



November 2012

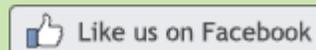


#### In This Issue

[Change the World](#)

[In the Holiday Spirit with ReUse and local artisans](#)

[Lessons from ReUse ConEx](#)



#### Quick Links

[TriCounty EcoConsumer Blog](#)

[Newsletter Archive](#)

#### Greetings!

Can you believe that we are already into November? It's hard to believe how fast the months have flown by! That means it's time to prepare for the holidays -- with beautiful simplicity.

So how can we do that? How do you celebrate with purpose and simplicity? Can you share your ideas for wasting less, buying local, celebrating experiences vs. stuff, creating handmade gifts, creating upcycled gifts and decorations from re-purposed "trash"? Tell your friends. Tell your family. Share it on our Facebook page. And tell David and !! I'm building quite the notebook of inspired ideas!

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you!

Heather Alexander  
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#### How can you help change the world?

Some of us are born of the optimistic spirit that we can change the world. Others of us feel like it's MUCH too big a job for one person to make any impact. But I would challenge those of us who feel the latter with the realization that each one of us can make an impact, even the "smallest" dent, on the people around us. We can challenge misperceptions with thoughtful conversation. We can share information that helps people do things they didn't realize they could do -- something as simple as leaving their bottle caps on and recycling them, rather than throwing them away, or something more complex like ridding their home of all chemical cleaners.

So, be heartened. Take that information you learned in Master Recycler classes, take the information you've read since class, take the knowledge

#### Tip of the Month

Share your tips and tricks with us! Email them to us. Post them on our Facebook page. Tweet us. Or pick up the phone and call us.

For example, David's family now recycles **all** bottle caps. Those who had the opportunity to go on one of our (Materials Recycling Facility) "MRF" tours will attest that these MRF's are not designed to handle small metal objects. So, upon checking in with MRF

you've gleaned from experience, and let it overflow. All those "little dents" of information do add up to a multiplying and duplicating larger impact as it is passed on one from person to the next.

## Master Recyclers: Reporters "On the Job"

We've got some great opportunities to educate our region's population of 20,000+ people about managing hazardous materials, making safer and more economical choices for their families and businesses, reducing waste, and enjoying a sustainable lifestyle in the Gorge.

Here at Tri-County, we are a conduit for information, going out through monthly columns in regional newspapers and publications, almost daily posts to Facebook and Twitter, radio ads, our blog, newsletters, and more.

YOU, our 50+ Master Recyclers, are the reporters. You are the "boots on the ground" in the community. Share with us in the office here, and let us know some specific tips, great businesses that match with our mission. and news. Email your news to Heather ([heathera@co.wasco.or.us](mailto:heathera@co.wasco.or.us)) or David ([davids@co.wasco.or.us](mailto:davids@co.wasco.or.us)).

### In November and December, we need your help with:

- Local craft fairs throughout the Gorge -- when are they and where are they?
- What businesses do you know that repurpose?
- Are there any community theatrical or dance performances that people can support?
- Specific tips and ideas for reducing waste this holiday season. Share some personal stories.
- Hot-tips for holiday crafts and food that can simplify and beautify the holidays, and spread some cheer without waste.

Thank you for your help! Let's see those ideas rolling in!



### Holiday Happenings for MRs in the holiday spirit

#### Help decorate our *"Trash to Treasure: A Re-Purposed Christmas"* tree for the Festival of Trees

TriCounty Hazardous Waste & Recycling has committed to decorate a tree for the December 7th **"Festival of Trees"** at the Civic Auditorium in The Dalles. This is a popular community event, raising funds each year to support health in the

operators, it's ok to recycle metal bottle tops.

#### Here's how:

1. Place your metal bottle caps in an empty tin can.



2. Crimp the can shut.



3. Place that tin can in your blue recycling bin. Off they'll go to a metal smelter, via the MRF....



### I can recycle that?

There are so many items we don't think of as recyclable, so we just throw them away. Check out our



Gorge through  
Mid-Columbia  
Health  
Foundation.

We will decorate our tree on Wednesday, December 5th, beginning at 1:00 PM at the Civic.

We are looking for a handful of folks who would like to **help with making decorations and/or decorating the tree**. Our theme is a classy and fun looking Christmas tree and repurposed items as gifts to go under the tree. Or, do you have a fake tree in good condition you could donate?. All decorations and gift items will go with the tree to the highest bidder in the auction on December 7th.

Please [email Heather](#) if you would like to participate.

### **Rural Craft Revival Holiday Market, December 5th**

Come support local craft artisans, and find some wonderful hand-made Christmas gifts. Rural Craft Revival will hold their Holiday Market on Wednesday, December 5 from 6-9:00 PM at Springhouse Cellar in Hood River. Check out their [website](#) for more information, and a sneak peek at some of the vendors!

## ReUse ConEx was a great resource!

*by David Skakel*

ReuseConex 2012 international reuse conference confirmed how special the Northwest is in its ethical appreciation of our ever complex human interplay with the environment.

Without having a television per say in my own household, I suggest that one might walk the halls of the Reuse Conference and imagine they were at a cast tryout for the show Portlandia.

The presenters ranged from "how to repurpose the oddest little things" to "you don't fully own it until you have the information to repair it" to "how I started a national reuse company". The City of Portland expressed sincere interest in the merits of this conference by proclaiming an official annual "Reuse Week" in Portland (how cool!)...

The connections made at this gathering were too many to describe in detail. Here is verbatim from my notes on the one day I attended: "Habitat for Humanity; Reuse Alliance; Ifixit.com; Terracycle; Learn from the World; Makeprojects.com; repair cafes; bike kitchens; SCRAP; Schoolhouse Supplies; Community warehouse; reuse space; Pinterest."

Facebook page and this sidebar for information on "odd" recyclables.



### **Broken Window Airconditioners?**

Yes! Paul Lepinski at A&P Recycling in The Dalles takes a number of metal appliances.

A & P is located at 280 Webber Street in The Dalles.



Also, try [reusing.blogspot.com](http://reusing.blogspot.com), which is a wonderful blog maintained by a gal from Waste Connections named Terra, A.K.A. "The Reuser." Terra's latest entry gives her own impressions of the same reuse conference, which she attended as a panelist speaking about the ins and outs of social media.

Our very program is just starting to leverage social media (two-way online conversation) to most effectively advance our mission. In that regard, this Reuse conference affirmed for me that there are just too many good, and great and ever changing (and failed) ideas out there in this genre of interest that our program is clearly better of trying to be a conduit rather than an expert. In other words, we provide the localized platform for discourse online and in print, and we rely more on folks such as you (our esteemed, trained, curious and knowledgeable Master Recyclers) to provide the information and to start the dialogue that will help our community steer towards best practices.

## What I Learned at ReUse ConEx... WOW!

*by Karen Murray*

The Reuse Alliance's 2nd International Reuse Conference and Expo in Portland was a very interesting experience for me. I decided to "invest" and attend to get a better handle on the "reuse" aspect of sustainability. The diversity of reuse businesses, groups, non-profits and government agencies amazed me; it wasn't just about 2nd hand stores! People were there from all over the world and Portland was a perfect place to host such a gathering. From their food carts' "Go Boxes" to the City's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Metro, DEQ, Habitat Restore, Goodwill Industries, St. Vincent DePaul and many other groups, there was quite a wide range of local involvement. Then, there was representation from throughout the Northwest.

Some of the important "take-aways" for me were:

- We are consuming in 8 months what Nature takes 12 months to produce!
- Reuse is 4-5 times BETTER than recycling, when it comes to saving energy and preventing emissions.
- Product waste has doubled since 1960.
- By reusing, (before recycling!) materials go to the highest and best use.
- David Allaway from DEQ made a strong case for reuse because of the "environmental protection" it entails. He said it should NOT be about "keeping things out of the landfill." (What?!) 20-30 years ago it WAS about keeping things out of the landfill, but now landfills are managed appropriately and we have lots of room, relatively. He reminded us that most of the "pollution" happens "upstream" during the "production of stuff"; 10-20 times more pollution happens when things are produced...like in the factories or when the resource was "extracted." 41% of the energy/emissions comes from extraction and manufacturing. (Yikes!! That is a lot! Recycling saves maybe 6%...not buying it in the first place, can save 41%!! Do I really need that?) So, there needs to be more emphasis on REDUCING our consumption in the first place, (thoughtful consumption?) REUSING what we already have, then RECYCLING what we can, COMPOSTING, RECOVERING ENERGY, and when all else fails, DISPOSING. Emissions are reduced upfront when there is reuse so what can the state do to make reuse more likely? And, it can't be just the state looking at this. All of us need to take responsibility.

Along with reuse, one session emphasized repurpose, repair and rental. The state of Minnesota did an extensive survey of all the "reuse" businesses and concluded that the reuse industry is NOT INCONSEQUENTIAL. They included such businesses as automotive/boat repair, salvage and refurbishment, rental stores, resale of previously owned goods by a business or charity, deconstruction and much, much more. There was a lot of economic activity involved in reuse in some way, shape or form! There was an underlying theme that REUSE often gets a bad rap in terms of the public impression and the economic growth model but, that was seen as unfair if one looked closer. Resources like "Ifixit.com", (a website that gives you access to repair steps for thousands of products!) repair cafes, free geek and remembering the triple bottom line (People-Planet-Profit) all were emphasized at this gathering. The idea that we "lack systems and infrastructure to make reuse easy." How does one access a data base that helps connect people who have stuff with people that need stuff? Reuse Alliance Chapters around the nation are tackling such a challenge. These notes just "scratch the surface" when it comes to reuse but it sure gets me thinking!! There is so much more to do and to know that there are resources out there to help us, it is encouraging!!

Thank you for all you do to help educate your family, friends, co-workers, and community about sustainable and healthy living.

**Sincerely,**

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TriCounty Hazardous Waste & Recycling is part of North Central Public Health District.

