

WASTE BYTES!

Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management and Recycling Program

2010 Maine Recycles Week Is Over



(The winning poster, submitted by Tessa, of Chelsea)

On November 29th, the Maine Recycles Week (MRW) Steering Committee Members met in Augusta to look at the entries submitted for both the School Contest and the Poster Contest. We always like to point out the importance of each individual's contribution. We also know how everyone anxiously awaits the outcome of the competitions. The selection process was very challenging this year due to the number and quality of school submissions and posters. After much review and discussion, the MRW Steering Committee did take special notice of the following entries.

Twenty-one schools formally entered the school contest, making it difficult to choose the top candidates. Three were chosen for meeting or exceeding the contest's criteria. These three were: Bowdoinham Community School; St. John Regional Catholic School in Winslow, and G.W. Mallet School in Farmington.

When the last poster had arrived, the Committee had the pleasure of reviewing over 1700 entries. By the end of the week, December 3, 2010, all of the pieces of the 2011 Maine Recycles Calendar had been delivered to the printer.

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Recycling Is Good for You - Perspective on Hospital Recycling

Not a soul should call recycling a dirty business again!

Recently, and hopefully because of Maine Recycles Week 2010, the number of phone calls and e-mails increased in our office; however not all were from schools, municipalities, or businesses. Well, not all the usual sources anyway. One call came from a clinic that was working on becoming "greener" and another came from a golf course that wanted to. I'll pass on any comments about that. With all the energy being directed toward increasing the 'greening' of schools, institutions, and businesses of any kind, it should not have seemed unusual to hear from the Health Care Industry. The idea of a green business concept has given new life to promoting the likes of recycling and even composting. Of all Industries, health care is sensitive to controlling costs and efficiently tackling waste reduction efforts.



Bettie Kittell and Molly Gardner,
Co-chairs of the Mid Coast Hospital's Recycling Committee

First it needs to be pointed out that the Maine Hospital Association had worked on waste reduction and proper disposal for some time.

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The cover is the picture drawn by Tessa Gervais from the Stepping Stones Montessori School in Chelsea. This is the third consecutive year that Tessa has had her work recognized. Mahoney Junior High School in South Portland had three students whose posters were selected: Jackman Mickiewicz; Caleb Cram; and Caitlin Gaven. Livermore Falls High School had two students: Tayla Knapp and Lindsey Donahue. Williams-Cone Elementary in Topsham had two students: Lyndsey Hanna and Morgann Allard. A student from each of four other schools were selected and awarded a month on the calendar. These were: Emma Tirrell, Scarborough Middle School; Julianna Preston, South Bristol Elementary School; Catherine Faulkner, Marshwood High School, South Berwick; Erika Auger, Wiscasset Middle School; and Alexandra Buzzini, Weatherbee School, Hampden.

We would like to congratulate and thank each student, teacher, and school staff member for taking part in this year's Maine Recycles Week activities. We would also like to thank each of you for your commitment to recycling and promoting waste reduction strategies, such as recycling and composting.

A Host of Surveys and a Little Bit of Insight

Some of you may have noticed that the last issue of "Waste Bytes", and the Maine Resource Recovery Association, circulated surveys in the last month. It wasn't intended to go that way, although we were both aware of the possibility of testing the waters again with a survey. The MRRRA did a separate e-survey while we just added the list of questions to "Waste Bytes". To keep a promise is always important - so what was learned? First of all, the title about says it all - "A Host of Surveys/a Little Bit of Insight". Having reached a lot of people we still received less than 10 responses each.

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Physicians for Social Responsibility have added their support of the fight against Global Warming and other environmental issues as well. And quite some time ago, I was made aware of Bettie Kittell at the Mid Coast Hospital. To help explain her requests for MRW posters one year, George explained about her work in reducing waste and improving recycling at the hospital as well as her taking part in other projects. After only e-mails over the years, I finally met Bettie at last year's MRRRA conference. She was with the new co-chair of their recycling committee, Molly Gardner.

This year when Bettie's request came for the MRW posters, she pointed out that the committee had a display for the week at the hospital. It took only a little hesitation to realize that I would be in Brunswick and make up my mind to drop by and thank her for her efforts. I would miss the day of their manning the booth; however she gave me instructions to go to the front desk when I arrived and they would either page her out of the operating room or find Molly. I hoped that she didn't say that to everyone.



Photo of Mid Coast Hospital's booth

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Even with only a few responses; each and every answer is not only important but deserves careful interpretation and consideration. Any survey or evaluation is a snapshot of a time. With the surveys, an invitation was made to offer suggestions at any time. This was a time to open up the e-mail channels and invite responses and important thoughts from the day's work, issues from discussions or conversations, interest from reading, or especially your own creative ideas. Please remember that.

The 'Nugget' from a Waste Bytes Survey

What did we learn from what we asked? For those of you that looked and didn't respond, you noticed that questions looked at communication, technological and other forms. Remember again that we heard from less than 10 of you.

- Suzanne and our summer intern put a lot of effort into our Face Book and Twitter sites, which are still well-maintained and kept current by Suzanne. We wanted to know your thoughts and a few let us know. As for Face Book, no one answered positively about it, and yet we thank the better than half of you that signed up. Almost everyone saw an advantage to social networking and commended the strategy.
- Lana has taken the reins of not only managing the data but also the web site. Personally, I think she does a great job and better than half of you agreed. A couple more use it for information and recognize the true value of the interactive age.
- Maine Recycles Week is recognized by about half and may reflect a disconnect with the institutional and business part of the community.
- It does appear that the web sites of SPO, DEP, and EPA are viewed favorably by facilities in our rural state as a means of providing information, news, and communication. We are glad that that is recognized, since it does aid in our communication efforts with each of you when used.

Thank you.

I started by asking for Molly. Molly first led me to the hallway that was lined with educational displays – mostly on recycling. She explained that when manned they did have a trivia game going that asked those passing by to identify what could be recycled or not. The person was awarded a towel for their guess and learning the correct answer. By the number of towels, they had estimated over 75 stopping by. Actually as I looked at the display, I had to admit that I had learned a lot myself and dispelled a few myths of my own about hospitals. As I was receiving a presentation from Molly, we were joined by Bettie. One thing that they were especially proud of was the incident of being recognized by their administration with the displays. Bettie explained that now with the single stream recycling they have made an impression on the bottom line. With recycled materials being hauled away at \$9, which is a fraction of the cost of the trash and almost non-existent with the cost of handling some special waste, recycling has become more important than ever.

Molly took over for the rest of the tour then. Starting in the ICU, she explained that they had picked the right place to begin. She had nothing but praise for how well the staff picked up and ran with recycling. Later, in other parts of the hospital, she could say (and often did), "Please don't tell me you don't have time to recycle or can't, because I have seen how good they are at it in the ICU". Evidently many of the barriers dropped at that reply.

Along the way of the tour, the popularity of Molly and recycling was evident. In almost every convenient space and room there was a blue container for recycling and another for trash. Somewhere close by were containers for returnable beverage containers. Molly explained about the collecting of the 'single sort bags' and the adding of a label to prevent confusion. She also was proud to be able to complain that containers used for picking up recyclables were getting too small and they are looking for larger sized barrels. At one point, I thought that I understood Molly to say that their recycling rate was about 20% and she knew they could do better. She also explained her hope that they would soon be composting food waste. Thinking of the number of kinds of waste streams identified made me realize just how great a job they have done.

MRRRA Winter Workshop

If you hurry, you can be part of it!

The Maine Resource Recovery Association is holding its Winter Workshop at the Millenium in Palmyra (Newport) on January 24, 2011 from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Snow Date: Tuesday - snow postponement only if state offices are closed on Monday).

Check out the details on the MRRRA web site, and while you are there, you can take advantage of the opportunity to register, if you haven't. http://www.mrra.net/admin/assets/2011_Winter_Workshop.pdf

There are two breakout groups for the workshop. Topics for each include:

- ❖ Blood Borne Pathogens
- ❖ Safety Certification: Personal Protective Equipment Parts 1 & 2;

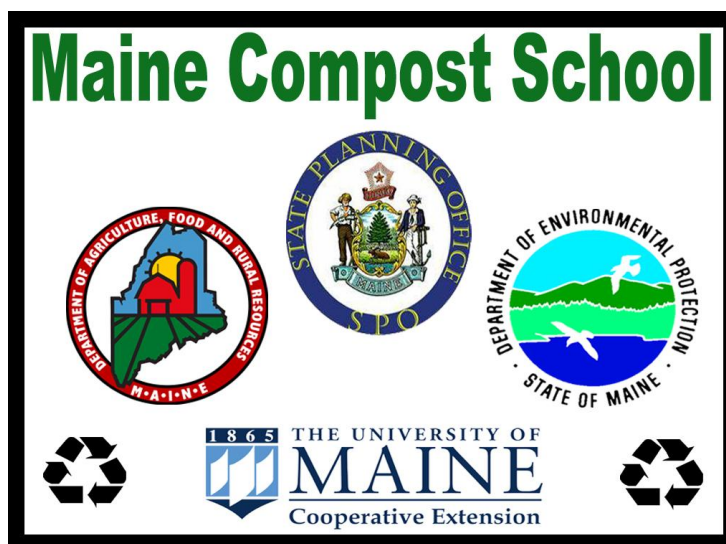
Or

- What Computers Can Do for your Program!
- What's New in Universal Waste!
- MRRRA's Efficiency Study of Waldoboro

At lunch you can even let MRRRA know what you need or want - from MRRRA anyway.

Hope to see you there.....

With interest growing in composting organics at municipal facilities, consider attending the Maine Compost School at Highmoor Farm in Monmouth for one of their week-long trainings. The week is filled with classroom presentations, hands-on training in composting and tours of area composting facilities.



By passing the exam at the end of the week, you become 'technically certified' as a composter, which is of benefit to your municipality or regional program. The school is offered twice a year, once in June and again in October. Class size is limited, so make your reservation early. For more information, visit the school's website at www.composting.org