



Staying in the Loop

Providing community-wide recognition and organizational-based technical assistance and education to businesses, schools, governmental agencies and non-profit organizations that demonstrate leadership in waste reduction and recycling.

Fall 2008

WASTE KNOT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: Whitmore Lake High School

In 2007, a local high school achieved a tremendous accomplishment. As one of the first high schools in the nation to register with the United States Green Building Council, Whitmore Lake High School was granted LEED Silver Certification. They achieved such a high performance standard through creative design, energy efficiency, and various methods of waste reduction.

They were meticulous in their environmentally conscious efforts, down to the materials used in the carpet, adhesives, and paint, all of which contain few to no VOC's (volatile organic compounds) helping to drastically improve indoor air quality. On a daily basis, they also use many post-consumer paper products with high-recycled content, as well as green cleaning supplies and techniques.

Natural light fills every room in the building, helping the students to learn more effectively and giving the school a very open and warm feeling. To complement the variable nature of natural lighting, each room is also equipped with multi-level light switches and occupancy sensors.

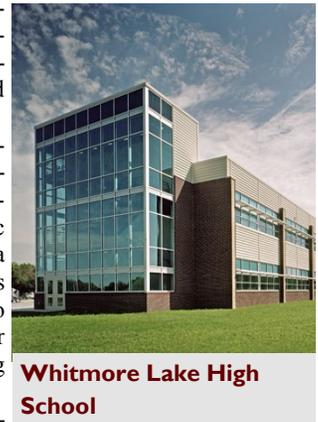
It has become clear in light of past and present energy crises that energy efficiency is at the core of sustainability. Keeping this in mind for now

and for the future, Whitmore Lake High School elected a geothermal heating and cooling system instead of conventional boilers and chillers, thereby eliminating the release of ozone depleting hydrochlorofluorocarbons and using less energy.

Through implementing the geothermal heat pump system, only domestic water is heated via natural gas. This also translates into over \$80,000 a year saved in operating costs.

The school district also prioritized historical and cultural preservation. They were able to keep approximately 208 tons of material out of the waste stream, while upholding local history, by relocating two barns and a farmhouse to a location a half-mile north of campus.

Another way the school reduced waste was through recycling. Over 83% (*cont'd on pg 4*)



Whitmore Lake High School

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Waste Knot & Michigan Green Schools Team Up

The State of Michigan now has an official Michigan Green School law, which encourages and recognizes all public and private schools that participate in simple energy-saving and environmental activities throughout the academic year. The law contains a list of 25 environmentally-related criteria of which at least 10 must be achieved by a school in order for it to be formally designated as a "Green School." Those outstanding

schools that achieve at least 15 of the 25 criteria are designated "Green School - Emerald Status." Some examples of the criteria include the school implementing recycling programs, maintaining native plant areas, adopting endangered species, students participating in classroom energy audits and the school observing Earth Day. The program encourages students and teachers to work together, inside and outside of the classroom, to achieve their "green"

goals, and to install a sense of environmental responsibility to students at a young age in hopes that they will carry it throughout their lives. "Green School" winners are awarded with an official Michigan Green Schools flag and a handsome certificate to proudly display in your school, signifying the school's efforts to protect Michigan's natural resources and save taxpayer dollars.

The Michigan Green Schools law was passed in 2006 and already there are (*cont'd on pg 3*)

New Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program



The new Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program allows Washtenaw County residents to conveniently take back their old, unwanted medications to a local pharmacy so they may be properly disposed of, for FREE!

Elevated levels of pre-

scription drugs are currently being detected in U.S. rivers, waterways, and groundwater due to people flushing meds down the toilet or rinsing them down the drain, as shown by a United States Geological Survey. However, this “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” mentality is only causing harm. Neither wastewater treatment facilities nor septic systems are equipped to “filter out” such chemicals, so medications like antidepressants, cholesterol reducers and antibiotics are making their way into our drinking water supplies. Long-term exposure to this drug-

laden water is unknown, but could potentially be harmful to humans, animals and plants.

Visit the website dontflushdrugs.com to view a complete list of participating pharmacies.

Moreover, many children fall victim to accidental poisonings each year due to ingesting medications in the home. In an effort to protect our children and the environment, we must ensure that meds are properly handled, stored and disposed of.

Previously, the best disposal method was to “wrap and trash” old meds. Luckily, the new Washtenaw County Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program now gives residents a more convenient and safe solution to the medicine-disposal dilemma.

Please visit the website www.dontflushdrugs.com to learn more and to view a list of all currently participating pharmacies, along with a list of acceptable and unacceptable meds. If your pharmacy is not already participating, encourage them to do so!

Please remember to NEVER flush your meds!

Annual America Recycles Day Celebration this November



America Recycles Day is rapidly approaching and, as always, Washtenaw County and the Waste Knot program are doing their part to promote the cause. America Recycles Day was created by the National Recycling Coalition and is the only nationally recognized day dedicated to encouraging Americans to recycle and purchase recycled products. The holiday officially takes place on November 15th of every year, but Waste Knot will be celebrating it one week early this year on November 5th, 2008, at Arbor Brewing Company. This celebration will take place in conjunction with the Bottle Bill workshop (see info below) taking place at WCC during the day on Nov 5th. All workshop attendees and Waste Knot partners are invited!

This event is not only an opportunity to celebrate recycling, but also to recognize the Waste Knot Program and its partners. The Waste Knot program boasts over 200 partners that have demonstrated leadership in waste reduction, recycling and closing the loop. The America Recycles Day celebration is intended to provide a welcoming venue for networking opportu-

nities among partners, as well as to educate the public on the environmental and community leadership that Waste Knot partners have demonstrated, encouraging citizens to support these local organizations. This event is free and will include food, educational displays and more.

Come celebrate recycling and the Waste Knot program at America Recycles Day 2008!

Event Info:

Date: Wednesday Nov. 5th, 2008

Time: 4pm-8pm

Location: Arbor Brewing Co. (In the Game Room)

located at 114 E. Washington, Ann Arbor

****A public parking garage is located directly across the street from Arbor Brewing Company**



You're Invited to the MRC's "Fall into Recycling 2008—Discussing Bottle Bill Expansion" Seminar

Date: November 5th, 2008

Time: 9am-2:30pm

Where: WCC

****Please see last paragraph in article for registration info.**

Expanded Bottle Deposit Law

Michigan's original bottle bill was enacted in 1976. We all know how it works: with a 10-cent deposit, the highest in the country, being paid by consumers for each bottle of specified beverages at the time of purchase. Currently, the bill covers beer, soft drinks, carbonated & mineral water, wine coolers, and canned cocktails. The returned bottles are brought back to a grocery store or other beverage distributor for sorting and

deposit refund. Seventy-five percent of unredeemed deposits go towards a special state fund, while the remaining twenty-five percent go to drink distributors.

Now MUCC, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, and other supporters want to update coverage of the bill to include other kinds of beverage containers, most notably water bottles, which are quickly overcoming soda bottles in number sold. Opponents to a bottle bill amendment, chiefly retailers

and beverage companies, argue that recycling should not be the responsibility of retailers and that money and time would be better spent expanding programs in other areas of recycling, such as curbside collections.

According to MUCC, ninety-seven percent of bottles covered under the current law are recycled, as opposed to just twenty percent of bottles that are not included in current legislation. Nationally, (cont'd on pg 4)

Business Shrink Wrap Recycling in Washtenaw County

The Waste Knot program is working together with its partners to recycle plastic shrink-wrap within Washtenaw County. Recycled shrink-wrap (also known as low-density polyethylene, LDPE, or #4 plastic), is used to manufacture materials such as plastic bags, guardrail blocks, wheel chocks, lawn edging, plastic banners, decking, benches and more.

Washtenaw County Solid Waste and the Waste Knot program has partnered up with Michigan Clean Marina Program & Ohio company Mondo Polymer Technologies, Inc., a major manufacturer of such products, to provide shrink-wrap recycling services to Waste Knot and other Washtenaw

County businesses for use in their products. This partnership is in its beginning stages, but with continued support and participation of our members we expect to see the program grow throughout the county and the state.

Prime shrink-wrap generators include marinas, nurseries, RV storage yards, manufacturers and distributors. Shrink wrap is often a large component of a warehouse or distribution center's waste stream but does not have to be. Shrink-wrap is easy to identify & collect and arrives at commercial and industrial facilities relatively clean and ready to be recycled.

This shrink-wrap recycling service is provided for free to

businesses. In addition to the actual service being free, businesses will further save money by reducing their waste disposal costs, while saving landfill space at the same time. Currently participating marinas, that produce approximately 2000 lbs of shrink-wrap per year, save about \$250 annually in waste disposal costs from recycling shrink-wrap.

If your business generates shrink-wrap, or any LDPE, and is interested in participating, please contact the Washtenaw County Solid Waste Coordinator, Dan Moody, at 734.222.6874 for information on how you can start recycling for free!

Is your business already recycling shrink-wrap? Let us know!



LDPE

Shrink-wrap is not biodegradable and is therefore an environmental threat. By recycling shrink-wrap you are helping the environment while reducing the cost of trash disposal services and saving landfill space.

Environmental Excellence Awards 2008

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2008 Environmental Excellence Awards:

Overall Winner: Veterans Administration Hospital

Waste Reduction Category: Washtenaw Woodwrights, Inc.

Pollution Prevention Category: Kunststoff-Technik

Water Quality Protection Category: Fox Hills Golf and Banquet Center

The Environmental Excellence Award Ceremony is scheduled to take place on **Wednesday October 15th, 2008, 6:30PM** at Board of Commissioner's meeting room at 220 N Main, Ann Arbor. Winners are chosen by members of the Washtenaw County Dept. of Planning & Environment and the Drain Commissioner's Office.



The Veterans Administration Hospital was chosen as Overall Winner of the 2008 Environmental Excellence Award.

Waste Knot & Green Schools (cont'd from cover)

over 150 "Green Schools" in the State of Michigan, 11 of which are Washtenaw County schools. The law was originally drafted and made successful by a handful of environmentally enthusiastic students and teachers at Hartland High School. The Michigan Green Schools law is meant to improve occupant health, provide a productive learning environment, connect students to the natural world, increase average daily attendance, reduce operating costs, improve teacher satisfac-

tion and retention, and reduce overall impact on the environment.

Since there is a significant overlap between the two programs' criteria, the Waste Knot Program and Michigan Green Schools are now partnering up! That means when a school within Washtenaw County applies for Green School recognition, it is automatically applying for Waste Knot membership, too. For those schools that are already Waste Knot members and have not yet received

Green School recognition, you are encouraged to apply to the Green Schools program as soon as possible to get your school the full recognition it deserves!

Please visit <http://www.lawmasc.net/greenschools.htm> for an online application. This website also features a copy of the official Green Schools Bill, the 25 environmental criteria and a list of resources intended to aid schools in achieving Green School designation.



The Michigan Green Schools flag (above), is presented to all "Green School" winners. Green Schools also receive a handsome certificate to be proudly displayed within the school.



Please keep us updated on your waste reduction and recycling efforts—we want to know what you're doing!

The more ways you reduce, reuse & recycle, the more \$\$\$ you can save.

Let co-workers know they are part of the Waste Knot Program! Please post this newsletter in common areas or mass email to employees so everyone can read it!

Would your organization like to be featured in a future issue of Staying in the Loop? Please let us know!

Whitmore Lake High School (cont'd from cover)

of all construction waste generated by the project was recycled. Also, great effort was put into obtaining and using post-consumer building materials, such as recycled steel, aluminum windows, and masonry.

One of the most innovative sustainability aspects of the project was in the creative design techniques enacted to re-

duce resource consumption. Many spaces throughout the school are shared, such as the science labs, and the theater, which expands into the cafeteria for extra seating. Such innovative design methods greatly reduced the overall size of the school, thereby reducing overall energy costs by 35,000,000 BTU's a year.

The Whitmore Lake School District has achieved a great accomplishment with their forward-looking vision. Whitmore Lake High School is one of the most sustainable high school campuses in the nation today and we are proud to have them as a Waste Knot partner!

Bottle Bill (cont'd from pg 2)

Michigan has been a leader in recycling rates for many years, around forty to fifty percent above the national average, according to a study by CRI, the Container Recycling Institute.

In addition to this, bottles returned at retail outlets are sorted more specifically than those returned through curbside programs. Huge amounts of recycled materials come across the conveyor belts of material recovery facilities, and only minimal sorting is typically possible. Bottles returned to retailers are sorted more thoroughly, which yields a more valuable product analogous to the higher value of recycled white paper over that of mixed paper. With a lack of buyers for recycled material as one of the

bigger challenges for the industry, this point should not be overlooked.

Data from CRI indicates that the average Michigander consumed 138 containers of water and other non-deposit beverages in 2005, a number that is likely higher today. This translates to over 1,380,000,000 bottles per year, most of which end up in landfills, roadsides, and natural areas.

Legislature for a bottle bill amendment has been introduced to the state senate, but nothing further has happened since it was referred to committee in January of 2007. For more information and an opportunity to sign an online petition, please see MUCC's website, at <http://www.mucc.org/policy/bottlebillexpansion.php>.

For those interested in learning even more about the proposed bottle bill expansion, you're invited to attend the annual Michigan Recycling Coalition seminar "Fall Into Recycling" which will explore whether or not an expanded deposit law should sink or float. The seminar is scheduled to take place on Wednesday November 5th, 2008 at Washtenaw Community College. Please visit <http://mrcgogo.ning.com/events/event/show?id=2319043%3AEvent%3A23&xgi=7JDa2OH> for more information and to register for this event. You must register beforehand. After the seminar, attendees are invited to come celebrate America Recycles Day with Waste Knot at Arbor Brewing Company (see pg 2)!



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