

# Recycling Results in Less Trash, Cleaner Community

Each week, as we wheel our trash to the curb to be hauled away, it's easy to forget where it ends up. In 1960, the average American generated 2.6 pounds of waste a day. By 2013, the rate rose to 4.4 pounds a day. The good news? More Americans are recycling. While only 6 percent of the nation recycled in 1960, the rate rose to 34 percent by 2013.

The steady stream of waste puts pressure on landfills and the environment. Trash disposal sends waste to its grave, but recycling protects natural resources and strengthens the economy. Every time we separate recyclables from trash, we're not only being green, we're also helping create jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries.

The reuse of metal cans, plastic and paper products helps protect minerals, water and other natural resources. Paper recycling alone saves millions of trees. Recycling also lessens the impacts of extracting and processing raw materials.

Using recyclables in the manufacturing process often produces

less waste and uses less energy, because the materials have already been refined and processed.

Americans are recycling more, but there's always room for improvement. Although aluminum cans are one of the most frequently recycled items, it's estimated that \$812 million worth of them still ended up in landfills in 2013.

It's easy to recycle in Tallahassee and Leon County. A wide array of items are recyclable, and they all go in the curbside recycling bin with no sorting or bagging required.

## WHAT CAN YOU RECYCLE?

- **Paper:** Plain or colored office paper, sticky notes and envelopes (manila, window, etc.); cardboard; magazines, books, catalogs; cereal or tissue boxes
- **Plastic:** Nos. 1-7 empty plastic bottles and jugs with caps; Nos. 1-7 empty plastic tubs and screw-top jars (yogurt cups, margarine tubs, etc.); empty food trays; 3-gallon buckets

- **Metal:** Aluminum, tin and steel containers; pie tins; clean balled-up aluminum foil
- **Glass:** Bottles and jars of any color

### **WHAT WE DON'T PUT IN THE RECYCLING BIN IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT WE DO RECYCLE.**

- No plastic bags! Use the recycling bins found at many retail stores for plastic bags.
- Put recyclables directly in the recycling bin. Bagged recyclables slow down the sorting process, and plastic bags can clog or damage equipment.
- No clothes hangers, garden hoses, extension cords or string lights. Cords and wires get tangled in recycling equipment.
- Food and pet waste, Styrofoam and shredded paper can contaminate a load of recyclables. That drives up disposal costs and results in more trash for the landfill.

The Florida Legislature established a statewide recycling goal of 75 percent to be achieved by 2020. In 2014, Leon County had a 47 percent overall recycling rate.

We can all help Florida meet its goal. Practice good recycling habits at home, and encourage your school or business to step up its efforts. Only about half of Florida's commercial solid waste is being recycled.

When you shop, strengthen the market for recyclables by choosing products made with recycled content. Support manufacturers that use recycled material, whether it's a fleece jacket made with plastic bottles or greeting cards made with recycled paper.

To learn more about recycling in Florida, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/categories/recycling/default.htm>.

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