packaging. The insert provides a toll-free number that consumers can call to find out where EPS foam is collected for recycling in their area. According to AFPR, the toll-free number receives hundreds of calls per month.

Prior to the winter holiday season, a time that usually produces large quantities of EPS foam packaging

waste, AFPR runs special campaigns to encourage EPS foam recycling. During this time, AFPR often receives thousands of calls per month—50 percent are from consumers who have read the packaging insert.

For information on EPS foam recycling or to locate the nearest EPS foam recycling collection center, call the Association of Foam Packaging Recyclers at 800 944-8448. ♻️



## Two Guides Provide the Dirt on Composting

Organic wastes (including paper, food scraps, and yard trimmings) make up a sizable portion of the municipal solid waste (MSW) stream in many communities. By adding composting to the mix of waste management options, communities can divert as much as 60 percent of MSW from landfilling or combustion! The following resources can help you determine whether residential or municipal composting is an option for your community.

*Keep It Off the Curb* is a step-by-step manual for community and state government officials who want to establish a backyard composting program for residents. Specifically, it is designed for those communities that want to distribute bins so that residents can compost in their own backyards. The book presents information on composting basics, potential cost savings from waste diversion, and bin selection and distribution options, as well as information on how to elicit support, conduct workshops, and set up demonstration sites. It provides case studies of successful bin distribution programs and ready-to-use tools for the community, such as camera-ready brochures and surveys. To order a copy of the manual, call Harmonious Technologies at 805 646-8030.

*Composting Yard Trimmings and Municipal Solid Waste* is an EPA guidance manual for state and local planners who are interested in organizing municipal composting operations. It provides guidance on setting up all kinds of composting operations—from basic windrow processes to high-tech, in-vessel systems. The guidebook also provides assistance on anticipating and

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## Creating Markets for Hard-To-Recycle Materials in Minnesota

Minnesota is developing markets for several materials generated in large quantities that are currently difficult to recycle within the state. By focusing on wood waste, certain plastics, and low-grade paper, Minnesota will help the state move beyond its current 40 percent recycling rate.

One potential use for these materials is in composite products. (Composites are made by combining two or more different materials in a way that enhances their combined properties.) Building on prior research conducted by the Office of Environmental Assistance (OEA), Minnesota's RBAC has developed an impressive list of potential new composites that might prove economical to produce. For example, Minnesota will fund a study to explore ways to increase demand for bagged wood chips and mulches derived from blends of wood waste and demolition waste. Another project will support research on ways to add structural reinforcement materials into composites of wood and plastic wastes to expand their usage. For example, such reinforcement will make these materials stronger so that they can be used for structural purposes.

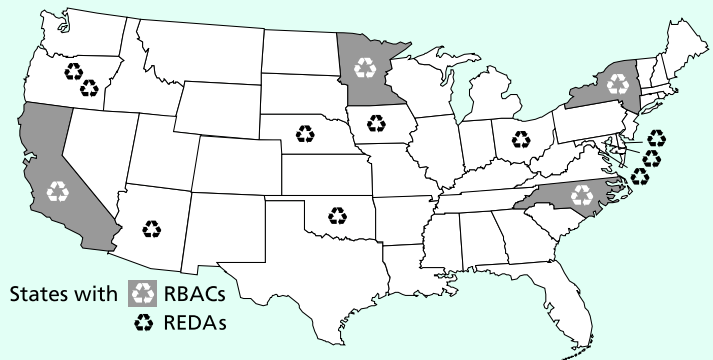
Minnesota industries have already shown a willingness to integrate recovered materials such as old newspapers, old corrugated containers, and steel cans into existing manufacturing processes. By focusing on the more difficult to recycle wastes, Minnesota will not only improve waste management, expand recycling, and conserve virgin resources, but it also will create new businesses and new jobs in recycling. "By targeting and working closely with specific industries and expanding cooperative activities with economic development officials, we will have a significant impact on the state's recycled materials markets," said Ted Troolin, supervisor of OEA's Market Development Unit.

## North Carolina's RBAC Launches Demonstration Projects

During the summer of 1994, North Carolina's Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources (DEHNR) surveyed nearly 500 recycling companies within the state. The survey included manufacturers, scrap dealers, processors, collectors, brokers, equipment dealers, and pallet reclaimers. It assessed their size, growth potential, and financing and technical assistance needs. North Carolina will use these data, along with the findings of its

soon-to-be released report entitled *Assessment of the Recycling Industry and Recycling Materials in North Carolina* to establish four demonstration projects showcasing different recycling market development strategies:

- **Capacity Expansion Demonstration Project**—The RBAC will help a chosen company increase the amount of recycled feedstock it presently uses. Assistance will include securing capital, installing new equipment, and locating potential supplies of recovered materials. The experience of this select company will serve as a model for other fledgling recycling businesses and help expand use of recovered feedstocks within the state.



- **Feedstock Conversion Demonstration Project**—Switching from virgin to recovered material feedstocks is not always easy for manufacturers. For example, such a conversion can entail equipment purchases, changes in processes and product formulations, and employee training. North Carolina will help a select company completely convert from virgin to recycled feedstock. A team of RBAC specialists will work closely with plant managers to identify appropriate equipment, secure capital, and seek out consistent, stable feedstock sources.
- **Industrial Recruitment Demonstration Project**—North Carolina will coordinate state efforts to attract companies that use targeted recovered feedstocks to the state by offering expert business development advice and technical assistance.
- **Regional Commodities Demonstration Project**—Many new recycling businesses find it difficult to locate economical sources of high-quality recovered feedstocks. This project will help a chosen company identify local suppliers of recovered materials. Using local, rather than out-of-state, suppliers reduces transportation costs, making it more attractive for manufacturers to use recovered materials.

North Carolina is poised to bring these combined economic and market development plans to fruition. "We believe our efforts will open up new markets, strengthen existing ones, and eventually create jobs in the recycling industry," predicted Mary Beth Powell, manager of DEHNR's Solid Waste Reduction Program.

## Postconsumer Payoff in New York

Working in cooperation with the South Bronx 2000 Local Development Corporation, the New York RBAC will support community-based recycling enterprises that use materials recovered from commercial, industrial, and institutional generators. Bronx 2000 has already started several innovative recycling projects, including the *Big City Forest* facility that is remanufacturing thousands of wood pallets and shipping containers. This pilot project created 37 jobs and processed 37,000 discarded pallets and 413,000 pounds of wood packaging materials. RBAC funding will help establish additional wood reclamation programs based on this prototype.

New York's RBAC, housed in the State Department of Economic Development (DED), also plans to improve the collection infrastructure for office paper

## Economic Development Specialists Focus on Recycling

EPA's Jobs Through Recycling Initiative is also supporting ten professional staff positions for Recycling Economic Development Advocates (REDAs). These economic development specialists are helping create new recycling jobs, advising new and existing recycling businesses, and coordinating solid waste and economic development efforts within their respective jurisdictions. Each of the following is hosting a REDA:

- Arizona—Department of Commerce
- Delaware—Development Office
- District of Columbia—Office of Economic Development
- Iowa—Department of Economic and Employment Development
- Maryland—Department of Economic Development
- Nebraska—Department of Economic Development
- Ohio—Department of Development
- Oklahoma—Department of Commerce
- Oregon—Economic Development Department
- Siletz Tribe (Oregon)—Economic Development Office

and paperboard packaging. It will establish partnerships between local collection programs and paper companies. These partnerships will demonstrate cost-effective methods for collecting, processing, transporting, and delivering high-quality waste-paper to mills. New York will also work with 12 plastics processors, reclaimers, and manufacturers to help them resolve barriers to expanding their use of postconsumer recovered plastics.

"EPA's RBAC funding will help us accelerate our efforts to optimize market conditions for recycling in New York and raise the efficiency with which secondary materials are recovered and used as manufacturing feedstocks," said William Ferretti, director of DED's Office of Recycling Market Development.

## California Nurtures Fledgling Recycling Businesses

California's RBAC, dubbed the "R-Team," is establishing an information network to provide recycling companies with the many types of information they need to be successful, from general business advice to technical assistance. The network will help recycling entrepreneurs access the technical reports and materials testing information they need. It also will link these entrepreneurs with experts at federal laboratories and manufacturing technology centers.

Housed at the California Integrated Waste Management Board, the RBAC will set up a telephone and facsimile hotline that offers two levels of support. First, the hotline will provide all recycling companies that call in with general business advice. It will also disseminate publications, answer questions, and make referrals. Second, the hotline will provide more individualized services to selected recycling businesses. These services will include:

- Identifying low-cost technical assistance.
- Coordinating financing.
- Helping with business planning and marketing activities.
- Identifying sources of recovered materials.
- Providing siting and permitting assistance.

In addition to establishing this resource network, California is also identifying existing businesses that can convert from the use of virgin to recovered materials, as well as those that are likely to benefit by diversifying their current product mix or expanding their manufacturing capacity. "By providing direct services to recycling businesses, we are working to help them profit through recycled content manufacturing," said R-Team director Ranny Eckstrom.


For more information on EPA's Jobs Through Recycling Initiative, see the Spring issue of *Reusable News*. 

# Reusable News Goes Online

**A**s part of a new EPA pilot project, Internet users are now able to find everyone's favorite solid waste periodical, *Reusable News*, on line. The EPA Internet Pilot Project grew out of a desire to make solid waste publications available to the growing ranks of computer users seeking information on line. So, along with documents on landfill regulations and RCRA hazardous waste materials, individuals can now pick up the latest issue of this publication electronically.

Since the project began in July, organizers are reporting a lot of interest in the various EPA publications. Unfortunately, all good pilot projects must come to an end—this one in January. But EPA will be conducting a thorough analysis of the process, and, if all went well, users will soon find *Reusable News* regularly on the Internet.


*Reusable News* can be accessed on line using one of several Internet pathways:

- **Through FTP:**  
Go to the ftp.epa.gov server. Login as "anonymous" using your Internet address as the password. *Reusable News* files are located in /pub. All OSW files are in directories beginning with "OSW."
- **Through Telnet:**  
Go to the gopher.epa.gov server and choose the EPA Public Access Gopher. From the main (Gopher) menu, begin with "EPA Offices and Regions." *Reusable News* is under the "Office of Solid Waste" directory.
- **Through Mosaic:**  
Go to the http://www.epa.gov server and choose the EPA Public Access Gopher. From the main (Gopher) menu, begin with "EPA Offices and Regions." *Reusable News* is under the "Office of Solid Waste" directory.
- **Through dial-up access:**  
Dial 919 558-0335. Once connected, choose the EPA Public Access Gopher. From the main (Gopher) menu, begin with "EPA Offices and Regions." *Reusable News* is under the "Office of Solid Waste" directory. 

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## Two Guides Provide the Dirt on Composting

*(Continued from page 5)*

overcoming some of the common challenges involved in establishing a composting program, including designing the facility, managing odors, involving the public in the siting process, and identifying end users of the compost product. It also explains the biology of the composting process, collection and processing methods, and marketing techniques. A comprehensive listing of many types of composting equipment (along with product costs and advantages and disadvantages) also is included. This manual can be ordered for \$27 (plus a \$4 handling charge) by calling the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) at 800 553-6847 and requesting publication number EPA530-R-94-003. 

*The mention of publications, products, or organizations in this newsletter does not constitute endorsement or approval for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.*

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