

# SUSTAINABILITY TODAY NEWSLETTER

Volume 3/Issue 1

## ABOUT US

The Texas Tech University Recycling Center is housed within the Student Housing Services. The center has been in operation for over 7 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!



## KEEP YOUR HOME PERFORMING!

This week's newsletter is focused on tips for keeping your home performing as we move into the fall season! We hope these tips will help you reduce your home's energy needs and make your home more energy efficient and sustainable!

### The Bigger Picture

As the days start to get darker during the fall season, we turn on our lights earlier and earlier. The days get shorter, the natural light becomes less available for usage, and we turn to our friend, the lights! Lighting accounts for about a quarter of all electricity consumed in the U.S.

But what about those windows? As we start getting into the fall season, temperatures will start to drop and it will be time to crank up those heaters again. Before we get too far into the fall season, let's take time to inspect our windows since that is likely where the heat will escape!

Windows waste plenty of energy and that wastes money. Experts say that as much as 25% of your home's heat can escape through leaky windows. All of that leaked energy means that energy bill will be more expensive, and as we get closer and closer to the holiday season, every dollar saved will help out! Let's look at some simple steps on how to keep your home performing by inspecting your lighting and windows!

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*"Be mindful of the impact your actions leave behind, take responsibility for your actions, and have respect for the world around you"-*

*Tyra Banks*

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## THE SIMPLE STEPS

1. **Consider switching out your light bulbs.** Regular incandescent light bulbs are very inefficient. 90% of an incandescent bulb's energy goes into generating heat, not light. Anyone who has accidentally touched an incandescent bulb that has been on can tell you how hot incandescent light



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bulbs can get! Replace standard lamps with compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs! CFL bulbs do cost more upfront, but these bulbs last up to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs. CFL bulbs are much more efficient than incandescent bulbs; therefore, CFL bulbs will pay for themselves in savings from utility bills!

**2. Check your windows.** Checking your windows for leaks can save you lots of money on your heating and cooling bills. Many older homes have single pane windows that can be upgraded to double pane windows. If you are considering installing double pane windows, you could expect to pay about \$600 a window, but it is also important to focus on the energy savings and potential added value to your home.

**3. Consider using technology to help combat wasted energy.** In today's advanced world, it isn't too surprising to see people using a smart device to get through out daily routine. There are many devices that can help your home become more energy efficient from full smart home systems to digital thermostats. Utilizing technology to aid in making homes smarter is becoming more and more popular, and many systems can even be run from your smartphone!

## TIPS FOR YOUR HOME!

**Install weatherstripping:** Check your doors and windows. If you can feel a draft coming from them, check the weatherstripping to see if it needs to be replaced. Doors and windows are typically weatherstripped when they are installed, but over time the weatherstripping wears off. As a rule of thumb,

all doors and windows, including storm doors and windows, should have weatherstripping on all of the moveable joints to prevent air from leaking in and out of the doors and windows. You can find weatherstripping at your local hardware store that can be easily installed. Weatherstripping is also a cheaper alternative to replacing doors and windows.

**Use drapes or shutters:** Using drapes or shutters over your windows can keep cold out in the winter and the heat out during the summer months. As we move into the fall season, there will be hot days and cool evenings, so this is a great way of conserving energy from your heating and cooling systems. An uninsulated drape can cut window heat loss by a third and an insulated drape can reduce it by half!

**Check your window air conditioners:** Check to see if you can remove, clean, and store window air conditioners to prevent warm air from leaking out of the unit. If you are unable to remove the window unit, wrap the unit up in a thick layer of fiberglass insulation and seal it with plastic sheeting and duct tape to keep out air and moisture.

**Consider using lighting controls:** There are several different lighting controls on the market that could help you reduce energy wasted on lighting at home. Consider using controls like photocells that turn lights on and off based on natural light levels, dimmers to reduce the wattage and output of light bulbs, or even occupancy sensors that activate lights when you enter a room and turn off after you leave. These are a great idea for areas of infrequent use like a closet or storeroom. Any of the various lighting controls can help you reduce wasted energy from lighting.

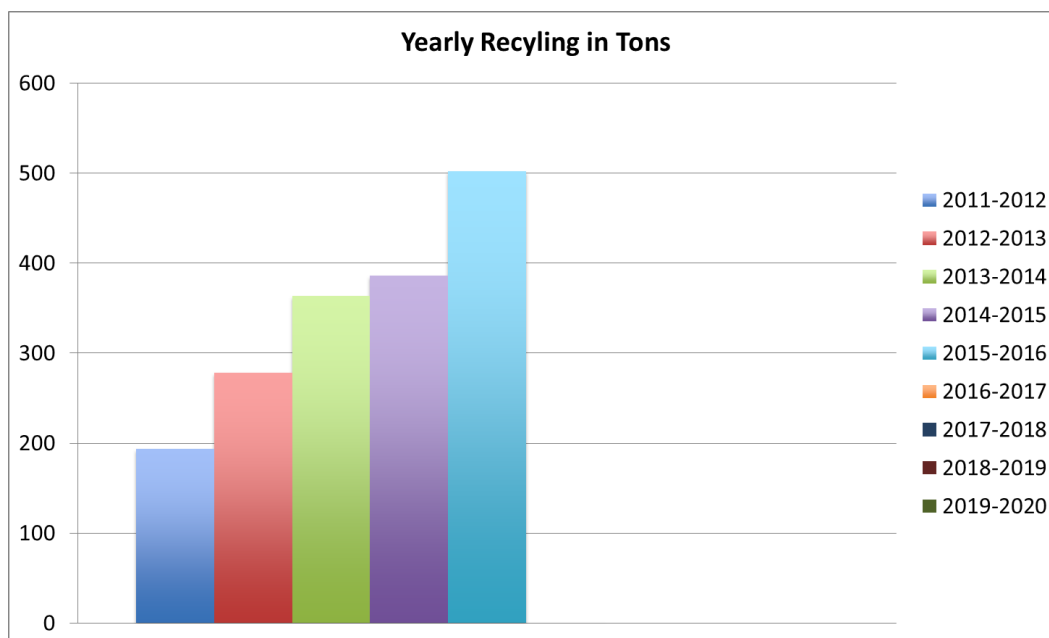
**Clean fixtures:** Cleaning lighting fixtures and lamps more often by wiping off the dust. The dust and dirt on these surfaces reduces the amount of light that is reflected and can make the room feel darker. You might also consider cleaning walls or repainting walls to make rooms feel brighter!

**Turn off:** The easiest way to prevent lost energy from lighting, it to just simply turn off the lights when they are not needed. You can also consider turning off heating and cooling systems when you are at work or if you go on vacation so

that you can prevent heating and cooling an empty house. Turning off these systems will save you money on your utility bills and can help conserve energy.

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

This past fiscal year the Texas Tech Recycling Center recycled more material than it has ever recycled in its history. In FY 16, the Recycling Center recycled 502 tons of material compared to 381 tons of material in FY 15. The total rebates from recycling comes out to an amazing \$39,000 that will be put into scholarships for students! We are so proud of all the hard work everyone puts into recycling, and as much as we like seeing the recycling numbers increase, the ultimate goal is to reduce the amount of material that needs to be recycled like paper and plastic. We will always encourage people to utilize a refillable water bottle rather than purchasing a new plastic bottle. Below is a graph that represents the past several years of total recycling in tons.



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Maybe you find yourself asking, “Well what *can* I actually recycle?” We have found a great resource for recycling and reusing items! We must remind you that if you have any questions on what we can take here at the Texas Tech Recycling Center, please don’t hesitate to call or email us your questions. Our goal is to take as much recyclable material from the community as possible; however, there are some materials that we are not able to recycle. We also wanted to remind everyone who utilizes our Recycling Center to put their recyclables in a tied bag, this helps us stay organized, and we do recycle the bags!

<http://www.personalcreations.com/blog/how-to-recycle-anything>

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The Texas Tech Recycling Center is excited to be a part of the upcoming community event “Think Global, Act Local: Get Your Green Up” on October 16<sup>th</sup> from 2-4pm at the Museum of Texas Tech University. This event is in conjunction with the Museum’s new exhibit *Green Revolution*! There will be over 15 local organizations for sustainable living and will include information on renewable energy, recycling, lighting, wildlife, and more! To learn more, check out the link below!

<http://today.ttu.edu/posts/2016/09/green-revolution>