

TexasRecyclesComputers.org Expands Web Site

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has expanded its computer recycling Web site, TexasRecyclesComputers.org, to include even more options for recycling computers.

TexasRecyclesComputers.org, which launched in September, is part of the new computer recycling program created by House Bill 2714 in the 80th Texas Legislature. The program requires computer manufacturers that sell in Texas to offer their consumers a convenient recycling program that is also free at the time of recycling. Once a computer manufacturer submits a recycling plan that meets state requirements, it will be added to the manufacturers list maintained on TexasRecyclesComputers.org.



To find out how an old computer can be recycled, visit TexasRecyclesComputers.org, find the computer brand on the list and click on the manufacturer's name. You will then be redirected to the manufacturer's recycling Web page. If a manufacturer is not on the list, TexasRecyclesComputers.org has other resources available to help recycle old computers. The Web site also contains additional information to promote computer recycling.

Austin Energy Offers Customers Ways to Save



Austin Energy is helping its customers use less energy—and save money! That's right: as a publicly owned electric utility company and a city department, Austin Energy not only returns profits to the community annually, it also offers a variety of commercial and residential energy-saving tips and free services.

Austin Energy assists more than 600 customer residences annually with its free weatherization program. The program provides services such as attic insulation, duct sealing, and weather stripping to low-income, elderly, or disabled Austin Energy customers. In addition, the company offers a variety of other energy-efficiency rebates and loans to area residents who are customers.

Austin Energy also offers assistance to small-business owners through its Small Business Lighting Program, which provides

installation of energy-efficient lighting at discounted prices. The program serves commercial customers requiring 100 kilowatts or less, as well as churches and non-profits. Best of all, the program pays up to 70 percent of the total cost of parts and installation.

Other Austin Energy programs include refrigerator recycling, "Power Partner" thermostats, and free home improvements.

To learn more about these and other programs, visit www.austinenergy.com.

Austin Energy's Decker Creek Power Plant is a Gold-level leader in the Clean Texas Environmental Leadership Program. To find out how to become a Clean Texas member, or to search for Clean Texas leaders in your community, visit www.cleantexas.org.

Need a New Year's Resolution? How About Take Care of Texas?



When making your resolutions for the New Year, try adding a few environmentally friendly practices to your list. A few easy changes to your daily routine can help the environment and save you money throughout the year.

Drive less. To reduce your vehicle's air-polluting emissions, you can carpool with a coworker, use public transit, or simply combine errands when possible. By ride-sharing every day, commuters can save up to \$3,000 a year on gas, insurance, parking, and wear and tear on their cars.

Turn off the lights. Turn off the lights when you leave the room to reduce your energy consumption and in turn help reduce polluting air emissions. Not using four 60-watt incandescent light bulbs for two hours a day can save you about \$15 a year.

Pack your lunch. By eliminating the drive to your local eatery, you help reduce polluting air emissions. When packing your lunch, try using a reusable container that allows you to take home your leftovers.

Try composting. Yard trimmings make up 20 percent of the waste generated by Texans each year. Instead of throwing them out with the garbage, you can recycle these materials by composting them. Compost can serve as a soil conditioner that will help improve your garden and reduce your water usage.

For more ideas on how to help take care of Texas this year, visit www.takecareoftexas.org.

Questions About Household Hazardous Waste?

Many household projects involve the use of products such as paints, cleaners, varnishes, pesticides, and fuels such as gasoline or propane. Some of these types of products contain materials that can be hazardous to people and to the environment if used or disposed of improperly. These materials, when disposed of, are often referred to as household hazardous waste.

Federal regulations allow household hazardous waste to be disposed of in the regular trash in most cases; however, there are better disposal options that are more protective of the environment. Across Texas, communities help citizens find ways to properly manage and dispose of their household hazardous waste. Many communities host one-day collection events, or develop programs for collecting household hazardous waste at permanent facilities.

The TCEQ's household hazardous waste management program offers assistance to both municipalities and citizens with the following:

- Educational and regulatory information
- Technical assistance in setting up a collection program
- Contact information for existing programs
- General information on relevant issues

To find out more about household hazardous waste visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/nav/household_chem_waste.html.

Protect Children from Environmental Risks

Children are often more sensitive than adults to substances in the environment, both indoors and outdoors. Their bodies are still developing, and their playtime activities can expose them to chemicals and organisms. However, there are many simple ways to help protect children from environmental risks and keep them healthy and safe. Try these tips:

- Walk, use bicycles, and take public transportation to do your part in reducing air pollution. Limit outdoor activity on ozone-alert days when air pollution is especially harmful.
- Store pesticides, cleaners, and other hazardous household waste where kids cannot reach them—never store hazardous household waste in containers that kids can mistake for food or drink.
- Properly dispose of potentially toxic household chemicals. Take used motor oil to a recycling center, and find a nearby hazardous household waste collection facility for other chemicals.

For more tips on protecting children from environmental risks, visit <http://yosemite.epa.gov/ochp/ochpweb.nsf/content/tips.htm>.

Updated TCEQ Publications

Outdoor Burning Poster, GI-391, reminds people that outdoor burning is prohibited in Texas, with only certain exceptions.

Air Pollution from Particles – Facts, GI-274, explains fine-particle air pollution, why it is a concern, and what is being done to reduce it.

Backflow Protection on Water-Based Fire Protection Systems, RG-345, provides guidance for water purveyors, waterworks operators, fire line personnel, professional consultants, and licensed testers.



To order TCEQ publications, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications.

Take Care of Texas Tips

At Home Plant Shade Trees

Planting deciduous trees on the south and west sides of your house and around your air conditioner will help save you energy by keeping your home shady and cool in the summer, yet allow the sun to shine through windows to warm your home in the winter. Just three properly placed deciduous trees around your house can save an average household between \$100 and \$250 in heating and cooling costs each year.

Around the Office Recycle Paper Products



Recycling paper products—including newspapers, paperboard boxes (like cereal and cracker boxes), cardboard boxes, junk mail, and office paper—saves money. That's because recycling paper fiber is cheaper than growing, harvesting, and processing trees. Texans dispose of enough trash every two weeks to fill the Astrodome. Recycling 1 ton of paper is the equivalent of using between 17 and 31 trees to produce paper and saves 7,000 gallons of water and 4,000 kilowatts of electricity—enough power for the average home for six months.

www.takecareoftexas.org

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