



# 2007 RESOURCE CONSERVATION GUIDE

- ✓ Reduce
- ✓ Reuse
- ✓ Recycle

A SPECIAL PULLOUT SECTION OF THE NEBLINE

Prepared by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County and the City of Lincoln Recycling Office



## Earth Day Reminds Us to "Think Globally and Act Locally"

Sunday, April 22, is the 37th anniversary of Earth Day. It is a day set aside to reflect about our environment and how we affect the environment. In the 1970s, environmentalists used the slogan "think globally and act locally." That sentiment is still important today. Each of us in our daily actions impact the environment either positively or negatively. The purpose of this guide is to help you think about our environment and offer tips on how we can become better resource managers.

**The U.S. lifestyle accounts for 40 percent of the global consumption of resources!** People around the world want a similar lifestyle, but there are simply not enough resources in the world to provide six billion people with the goods and services we enjoy here.

**Our challenge is to "think globally and act locally" to bring about simple changes that allow us to save money and conserve resources.** Are there things you can do to save energy? For example, turning your thermostat down a degree or two in the winter and up a degree or two in the summer. Are there things in your daily life you can do to conserve water? For example, reducing your time in the shower or using a low-flow shower head. Are there things you can do to reduce the waste you generate? For example, buying items at the grocery store in bulk rather than individual packaged items.

Please take this insert and put it in a place you can refer to during the year. This Earth Day make a pledge to become a better resource manager.

## The Important First Step is "Reduce"

We all know how important it is to recycle. But let's stop and think about why we recycle. For many people, it's to reduce waste and save landfill space. By recycling, we don't have to throw things away, helping us to conserve our precious resources. Recycling is working, but recycling alone cannot solve all of our solid waste problems.

Remember the three "R's": reduce, reuse and recycle. Which one comes first? It's reduce. And it's first for a reason. **It's better not to create waste than to have to figure out what to do with it.** As Benjamin Franklin said, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

**Our challenge is to bring about simple changes that allow us to save money and conserve resources.**

While being more important, waste reduction is perhaps the most difficult of the three R's. It requires us to change our lifestyles and rethink how our daily actions impact the environment. In 1960, when the globe had half the current population, the average American produced approximately 2.5 pounds of trash per day. Today the average American produces more than 4.5 pounds of trash per day. The American lifestyle is the most resource intensive on the planet. Even with higher recycling rates, we have not been able to keep up with consumption.

Did you know in 2006, City Solid Waste Operations staff estimate roughly 304,000 tons of waste was disposed of by Lincoln and Lancaster County residents? This represents 2,294 pounds of garbage per person for the year. In 2000, we produced 2,311 pounds of garbage per person for the year. The rate of garbage disposal per person has dropped. However, more waste is generated per person in Lincoln than cities in European countries such as Germany

or in Pacific Rim countries such as Japan.

Remember when we only got one telephone directory? Today we get four from different companies. Help stop the waste. Choose a directory you want to use and contact the other firms and ask them not to deliver a directory to your home or business.

We should not only be concerned about the volume of solid waste we generate each year, but we should also be concerned about the toxicity of our waste. According to USEPA, Americans generate 1.6 million tons of household hazardous waste each year. The average American home has accumulated as much as 100 pounds of household hazardous waste. This household hazardous waste can also cause health problems. Over five million poison exposures occur each year in the U.S. Roughly 92 percent of these poisonings occur in the home and 53 percent involve children under the age of six. **Much of this waste and many of the injuries could be eliminated through the purchase of less toxic alternative materials.**

## EcoStores: Great for the Environment and Your Budget

Your next remodeling project could do more than improve your living environment. It could also help improve the natural environment and give a boost to your bottom line.

In May 2005, EcoStores Nebraska introduced a new building materials concept to Lincoln-area weekend warriors and professional builders at its 13,000-square-foot warehouse store at 530 West P Street. EcoStores collects and resells quality, salvageable construction materials, equipment and systems as part of its mission to reduce the waste of natural resources.

"About 135 million tons of construction and demolition waste is annually dumped into our landfills," said W. Cecil Steward, founder and director of the store. "Much of the waste is composed of usable and even high-quality materials, including leftover construction materials that are often virtually unused."

Steward says he hopes to keep some of that waste from going to the local landfills by offering individuals, contractors and building companies an alternative destination for used or overstock materials as well as an alternative source for building supplies.



EcoStores' inventory includes doors.

It's also a great destination for weekend "do-it-yourselfers."

"If you're remodeling your kitchen, rather than throw out the sink, the countertop or the cupboards, you can bring them to us. We'll take them if they're in usable condition, and chances are we might have something in stock to replace them," he said.

The incentives for builders large and small go beyond helping the environment. Steward said donors of materials will get a receipt for tax deductions, and buyers will

find a wide variety of building materials that can be purchased at half or less of their retail cost.

EcoStores' diverse and rapidly growing inventory includes all shapes, sizes and styles of doors and windows; wood trim, boards, paneling and flooring; office furniture including desks, dividers and file/storage cabinets; kitchen and bathroom fixtures including sinks, tubs and cabinets; electrical fittings and fixtures including ceiling fans; a wide range of commercial shelving and many other building and construction-related items.

EcoStores also features new, unused overstock items from building retailers as well as materials and fixtures collected by deconstruction teams from the Nebraska Center for Sustainable Construction (NCSC), which operates EcoStores. NCSC deconstruction teams are trained to dismantle and reuse materials and fixtures from whole or partial buildings. The NCSC also conducts job training and educational programs for sustainable, green construction methods.

### ECOSTORES NEBRASKA

530 West P Street  
(402) 477-3606  
www.ecostoresne.org  
Hours: Mon-Fri, Noon to 6 p.m.  
Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Sundays & Holidays, closed



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