

SUSTAINABILITY TODAY NEWSLETTER

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ABOUT US

The Texas Tech University Recycling Center is housed within the Student Housing Services. The center has been in operation for over 6 years and has continually grown year after year.

Today the Recycling Center collects all forms of recyclables from plastics, glass, foam, cardboard, paper, aluminum, tin, electronics, and anything in between! The money collected goes back into the students through Sustainability Scholarships!



ENTERTAINMENT

This week's newsletter is focused on tips for being sustainable around entertainment. With the holidays in full swing, more and more of us are spending time with family whether it is having family and friends over or traveling to be with them. This newsletter is focused on helping you continue to think green this holiday season!

The Bigger Picture

Having fun means tons of trash, literally. Empties and cigarette butts are good reminders of what's bad. More than eighty billion cans and bottles that could be recycled are just lying around as trash. Trillions of cigarette butts litter the planet. And even if you don't party like a rock star, waste from having a good time can add up. Take a parade, the famous Tournament of Roses Parade attracts half a million spectators, as well as 100 tons of trash. This number doesn't even include tailgating.

Speaking of watching trash pile up—every year, 2 million books, 350 million magazines, and 24 billion newspapers are thrown away and you thought no one read anymore! Sure, newspapers may be going the way of eight-track cassettes, but new technology isn't helping old habits: one hundred thousand CDs are thrown away each month, along with 5.5 million boxes of software. That's enough to make even Bill Gates shed a tear.

The real problem faced by the entertainment industry is energy. Not only do live events zap energy for lights, sound, amps, and video screens, but just about everything related to watching and listening takes wattage. One live event can burn through as much electricity in a few hours as seven hundred households use all year. Even that, pales in comparison with what's at the top of the "e-waste" mountain: batteries. The average person owns about two button batteries and ten normal (A, AA, AAA, VC, D, 9V, etc.) batteries and throws out about eight household batteries per year. Some three billion batteries are sold annually in the US, averaging about thirty-two per family or ten per person.

Do the math and you'll see that almost as many batteries are thrown away each year as are purchased. The problem isn't just about waste, the problem is the mercury, lead, and other toxic chemicals that batteries contain.



Considering the most hazardous waste is incinerated, well, you don't have to be a chemist to figure out that a lot of pollution is created.

Water, too, runs dry when it comes to entertainment. It takes 1,500 gallons of water to make a single drive-through order: hamburger, french fries, and a soda. This includes the water needed to grow potatoes, the grain for the bun and the cattle, and everything for the soda. Gulp. Keeping all that in mind, check out the "Simple Steps" which gives you the biggest impact with the least amount of effort.

"How we treat the earth says much about us as a society"- Robert Redford

THE SIMPLE STEPS

1. Use fewer paper napkins--everywhere. There is no need to grab a huge stack of napkins from the concession stand when you know you'll only use one or two. Each American consumes an average of 2,200 standard two-ply napkins per year, or the equivalent of just over six of these napkins per day. If everyone in the United States used an average of one fewer napkin per day, more than a billion pounds of napkins could be saved from landfills each year. A stack of napkins this size could fill the entire Empire State Building in New York City!

2. Buy rechargeable batteries. You'll save money over the long term. A single rechargeable battery can replace up to one thousand single-use alkaline batteries over its lifetime. Americans throw out approximately 179,000 tons of batteries per year! Better yet, collect your old batteries and bring them to the Texas Tech Recycling Center!

3. Drink water from a tap or water fountain instead of bottled water! You can save as much as \$7 for a bottle of water, and it may be safer to drink. Tap water is more strictly regulated than bottled water. If everyone drank tap instead of bottled water in the United States, it would save about \$8 billion —about as much as the United States spends each year in drought response. It also would help prevent plastic waste: Sixty million water bottles are tossed in the trash each day in the United States. But if you must drink from a bottle, please make sure that bottle ends up in a recycling bin!

TIPS FOR ENTERTAINMENT!

Albums: About one million vinyl LPs are still sold each year in the United States. So instead of just tossing your old records in the trash, you may be able to sell them. While the LPs can be put into the recycle bin, recycling takes a lot more energy than you'll spend dropping off your old LPs at a used-record store.

Books: Use the library or buy secondhand books. Consider sharing the ones you have with friends or donating them rather than throwing them away. About three billion new books are sold per year, requiring four hundred thousand trees to be chopped down. The Texas Tech Recycling Center will also accept books if you would like to recycle them!

Candy: Buy loose, unwrapped candy if you can. Many candy wrappers contain chemicals that make them stain- and water-resistant but also make them difficult to recycle.

Compact Discs: Download tunes instead of purchasing them at the store. The average of a CD is about \$15, whereas an album download is only \$10. Each month, more than forty-five tons of CDs became obsolete—outdated or unwanted—and end up in landfills!

DVDs: Rent DVDs instead of buying them. Depending upon how much you watch one, you could save money. The average movie rents for about \$4, while the average new DVD sells for more than \$16. You also won't have to worry about contributing to their trash pile: One hundred thousand DVDs and CDs are thrown away each month. If you do own DVDs and want to discard them, donate them to a local library or thrift store.

Gift Wrap: Skip gift wrapping altogether, reuse ribbons or reuse old paper materials like newspapers or maps. If each family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon each year, thirty-eight thousand miles worth would be saved. That's enough to tie a bow around the entire planet!

MP3 Players: Recycle or donate your old MP3 players. Some companies give customers up to 10 percent off their next purchase when they return their old players. About 40 percent of all the lead in U.S. landfills comes from improperly discarded electronic waste, which can result in toxic pollution of the air and groundwater. So be sure to seek out an e-waste collector like the Texas Tech Recycling Center for all of your e-waste.

Soda: If you have the choice, buy soda from the fountain in a paper cup instead of a can or plastic bottle. You'll reduce the amount of aluminum cans and plastic bottles that are wasted. More paper (48 percent) is recycled and recovered to make new products than aluminum soda cans (43.9 percent) or plastic soda bottles (25 percent). Even better bring your own refillable cup and some stores offer a discount on the price of the soda. Should you end up with an aluminum can or plastic bottle, make sure it finds its way to a recycling bin!

Popcorn: Share your popcorn when you're at the movies instead of buying multiple cartons or bags. You'll save money and packaging. Americans today consume seventeen billion quarts of popcorn each year (fifty-four quarts per person), 30 percent of which are eaten at movie theaters, sporting events, entertainment arenas, amusement parks, and other recreational centers. If half the people shared their popcorn at these events, we could save the paper packaging for more than 2.5 billion quart-sized servings.

Tickets: Buy your movie and event tickets online and print them at home. You'll save time and paper waste. Print-at-home tickets use plain copy paper, which is easier to make into recycled paper than the paperboard used for printed tickets. Some 1.4 billion movie tickets alone are sold in the United States annually—and almost every one of them goes to waste.

Invitations: Use electronic invitations, or choose "chlorine-free postconsumer recycled paper" for your party invitations. Online invitations eliminate stationary and mailing costs, and postconsumer recycled paper costs about the same as primary fiber paper (traditional invitations). Better use of paper could allow the world's wood consumption to be reduced by 50 percent and possibly by as much as 80 percent or more!

Placeware: use porcelain plates, silverware, and glasses instead of plastic and paper. Each year, forty billion plastic utensils are thrown into landfills across the country. Besides waste, you can save money, too. Using your own utensils, glasses, and flatware is free, whereas the cost of plastic plates, forks, knives, and cups for a total of fifty meals could add up to \$100.

Televisions: Unplug your TV when it's not in use. You'll save money and energy. Between 10 and 15 percent of a TV's energy is still used when it's powered "off." TV use accounts for more than 10 percent of household electricity bills. The average household in America owns more than two TVs. If every home just unplugged their TV sets when they weren't being used, we'd save more than \$1 billion per year in energy bills! To make this easier, try connecting your TV to an outlet that is connected to a wall switch. Or you can consider plugging in all of your devices (TV, cable box, game system, etc.) into a power strip that can be unplugged and you can save even more money on your energy bill!

Fun and Games

Each newsletter we will also bring you a fun game or trivia to help you remember to go green!

Answer all of the trivia questions correctly by sending an email to housing.gogreen@ttu.edu with 'Trivia Answer' in the subject line and you will be placed in a drawing for a prize! Answers are due one week after the newsletter is sent out and winners will be notified via email.

Congratulations go out to Jacqueline Butler who is a Graduate Assistant for Residence Education and Academic Programs for successfully answering the questions in the last newsletter and being drawn as our winner. Way to go Jacqueline!

Remember, if you print this newsletter, use both sides of the page and once you are done with it, make sure it finds its way to one of the many recycling bins located throughout campus!

Recycling plastic saves _____ times as much energy as burning it in an incinerator.

- a. 2 times
- b. 0.5 times
- c. 3 times
- d. None, it takes more energy to recycle

A typical glass bottle would take _____ years or more to decompose.

- a. 20 years
- b. 150 years
- c. 4000 years
- d. It will never break down

The US Department of Energy (DOE) recommends turning off the monitor and placing the computer on sleep mode if you are not going to use it for more than _____.

- a. 2 hours
- b. 6 hours
- c. 45 minutes
- d. 20 minutes