

## PASCO COUNTY RECYCLING AND EDUCATION

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In this issue, we kick off a multi-part series to go more in depth on the nitty-gritty of the recycling world. We'll cover the economics of trash and recycling, Pasco County's solid waste system, the differences between material recovery facilities, population growth, and more. Watch for it.

# Recycling Update

APRIL 2016

## Recyclonomics Part 1

Every week, recycling bins and cans get emptied and their contents get whisked away. First, they make a trip to Pasco County's transfer station. Then, they travel to a processor for sorting and eventual sale to manufacturers that can use recycled material instead of new, raw material to make their goods.

Many things affect the recycling market, and much like the housing market, volatility is expected, often for unexpected reasons. For example, the price of gas has an effect on the monetary value of recycled plastic because plastic is made from petroleum. Though lower prices at the pump equals happier people, the abundance of cheap oil presents a problem for recycling markets.

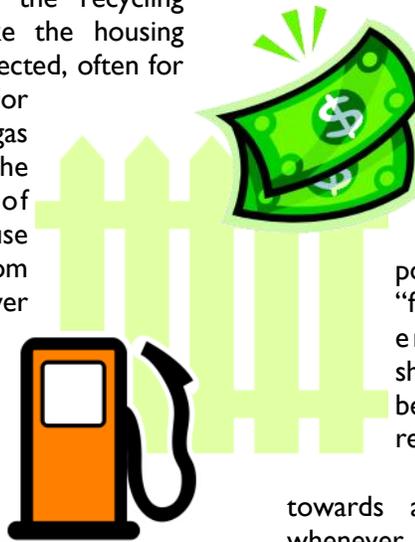
Normally, recycled plastic is less expensive to use than new plastic. But, while oil is cheap, new plastic

becomes cheaper and there is less demand for recycled plastic as a result.

A strong U.S. dollar has also contributed to a fluctuating recycling market. Most recycling material makes its way out of the country to fuel large manufacturing bases in Asia, and as the dollar becomes stronger, it becomes more expensive for overseas manufacturers to buy American exports, including recycling material.

Finally, increased contamination in national recycling streams has led China, a major importer of U.S. recycling material, to institute a policy known as Green Fence. The "fence" is an approach that emphasizes quality. If a shipment of recycling material is below an acceptable standard, it is rejected.

Awareness is the first step towards action. Buy recycled products whenever possible to show with your dollars that you value recycling. Always rinse your recycling and be sure to recycle the right stuff to lower contamination.



## Celebrate the Earth

Pasco's Earth Day is always held on the 4th Saturday of April. This year, it's April 23rd in Crews Lake Park at 16739 Crews Lake Dr, Spring Hill from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. All concession proceeds benefit Mary Giella Elementary School. For more event information, contact Lottie at 727-856-2917 Extension 201 or LKelley@covanta.com Events include...

- Children's crafts
- Educational displays

- Water Ventures Learning Lab
- Ladybug releases
- Croc encounters
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection
- Rain Water Harvesting Workshop (Register by going to: <http://pasco.ifas.ufl.edu> Click on upcoming events, choose April, and scroll to workshops.)
- HITS 106 remote broadcast (10 a.m. - 1 p.m.)
- Mercury Bounty

- Document Shredding by Shred 360 (10 a.m. - 1 p.m.)
- Pill take-back program
- Native Plant Sale
- Composting Workshop (Register by going to: <http://pasco.ifas.ufl.edu> Click on upcoming events, choose April, and scroll to workshops.)
- Central Pasco & Gulf Railroad Train Rides
- Geocaching
- UPcycle Vendors

## DEP Reports

Every year, all counties in Florida file a report with the State Department of Environmental Protection that details not only the recycling that comes to the county facility, but all recycling activities in the County, both public and private. For 2015, Pasco's recycling rate was 35.45%. With Waste-to-Energy credits, it's 65.35%.

## Barrels of Fun – We need your help

We're looking for a few old... satellite dishes. In February's newsletter, we introduced you to our upcoming Learning Walkway. It will feature Florida native plants, Gopher Tortoise habitat, education, and plenty of reduce, reuse, recycle information.

Now, our walkway is getting rain barrels. Since our path is nowhere near conventional irrigation, the rain barrels will provide much needed water to help establish plants and keep them going. To that end,

we're UPcycling old satellite dishes to serve as water catches for our barrels.

If you've gone to cable or decided to ditch the dish, give us a call and we'll give it new life in our Learning Walkway. Instead of broadcasting the latest reality television show, it'll help nurture our native plants and beautify a learning

experience for all ages. We need 5 dishes to make good rain barrels into great rain barrels, and we appreciate your help. Thank you in advance! Call 727-856-4539 to donate.



## Tour Garbage

We're putting out the welcome mat! On June 1<sup>st</sup>, Covanta is partnering with Pasco's Recycling and Education Department to take participants on an up-close and personal visit to our Waste-to-Energy facility, followed by a tour of our Recycling Transfer Station.

This is a great opportunity to see what happens to your garbage. How we manage our waste and recycling today will affect Pasco

residents for generations to come. It's important to be informed. Why not come learn?

Tour participation is free, however registration is required and space is limited. Reservations

are made on a first come basis. Please consider your reservation an agreement to attend. A no show is a seat we could have given to another participant. Also, be aware that the tour will have participants walking short distances outside between buildings. Participants will have to wear long pants, long-sleeve shirts, and closed toed shoes.

Please contact Lottie at 727-856-2917 Extension 201 or [LKelley@covanta.com](mailto:LKelley@covanta.com) to reserve your spot.



## Waste Reduction

In 2015 the Waste-to-Energy facility in Pasco County processed 341,227 tons of trash. Paper and cardboard accounted for 20% of the trash, which was 68,245 tons. If you love trees, or even remotely care about the environment you are officially cringing right now. But never fear, an eco-friendly answer is here!

There are ways you can reduce your paper usage every day. For starters, dust off the reusable plates

from the cabinets and start using them versus their one time only paper look alikes. If you have a piece of paper with a blank back cut it into quarters and use it for notes. Have your bills electronically sent through your email, it is easier to save them that way as well.

Many things we purchase such as cereal and crackers come in cardboard boxes. Don't throw them in the trash! In Pasco County

we have a paper recycling program through Green Fiber. There are over 100 locations county wide that accept cardboard, newspaper, and other paper products. For a list you can go to [pascocountyfl.net](http://pascocountyfl.net) and search recycling. Don't forget your paper towel and toilet paper rolls, they are cardboard too.

For every ton of paper waste we prevent, 15 to 17 trees are saved. So even though paper reduction may be inconvenient at times, the forests will thank you.