

THE OKRA NEWS

OKLAHOMA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2014

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Poteau Recycling Center Celebrates Grand Opening

Accessible recycling center encourages community involvement

POTEAU, Okla. – On May 28, 2014, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma celebrated the opening of a new recycling center in Poteau. Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. and members of the Tribal Council were present for the celebration as well as center representatives who provided visitors with information about services available at the center.

The Poteau recycling facility was made possible by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Native Americans – Social and Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) and

will help those who wish to recycle to make a positive impact on the environment as well as help save money on waste bills. The Poteau Recycling Center is in District

four of the Choctaw Nation and since officially opening in January, 2013 has received such overwhelming interest and contributions that grand opening ceremonies had to be delayed until this year.

For additional information about recycling services at the Poteau facility, please visit the center at 304 Kerr Avenue, Poteau, OK 74953 or call 918-649-0343 or 580-920-0488.



Press Release from Choctaw Nation May 21, 2014



Choctaw Nation Mascot, Luksi, with the winning 3rd grade class from Talihina Elementary School's Recycling Contest

Taking Recycling to School....

Jon Hotubbee, Choctaw Nation Recycling Coordinator, teaches students about recycling at Talihina Elementary School in April 2014. The Choctaw Nation partnered with the ODEQ (Bryce Hulsey and Sara Ivey, ODEQ, are on stage with Jon) to provide recycling containers inside and outside the school. They also held a recycling contest to increase students' enthusiasm for recycling. The Choctaw Nation plans to host similar events at two more area schools in August.



Tribe Launches Innovative Vermicomposting Program

ADA, Okla. - Chickasaw citizens are aware of the superb food served at Okchamali's Café located inside the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center. Hundreds of people eat at the café daily, knowing the food served is healthy. Fruits, vegetables and a full-service salad bar are items served daily.

While most of the food is consumed by patrons, there are always leftovers that must be safely discarded. To reduce the burden on the local landfill and support the Chickasaw Nation's stewardship core value, Okchamali's Café will be the test site for a new composting program.

"Okchamali's Café is good reliable source for composting materials," environmental specialist Ambrie Johnson said. "They don't cook with lots of salt and fat. The vegetables, fruit and other nutritious items will be collected and used to make great fertilizer. We plan on using this soil to grow vegetables at the community gardens."

If successful, Johnson hopes Okchamali's Café will be the first of many compost pickup sites within the Chickasaw Nation.

"This is a plan that will be built upon. We want to get to where the Chickasaw Nation is adding little to the waste stream," Johnson said. "Every day we throw away thousands of pounds of renewable trash into landfills, much of which can be recycled or used in other creative ways, like composting."

The process used to make the compost from the food collected at the Okchamali's Café is as unique as the program itself. Instead of using the traditional composting methods, a special breed of earthworms are used to make compost faster and richer for soils.

"We are using a process of composting the material collected at the café called vermicomposting. Vermicomposting uses worms to speed up the process," Johnson said. "It is more efficient and takes less time and energy to see the benefits than customary composting methods. We should start seeing usable materials within two to three months."

According to Oklahoma State University Extension Office, the end product of vermicomposting is better for plants and soil than most commercial fertilizers. Vermicomposting reduces the cost of municipal solid waste collection and prolongs the life of landfills.

"There are a lot of benefits to vermicomposting," Johnson said. "We will save money by taking less trash to the landfill, we won't have to buy as much fertilizer for our gardens and we will have another teaching tool to show our citizens how to live a sustainable lifestyle."

About Vermicomposting

Few things are more mysterious in the natural world than the intertwining and interaction of animals between one another. Among these creatures are the lowly, wiggly red and pink worms that tunnel beneath our feet that are barely given a thought.

More than bait for a Saturday afternoon fishing trip, these insatiable eaters provide much needed nutrients into the soil for plants to grow healthy and strong. They are Mother Nature's garbage disposals, eating any organic material in their path and leaving soils rich with nutrients.

Vermicomposting is great for home gardens and flowerbeds. Containing nutrients that dissolve and slowly spread in water when

added to soil, the compost is nutrient-rich and conditions the earth. Vermicomposting is 100 percent organic and eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers. With less than 2 pounds of worms, most kitchen trash can be turned into money-saving compost.

According to research done by the University of Nebraska, vermicomposting contains five times more nitrogen, seven times more phosphorus and 11 times more potassium than normal soil. Vermicomposting is rich in humic acids and improves soil structure.

Gardeners can buy vermicomposting kits for home use for less than \$100, or they can be made from products purchased at the local hardware store. Vermicomposting



Worms eat organics and leave behind rich soil

bins come in different sizes and materials, but they all maintain proper living conditions for worms.

"We have a vermicomposting system that can handle about 50 pounds of vegetable matter a day," Johnson said. "Home vermicomposting systems don't need to be anywhere near that big. With a pound or two of worms and easy modifications to a plastic tote, a family can significantly reduce the amount of trash sent to the landfill and have great compost for their garden."

Home composting has been studied by the Chickasaw Nation since 2007. Each year, the Chickasaw Nation Environmental Services hosts hands-on learning classes at Environmental Camp and at Senior Sites that includes composing demonstrations. The pilot program at Okchamali's Café is a natural progression from what environmental technicians have learned from teaching composting for the home.

For more information, contact Cindy Gammons at 272-5456.

Recycling Day at Skyline Elementary by Maci and Angela

Skyline Elementary is a school in Stillwater with a strong focus on recycling and sustainability. Skyline has been certified as an Oklahoma Green School for the past three years. On Saturday, April 26, 2014, Skyline held its third annual School and Community Recycling Day. During this event Skyline collected computers, printers, keyboards, scanners, appliances, bicycles, aluminum cans and other metal items. Free donuts and coffee were given away to participants. The following article written by Skyline students, Maci and Angela, was featured in the Skyline school newsletter.

Recycling day is a part of our recycling effort at Skyline. Recycling day took place in the west parking lot. People brought bicycles, old computers, chairs, dishwashers, fencing and other things. It was a huge success. The volunteers were there for three hours, from 9-11 am and



people came to drop off their scrap metal. They collected over 10,000 pounds of scrap metal. The metal will be turned into lots of different things. Skyline kids saved a lot of landfill space to help our earth stay clean and pretty. The metal recycling company, Northern Oklahoma Metals wrote a check to Skyline for almost \$1,400.



Skyline will use the money for our recycling fund that will help us improve our school's recycling program.

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American Waste Control's Dynamic Duo: Recycling and Waste to Energy

A few years back, we made a strategic decision to begin investing heavily in recycling for the express purpose of diverting re-usable resources from the waste stream. Our new and improved Material Recovery Facility, or Mr. Murph, as we call him uses state of the art processing equipment to separate two and three dimensional recyclables by size, allowing residents to mix recyclables placed in our Mr. Murph recycling container.

significant efficiencies to the facility. A good example is the redundant functions we built in to the MRF to increase uptime in case of any technical delay or malfunction.

The efficiency gained by our automated equipment and the ability to now pull previously discarded recyclables from the waste stream greatly reduces the impact of



American Waste Control Headquarters in Tulsa with Mr. Murph recycling bin and hybrid car out front

Our recycling program works in tandem with our waste to energy landfill, at American Environmental Landfill. Residue material generated from our Mr. Murph drop-off sites that cannot be recycled is hauled to the landfill where we are generating enough electricity to power over 4800 homes across Green Country.

A New Era in Citywide Recycling

We installed our new Mr. Murph to improve diversion rates and productivity for the new wave of recyclables from our recycling contract with the City of Tulsa. The new MRF replaces an almost entirely manual process with screens, magnets, optical sorters, air classifiers and quality control inspection points to dramatically improve our sustainability efforts.

We spent approximately one year in design planning and six months in the actual installation process of Mr. Murph, which included numerous site and design revisions. The prep time in planning paid off for us, as we were able to implement design features that added

trash on the environment and decreases the use of natural resources in the manufacturing process of new products.

Since going to our fully automated system, our material recovery rates from single stream recyclables delivered to our MRF are now as high as 95% of the recyclables processed. Prior to automation, our recovery rates were 20-30%. The City of Tulsa now has a 22% diversion of recyclables from the waste stream, which represents a dramatic shift in Tulsa's previous trash disposal efficiency.

In addition to our city-wide residential recycling, we have also reached out into communities across Tulsa, partnering with local municipalities, civic organizations, schools and churches to bring a convenient and easy approach to recycling with full service Mr. Murph mini drop-off sites. American Waste Control now has over a 100 Mr. Murph bins throughout the Tulsa metro market, providing no cost recycling options to Tulsa residents who can now place their recyclables into one container with no sorting needed.

Harnessing the Power

Although we aim to reclaim as much of the recyclable material as possible from the waste stream, we know a small percentage of it cannot be recycled. With this in mind, we have implemented an innovative approach for using non-recyclable trash residue at our landfill to produce renewable energy and power homes.

Finding a way to harness a growing percentage of our city's waste has always been our goal and now it's a reality. Over the coming years, we will continue to expand our emphasis on renewable energy and help our city's efforts to create energy sustainability within our backyard.



Tons of recyclables are processed inside the Tulsa Material Recovery Facility (MRF)

We now have a process to capture methane gas from decomposing trash through a series of strategically drilled wells. We are collecting the gas and then converting it via three generators into electricity to power over 4800 homes in Pawhuska and 38 other small Oklahoma communities.

It's our way of squeezing every bit of use out of the disposal process—creating new sources of renewable energy—and providing significant benefits for the community. Not only is our system generating power, but it's also offsetting fossil fuel consumption and reducing greenhouse gas to create a huge environmental plus for Tulsa.

We believe our recycling facility to be the ideal partner with our waste to energy technology: Our innovation is reducing waste and providing a new source of power across Green Country. We're seeing a terrific return on our investment, and it's measured in enriched lives.

More recyclables, more jobs, reduced landfills, less pollution—and it's just the beginning. Our quality of life is improving as a community. And, to us, there's no better result than that.

**By Robert Pickens, General Manager
Tulsa Recycle and Transfer**

ARC Awards Local Artists for Recycled Art

The Ada Recycling Coalition awarded prizes to winners of their annual 3-D Recycled Art contest in April 2014. At left, ARC member, Bruce Hartley, awards prizes to the following students; David Lawrence, Samantha Perry, Katie Cowger, Kaylee Martin, and Rebecca Jefferson. Students in Ada and surrounding areas are invited to participate in next year's contest. For more information, call the ARC at 580-436-8100 or visit adarecyclingcoalition.blogspot.com.



City Recycling Will Continue in Enid

ENID, Okla. — As the Department of Human Services divests from its recycling operation in Enid, there has been concern that locals could lose that service. A deal has been made, however, to continue recycling pick-ups and drop-offs without a hitch.

The City of Enid said Monday it would provide a building where developmentally disabled clients can sort and compact recyclable materials starting mid-June. The drop-off point in Frisco Park will remain in operation, and Keepin' Enid Green, a private business, will continue to make pick-ups throughout the city without interruption.

Public Works Director Jim McClain said the DHS clients now will work out of a building on a city lot at Spruce and Cherry.



"As far as the area, it's not much different. It's a comparative size," he said.

DHS' document-shredding operation tied to the recycling enterprise, OES Information Destruction, also will cease operations soon, but a private employer has stepped up to fill the gap.

Supported Community Lifestyles Inc. already employs about 100 DHS clients in Enid. It will manage the recycling center workers both at the city facility and through a new document-shredding business it owns.

"It was getting close to the deadline and it didn't seem like there were any other people that were quite as interested as I was in saving the jobs," said owner Ron Hammock. "They have a long history of working with the community on recycling, and it just seemed like a waste and a shame to let all just go by the wayside."

Hammock's DocuGuard business will provide the building

and labor for secure destruction of sensitive documents and materials. Just like OES Information Destruction, it will be nationally certified to do the sensitive work.

Hammock said his company is trying to work out a deal that would allow them to pick up and store cardboard disposed by commercial clients.

McClain said he is glad to see a conclusion to the uncertainty.

"It's always better to know where you're going than not where you're going. In that sense, absolutely. We can make our plans for the future accordingly, then," McClain said. "Our main concern, too, was making sure the clients still have a job. They do a good job, and we're looking forward to a continued relationship."

Enid's recycling operation will be managed by the Solid Waste Department. Chris Feeney, a state employee overseeing the current recycling operations, has been hired by Hammock's company.

"I was really nervous that it was all going to die," he said.

Feeney also operates his own business, Keepin' Enid Green, which provides a pick-up service. Now that the future of recycling in Enid is more certain, he hopes his operation can grow.

"I've been staying stagnant for a long time, but I'm hoping we can service even more homes now. I even went and bought another trailer this week so I'm hedging on it, for sure," he said.

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Enid News & Eagle

Dale Denwalt, Staff Writer

May 12, 2014

ARC's Annual Phone Book Collection Contest

The Ada Recycling Coalition sponsored its 16th annual Telephone Book Collection contest earlier this year.

Congratulations to Homer School, this year's \$150 winner, for collecting the most unwanted phonebooks (1,452).

Winning teachers who won money for pizza parties for their students were: Brenda Roberts (Homer) Diana Wallis (Washington) Claudette Wellington (Roff) Stacy Laden (Allen) Marsha Reeves and Monica Morrow (Latta) and Kathy Evans (Ada Early Childhood) and Byng Cosmetology.



Second Chance School Supplies

"used, but still useful"

Second Chance School Supplies (SCSS) is a non-profit started in Fayetteville, Arkansas. SCSS was founded by Rachel Deeds, who will be a high school senior next year, when she was only in the 7th grade. SCSS is based on the principle of "used, but still useful." Essentially, the program has a two-fold goal: To reduce the unnecessary waste that is generated each school year by diverting perfectly good school supplies from being thrown into the landfill; and to give these recovered materials to the students that need them most for the following school year.

Five years ago, Rachel was assisting a teacher in a first- grade classroom and was shocked to learn that many students had only one or two crayons to draw pictures. It broke her heart to see that those children were lacking such basic supplies.

Rachel knew that many students at her school threw away still-usable supplies at the end of each year. She decided to save those items for kids whose families could not afford new school supplies. With support from her principal, teachers and a few friends, she set up collection boxes, made posters, and produced a TV commercial to encourage fellow students to recycle their used notebooks, binders and other school supplies. Rachel worked with her friends over the summer in her family's garage to sort and clean what they collected, and delivered 30 large boxes of supplies to the elementary school where she had noticed the crayon shortage. On the first year, SCSS collected \$2,000 worth of supplies from Rachel's school alone, growing to \$5,000 worth of supplies from five area schools the following year.

Since then, Second Chance School Supplies has expanded to more than 20 schools in Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma. In Rachel's area alone, it has provided over 5,000 pounds of supplies worth more than \$30,000 to benefit over 2,500 students.

In February 2014, Rachel was named Arkansas' top high school volunteer by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. She received a \$1000 cash award along with an engraved silver medallion and an all-expense trip to Washington D.C., for four days of recognition events.

But for Rachel, it's all about the recycling and not the recognition. To further this end, she works through school Green Teams and speaks at recycling conferences and PTA groups to promote her award-winning program.



STARTING A SCSS PROGRAM

To create a sustainable cycle of use and re-use in your school, set up a Second Chance School Supplies program. It is easy to start-up in that it requires a one-time collection event at the end of the academic year during locker/desk cleanout day. Here are the steps you need to take to get the program up and running.

1. First identify a group of students in your school that would be good candidates to head the program. Many schools now have "Green Teams," and these are great examples of groups that could take the lead for the SCSS program. If your school doesn't have a green team, work on electing a group of interested students for the task. Once a student group has been identified, make sure that there is a willing staff member who will sponsor the event.

2. Ask all the teachers in the school to support the collection event. Teachers are only asked to supply 2-3 large boxes for the "rescued" supplies and to give their students reminders on clean-out day to find the supplies that are still useful and put them into the collection boxes rather than in the trash.



3. Inform the parents of your students about the program. SCSS has handouts available to be sent home with the students describing the program.

4. Designate an area in the school where the recovered school supplies can be housed until the time comes for sorting and cleaning. If space is an issue at your school, you can contact EAnderson@co.washington.ar.us for alternative ways to find suitable space for the materials.

5. Have the student group in charge of the program hang posters and/or give speeches to classrooms to help get all the students excited and to rally support for organizing the collection campaign and sorting the collected supplies to get them ready to donate.

6. Determine whether or not your school has a need for the supplies. If so, your administration will be responsible for re-distributing the rescued materials to the students. If your school does not have a need for the supplies and wishes to donate them to other schools in need, please contact SCSS at 2ndChanceSupplies@att.nett and they will get you information on how to donate.

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To join or renew your membership in 2014:

- ♦ **Send completed membership brochure and check by mail to OKRA, PO Box 521154, Tulsa, OK 74152-1154.**
- ♦ **Go to www.recycleok.org/join-us.php and access the online membership form toward the bottom of the page. You can pay online via PayPal or by mail (send your check to the PO Box above).**

If you renewed or joined OKRA in 2014, but are not listed here, please email info@recycleok.org

Thanks to our 2014 OKRA members who are working to improve recycling efforts in Oklahoma!



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