



JANUARY 2010
Recycling

By Karen Mayne

Have you made any New Year's resolutions? Many of us do. Here is one resolution that will help both the environment and your pocketbook, and it doesn't involve the size of your waistline!

Most of us have heard the phrase "reduce, reuse, and recycle," and we know about the materials we can put into the City's blue recycling carts. But we may not think about reducing and reusing the things in our life. Each year, the average Norfolk resident creates 1825 pounds of waste (that's almost a ton!). Everything plastic . . . whether a plastic bag or bottle, synthetic fabrics and carpet, and even car parts . . . is made from hydrocarbons mined from oil, natural gas, or coal.

Everything metal . . . from silverware to vacuum cleaners . . . is made from metals mined somewhere in the world. Mining of hydrocarbons and metals not only uses up limited natural resources that can never be replaced, it also causes environmental and social disruption in many regions around the globe. So, before buying something new, think about whether what you have can still serve a little longer (and that will save some money!).

When it is time to get rid of something, think about whether it could be reused to serve a needy family for some time longer. We have many thrift stores in our area that will take clothes and household goods, and many of them will pick up at your home. Habitat for Humanity has a program that will take surplus or still usable construction materials (everything from sinks to siding) . . . they are located at 900 Tidewater Drive and can be reached at 640-0590, ext. 217 or www.shrhabitat.org. Mailing stores, such as the UPS store at Southern Shopping Center, take back plastic packing peanuts, and grocery stores usually take back plastic bags.

Recycling is the last %+for our New Year's resolution. The recycling industry employs 1.1 million workers nationwide and is a \$236 billion a year industry. Our local recycling saves space in the SPSA landfill . . . something we all should be concerned about! And, every time you put out your recycling cart (even if it isn't full), the City %counts+the cart towards our neighborhood's participation rate for the EARNN program (Environmental Awards for Recycling in Norfolk Neighborhoods), and that earns us points towards our annual goal of getting \$750 from the City for our civic league.

Reduce, reuse, and recycle. Now, that's one resolution that is easy to keep and will help the planet!

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