CLEAN TEXAS CLEANER WORLD

ENVIRONMENTAL

NEWS you can use

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality ♦ MC-113 ♦ PO Box 13087 ♦ Austin TX 78711-3087

OCTOBER 2005

Household Hazardous Waste Assistance Is Available

Some household tasks may require the use of products containing hazardous components. Such products may include paints, cleaners, stains and varnishes, car batteries, motor oil, and pesticides. The used or leftover contents of such consumer products are known as household hazardous waste (HHW).

According to TCEQ's HHW program coordinator, the average American household generates 15 pounds of household hazardous waste each year. Our homes contain an average of three to eight gallons of hazardous materials in kitchens, bathrooms, garages, and basements. When improperly disposed of, household hazardous waste can create a potential risk to people and the environment.

Communities across Texas are managing household hazardous waste by holding one-day collection events or by conducting an HHW program at a permanent HHW facility.The TCEQ's Household Hazardous Waste management program offers help to municipalities and citizens with their HHW programs, such as:

- educational and regulatory information on HHW programs,
- technical assistance setting up an HHW collection program,
- general information on HHW issues,
- quarterly HHW managers meetings – a networking and training opportunity open to all interested in HHW.

For more information on HHW, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/hhw/hhw.html

Compost: Nature's Way of Recycling!

In Texas, more than 20 million tons of compostable organic materials like yard trimmings, wood chips, food waste, and paper go into landfills every year. When these materials decompose, methane (a powerful greenhouse gas) is released.

In urban areas of Texas, as much as half of the water supply is used for landscape and garden watering. Using compost and mulch helps the soil absorb and retain moisture, which can reduce watering requirements by fifty percent and reduce runoff into lakes and streams. Mulch and compost also insulate grasses and other plants against extreme heat and cold, and slowly release nutrients that promote plant growth and resistance to pests and diseases.

This year's theme for Texas Recycles Day (on November 15) is composting. For more information or resources on composting, visit www.texasrecyclesday.org. For assistance in yard care, ***A Green Guide to Yard Care*** **(GI-028)** provides practical information on the YardWise Program, including grass-cycling, mulching, and composting. To view a copy before ordering, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-028.html. For a complete listing of TCEQ's composting information, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/nav/composting.html.

Make plans now to attend the 2006 Environmental Trade Fair and Conference!

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference (ETFC) will be held **May 9 - 11, 2006,** at the **Convention Center in Austin, Texas**. This annual event is **Texas' premier environmental educational forum**, considered by many to be one of the best in the country. If you are not yet on the mailing list for this event, contact the Event Coordination and Education Section at 512/239-3150, or e-mail etfc@tceq.state.tx.us with your name, address, and interest (exhibitor and/or attendee). For more information on the conference, please visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html.

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An environmental message brought to you by the Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division.

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PD-025/05-08

Recharge! Reuse! Recycle Your Battery

With the holiday season coming up there will no doubt be many devices that need batteries.

You can safely dispose of alkaline batteries in the trash. But some types of batteries contain heavy metals such as mercury, lead, cadmium, and nickel, which can contaminate the environment when disposed of improperly. When incinerated, certain metals might be released into the air or can concentrate in the ash produced by the combustion process. These types of batteries should be taken to a household hazardous waste facility for safe disposal.

One way to reduce the number of batteries in the waste stream is to purchase rechargeable batteries. Over its useful life, one rechargeable battery may substitute for hundreds of single-use batteries. But, what do you do when your rechargeable batteries can no longer hold a charge? Recycle them! The Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation's (RBRC) *Charge Up to Recycle!*® program is designed to keep rechargeable batteries out of the solid waste stream. This program offers your community and public agency the tools to implement a simple, no-cost recycling plan.

The Mercury-Containing and Rechargeable Battery Management Act (the Battery Act) was a major step forward in the effort to facilitate the recycling of nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) and certain small sealed lead-acid (SSLA) rechargeable batteries and to phase out the use of mercury in batteries. For more detailed information about this act, visit the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Web site at www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/recycle/battery.pdf.

For a list of rechargeable battery collection sites or for more information on implementing a site, visit www.rbrc.org.

Texas Environmental Excellence Awards Deadline Extended

There's still time to honor an environmental project from your Texas town. The Texas Environmental Excellence Awards application deadline has been extended to November 14, 2005. Enter your project today at www.teea.org.

Driving Green 'n Clean

This past summer, the TCEQ had a proud first when the agency added a hybrid Chevrolet Silverado to its fleet—the first to do so in the state of Texas.

The new Silverado is just one of several new hybrid-electric models that auto manufacturers have released to the market over the last couple of years, allowing the agency to replace a number of older fleet vehicles with hybrid alternatives over the next several months. By adding hybrid-electric vehicles to the agency fleet, the TCEQ and other state agencies, including the Texas Department of Transportation, hope to reduce combined fleet emissions while also improving overall fleet efficiency.

Hybrid-electric vehicles typically combine the internal combustion engine of a conventional vehicle with the battery and electric motor of an electric vehicle. Unlike electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles don't need to be plugged in to recharge the batteries. Instead, they are recharged using regenerative braking or by using an on-board generator. This combination offers lower emissions, with the power, range, and convenient fueling of conventional vehicles. It also offers the potential to be two to three times more fuel-efficient than conventional gasoline vehicles.

Manufacturers currently offer a wide variety of hybrid-electric models, meaning there are very few roles that a hybrid vehicle can't fill in any fleet—public or private. By adding hybrids to their fleets, Clean Texas, Cleaner World members and other businesses can take immediate steps to not only reduce the impact of rising energy costs, they can also significantly reduce emissions and contribute to improved air quality in their communities.

Plans are underway to highlight emerging transportation innovations with events similar to the Hybrid Vehicle Fair held this past spring adjacent to the Capitol, so be on the lookout for your next opportunity to see these vehicles up close at an upcoming TCEQ event in the next several months. In the meantime, everyone is encouraged to incorporate these and other "clean" innovation into their activities—both at home and at work.

Pollution Prevention Takes Planning

Facilities that generate hazardous wastes or report on the Toxics Release Inventory, Form R, are required by law to have a pollution prevention plan. The bad news: many individuals required to have a plan don't know how to write one. The good news: the TCEQ has a workshop that assists individuals in writing a plan.

Grace Hsieh, Pollution Prevention and Industry Assistance, and her team make pollution prevention planning relevant and interesting to everyone from auto repair shop workers to oil refinery experts. Hsieh and a team of trainers

demonstrate how a pollution prevention plan that incorporates best practices helps regulated entities comply with the law, improve their environmental performance, and save money.

For example:

- Trico Products in Brownsville reduced its waste by 42 percent by changing its use of chemicals. This saved the company more than $12,000 a year in disposal and transportation fees.
- The Texas Department of Transportation office in Dallas saved more than $13,800 a year on solvent and drum disposal when it switched from using solvent to using convection ovens as the method for separating asphalt.
- Enterprise Transportation Company in Baytown eliminated 740 tons of hazardous waste per year by changing cleaning procedures, saving more than $24,000 a year.

Attendees work together in groups to design draft pollution plans of their own. They are able to interact with the TCEQ to get answers about regulations and to find out about resources available to help them design an appropriate plan.

"We have an online planner that walks you through the planning process and gives you best practices for different sectors," says Hsieh.

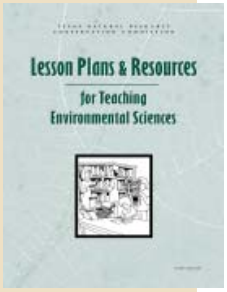
Workshop participants don't just hear from the agency, they also hear directly from industry leaders. In the October workshop in Houston, Zachary Bell, Dow Chemical, talked about how his company achieved cost savings through pollution prevention planning. November's workshop in Austin features a luncheon speaker from Applied Materials.

Upcoming workshop: November 17 - 18, 2005
The University of Texas Thompson Conference Center
Austin, TX

Clean Texas, Cleaner World partners get a $50 discount off the registration fee.

To view the brochure, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assets/public/admin/events/10-05p2workshop.pdf, or to register by e-mail educate@tceq.state.tx.us.

Featured TCEQ Publications



Are you a teacher, scout leader, youth leader, or a concerned parent who cares about the environment? ***Lesson Plans & Resources for Teaching Environmental Sciences*** **(GI-268)** can help you teach simple, easy-to-use lessons on the environment. To view the book before ordering, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-268.html. To order a copy, e-mail educate@tceq.state.tx.us.

How's the Air Out There? (How Ground-Level Ozone Affects Your Health) **(GI-269)** is a poster that describes ozone in simple terms; provides tips on avoiding unhealthy exposure to ground-level ozone; and features a color-coded index to use in planning outdoor activities, based on daily quantities of pollutants. To view the poster before ordering, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-269.html. E-mail educate@tceq.state.tx.us to order the poster.

When You Care for Your Car You Care for the Air (poster) / Cuando Cuidas tu Carro, Cuidas el Aire **(GI-259)** explains how cars and trucks contribute to air pollution and what drivers can do to help. (In English and Spanish.) Order several copies to hang in your workplace or school. To view the poster before ordering, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-259.html. E-mail educate@tceq.state.tx.us to order the poster.

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