

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



Spokane Regional
SOLID
WASTE
SYSTEM

(509) 625-6580

www.solidwaste.org

Spring 2009



E-Cycle Washington gets off to a great start

Beginning in January, households, schools, small businesses, small governments, and non-profit organizations can now drop off electronics (e-waste) for recycling—FREE OF CHARGE. This includes televisions, desktop computers, laptop computers, and monitors. These items are accepted for recycling at registered collection locations throughout Spokane County, including 11 Goodwill sites and the Salvation Army locations on North Division and East Sprague.



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Collections at both the Salvation Army and Goodwill sites have gone smoothly. During the first month of the program, the Salvation Army collected four pallets of computer monitors and the Goodwill locations filled three semi-

trucks. The only problem has been that many residents would also like to recycle broken printers, which are not accepted in this program. The E-Cycle Washington program accepts only televisions, desktop computers (CPUs), laptops, and computer monitors. When you drop these items off, be sure to note whether you are dropping them off for the E-Cycle recycling program or for donation and reuse through Goodwill or the Salvation Army's normal programs.

For more information about electronics recycling, including recycling collection locations, contact the Recycling Hotline, 625-6800, or go online to www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/e-productrecycle/.

Are there still markets for our recyclables?

YES!

The Recycling Hotline has received inquiries from the public about local recycling markets, the downturn in the economy, and the presumption that garbage trucks are picking up recyclables because there are no markets for recyclables and that we would rather burn recyclables for the energy. Here are some "myth-busters":

There are still markets for all of Spokane's recyclables. Granted, the markets are not paying as well as they were, but the commodities are still moving, still being sold, and still being recycled. Plastic 1's and 2's are shipped to a processing plant in Canada. Aluminum and steel cans are going to various processing mills. Glass, which has been persistently difficult to sell, is currently being stockpiled near the North County Transfer Station for future local use as road bed aggregate. Newspaper is shipped to our community's own local paper mill, Inland Empire Paper, in Millwood. Cardboard is sent to various mills in the Pacific Northwest, and other paper grades are being shipped to paper mills within and outside of the U.S. Ferrous and non-ferrous scrap metals go to mills and smelters throughout the world.

As with any commodity, market prices rise and fall with economic

pressures. Recycling markets were riding on an extraordinary bubble over the last few years, driven primarily by overseas demand, particularly from China's huge infrastructure investment. Going from that unusual high to the current unusual low makes the fall feel that much worse. But the markets are still there.

It is cheaper to recycle than it is to dispose. It is better resource management to recycle than to dispose. While the revenue produced from recycling programs does not completely pay for the program, that revenue does offset costs. Think about it—we are not paying anyone \$98/ton

to recycle as we do for disposal. Factor in the additional benefits from the sustainable use of mining, forest, and energy resources, and recycling will *always* save the consumer over disposal.

Recyclables are not being burned just because the market is down. During Spokane's recent winter, some recyclables were picked up and processed as garbage at the Waste to Energy plant. However, that was due to the extreme snows in the Spokane area. The volume of snow and the condition of the roads made it difficult for recycling trucks to negotiate the streets, and additionally bins that had been left outside had too much "snow" contamination, leaving items too wet and slushy to sort and recycle.

So please keep recycling—the markets are still there!



Best Buy offers e-cycling

In February, Best Buy expanded its electronics recycling program nationwide. Customers will be able to drop off up to two devices per day at any of the retailers throughout the United States. Best Buy will accept most consumer electronics, including televisions and monitors up to 32 inches, desktop computers, notebook/laptop computers, videocassette recorders, DVD players, and phones. A \$10 recycling fee will apply to any unit with a screen, such as a television or computer. Customers will receive a \$10 Best Buy gift card in exchange for the recycling fee. The fee does not apply to any of Best Buy's exclusive-branded products, such as Insignia, Dynex, and VPR Matrix. Call local stores for more details.

Sites now open for extended hours

Extended hours and variable fees for "Clean Green" yard debris began on Tuesday, April 1 at all Solid Waste System Disposal sites! Remember, all sites open at 7 a.m. every day. On Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, all sites stay open until 7 p.m. In addition, the Valley Transfer Station will stay open until 7 p.m. on Thursdays. Clean Green can be delivered during all hours that sites are open; however, rates vary depending on delivery time and day:

- From 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., there is a minimum charge of \$5 for up to 280 pounds of Clean Green yard debris. Amounts over the first 280 pounds are charged at 35 cents per 20 pounds. *Exception:* On days that the sites are open late, this rate is in effect until 3 p.m. only.
- From 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. on the days sites are open late, the first 100 pounds of Clean Green are free. Amounts over the first 100 pounds are charged at 35 cents per 20 pounds.
- Senior Citizens (+62) enjoy reduced rates during all weekday hours (Monday through Friday). The first 100 pounds are free. Amounts over the first 100 pounds are charged at 35 cents per 20 pounds.

Citizens may deliver trash (\$98.00 per ton), recyclables (free), and Household Hazardous Waste (free) during all hours that sites are open. For additional details, call the Recycling Hotline, 625-6800, or visit www.solidwaste.org.

Celebrate the Earth!

Earth Day is April 22 and many groups are planning activities:

- April 18, 10 a.m. to Noon, Spokane Valley Earth Day: Spring into Action - A Celebration of Environmental Awareness, Mirabeau Point Park
- April 26, Noon to 5 p.m., Capstone Celebration in Riverfront Park, Gondola Meadows

Watch for a calendar with even more opportunities.

ATTENTION Spokane County Residents

Make sure you know where your garbage goes!



Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) and Spokane County Code require that residential garbage & debris be disposed at these approved facilities only:

- Waste to Energy Facility • North County Transfer Station • Valley Transfer Station

Always obtain a tipping receipt from anyone hauling trash for you. If your identification is found at an illegal dump site, you could be fined up to \$1,000.00.

For additional information, call 509-625-6083



www.solidwaste.org

Recycling Hotline
625-6800

10 tips for Greener Cleaning



(c) Ivonne Wierink / SnapVillage.com

Read more about it!

485 Ways to Clean, Polish, Disinfect, Deodorize, and Remove Stains
Clean and Green: The Complete Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping by Annie Berthold-Bond (Ceres Press, 1994)

All-Purpose Cleaners Buying Guide
www.thegreenguide.com/buying-guide/all-purpose-cleaners

Clean Your House Without Hurting the Planet
www.grist.org/advice/possessions/2003/03/18/possessions-cleaning/

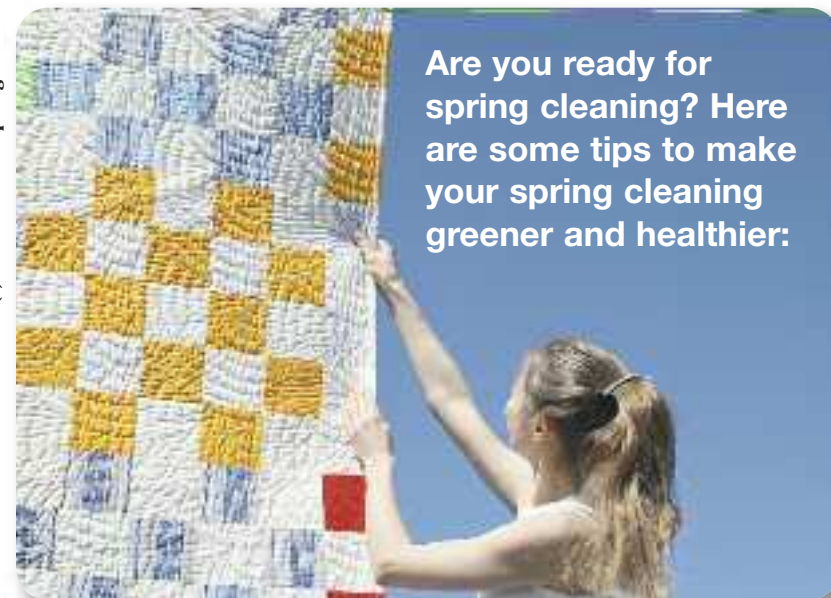
Greener Cleaning
www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning

How to Go Green: Cleaning
<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/green-cleaning/>

How to Make a Non-Toxic Cleaning Kit
www.care2.com/greenliving/make-your-own-non-toxic-cleaning-kit.html

Non-Toxic Home Cleaning
www.eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm

A Test of Green Cleaners
www.grist.org/advice/products/2008/03/25/



(c) Anika Sabera / SnapVillage.com

Are you ready for spring cleaning? Here are some tips to make your spring cleaning greener and healthier:

1. Open the windows. After the house has been closed up for most of the winter, the best thing to do is to give it a good airing out. On a pleasant spring day, throw open the windows and give the house a few hours to breathe in the fresh air.
2. Think mechanical first. A scrub brush, a dish scrubber, and a retired toothbrush can provide a lot of cleaning power with no chemicals at all. Drain baskets keep drains free of debris that can lead to clogs.
3. Use up chemicals that you have on hand before purchasing replacement products. If you have cleaners stored in multiple locations (some in the laundry room, others under the kitchen sink, and a few in the garage), find them and inventory what you have available.
4. Consider creating your own cleaners from common household products, such as vinegar, baking soda, salt, lemon juice, and mineral oil. Many of these cleaners are easy to make, effective, and less expensive than pre-mixed chemical solutions. (Remember that even homemade cleaners can be irritating to skin and eyes. Always use caution in mixing, storing, and using homemade cleaners.)

5. If you choose to purchase a cleaning product, choose the mildest and most benign chemical product available. Although it is not mandatory, a few manufacturers do voluntarily provide a complete list of ingredients. Try to select products that provide you complete information on ingredients, offer the most clear instructions on use, and don't require extraordinary safety measures for use or disposal.
6. When you purchase products or containers, look for recycled-content and recyclable containers. Rather than using paper towels, use reusable towels and old rags. If you purchase paper towels, please choose those made from recycled-content paper.
7. Buying concentrates reduces packaging waste. Some cleaning products are now sold in concentrated form; you finish making the solution by adding tap water at home. Other products, such as laundry detergent, are concentrated and ready to use when you get home. Remember—if you have softened water, you can use even less detergent.
8. Keep unfinished products in their original, labeled containers. *Never* pour potentially harmful chemicals into food or beverage containers for storage. Store all cleaning products out of reach of children and away from pets. Do not store potentially hazardous materials close to sources of heat or in direct sunlight.
9. Dispose of containers and unused chemicals properly. Follow the label instructions. If the instructions are unclear, call the manufacturer for more details or call us.
10. Make sure everyone in your family knows about your new "greener cleaning" habits.

On the GO

If you're trying to trim your expenses, you may be walking or biking more. Walking and biking are good for your health and your pocketbook. Of course, they are also better for our environment because walking and biking don't require fuel or spew out emissions.

However, if you like to take a cup of coffee with you when you leave the house, what are you supposed to do? Reusable travel mugs are fine if you are walking, but may not be fully leak-proof when you bike. There's a simple, waste-free solution—thermal or canteen bottles. The thermal-style bottles keep hot drinks hot and cold drinks cold. These bottles can be sealed, so you can put them into a backpack or bag without worrying about leaks and spills. Many have a built-in loop to allow you to hang the bottle from your handle bars. Others have insulated pouches with handles or loops. Still others will fit right into your bike's water bottle holder.

If your drink of choice is water or a sports drink, you can use the same style bottles. Simply fill the clean bottle with tap water or sports drink from your gallon jug.

Look for leak-proof thermal bottles at local stores. Many carry these bottles and accessories. Or, go online and search for "thermo bottles."



(c) Chasstock / SnapVillage.com

Hope for harried readers Planet Green

"Like money, books must be kept in constant circulation. Lend and borrow to the maximum."

At a time when many have had to tighten their belts, novelist Henry Miller offers good advice for readers. Enjoying a good book doesn't require buying a new copy or even owning it. Books can be borrowed, shared, and swapped. The pleasure is the same, but the cost is less.

The library is, of course, the least expensive way to enjoy good books. You can borrow from the local library's many resources. All you need is a library card.

Another option is used bookstores. When you buy used books, you often pay only one-quarter to one-half of the original price. Some of the "used" books have never even been read. Many secondhand stores sell books, and books are a common item at garage sales, as well.

Sharing books with friends is free. Often, you and your friends enjoy the same types of books or authors. You can also spread your enthusiasm for a book that you couldn't put down by passing it along to a new reader.

In addition to these local resources, there are many online options as well:

- Book Crossing is a program that allows people to "read and release"

books. If you want to release a book or are hunting for one, visit www.bookcrossing.com.

- Several sites offer readers the chance to trade one or more books with other readers, usually for just the cost of shipping. For more information about book swaps by mail, visit www.bookins.com, www.bookmooch.com, www.paperbackswap.com, or www.swaptree.com.

- If you've ever wondered why there isn't a "Netflix" for books, your wait is over. BookSwim allows readers to rent books. This concept is not new. Before the age of downloadable audiobooks, readers could rent books on tape (and later on CD) by mail. Now, readers can rent bestsellers at a fraction of the purchase price. For more information, go to www.bookswim.com.

Books aren't the only media that can be borrowed, shared, swapped, or purchased used, of course. The same applies to DVDs and CDs, as well as many magazines.

You don't have to give up at-home entertainment, but you can lower its cost by lending and borrowing to the maximum.



(c) FutureDigitalDesign / SnapVillage.com

If you have a pay-TV service, such as cable or satellite, you may be getting the Planet Green network. If you enjoy the Discovery channel, you'll like Planet Green.

Planet Green offers a variety of original programs. If you love home renovation or want to know how to live an everyday green life, you'll be able to watch shows like *Living With Ed*, *Renovation Nation*, *Total Wrecklamation*, *WaSted!*, *World's Greenest Homes*, *Focus Earth*, and *Greenovate*. Maybe you're more interested in food. Check out *Emeril Green* or *Supper Club*. If you're wondering what is new in transportation, catch an episode of *Mean Green Machines*. Do you love entertainment news? Watch *Hollywood Green*. How about a game show? Play along with *Go for the Green*.

In addition to the programming, you'll find "Go Green" tips at the website, <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/>, along with games and video clips. There is even a convenient "channel finder" — all you need to know is your ZIP code and your pay-TV service provider.

QUOTES REQUOTED



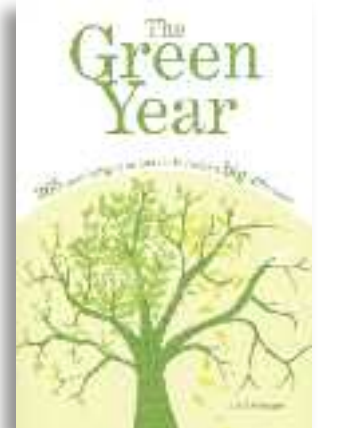
The care of the Earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope.

Wendell Berry, 1934—
American farmer and poet

Greening your year

Looking for small steps that will make a big difference? Check out *The Green Year: 365 Small Things You Can Do to Make a Big Difference* by Jodi Helmer (Penguin Group, 2008). This book has one simple idea for each day of the year. Each page also has a spot for you to check off that you've done the activity or to write your own alternative that will work better for you and your family.

The ideas include reducing waste, saving energy, and much more. Some days suggest things that you probably already do—or have thought about doing—such as replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents and sharing magazines. Other days give you new and fun ideas. For instance, when you stop at your favorite ice cream shop, don't get ice cream in a cup. Instead, order your ice cream in an edible and waste-free cone. Here's another one: Clean out your car's trunk or cargo area and improve your gas mileage. According to Helmer, an extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce your fuel efficiency by 2 percent.



CLIP AND SAVE



(c) Maypop / SnapVillage.com

Each year in the U.S., gas-powered lawn mowers consume more than 720 million gallons of gasoline. At the same time, these mowers spit out harmful air pollutants and disturb the peace and quiet of our spring and summer days.

However, gas-powered mowers aren't the only way to keep your lawn looking good. Electric mowers are quieter and exhaust-free. Some electric mowers need an extension cord, but many of the newer ones contain a rechargeable battery. With battery-powered models, you simply plug in the mower to charge it and then unplug it while you cut the grass. These cordless mowers are heavier and a bit more difficult to maneuver than the corded models. Neither type requires oil changes or gasoline. You do have the cost of electricity, but that may be as little as \$5-10 per year.

Another—and even more environmentally friendly—option is a manual reel lawn mower. Here are just a few of the great reasons to use a reel mower:

- Reel mowers leave behind healthier grass plants because they "snip" the grass, cutting it in the same way that a pair of scissors would. (Powered rotary mowers actually tear the grass blades.)
- Manual mowers don't need gasoline, so an empty gas can will never change your plans. They also don't require an electrical charge, so you don't have to remember to plug them in.
- Push reel mowers produce no harmful emissions and emit no exhaust into your face and your neighborhood's air.
- Manual mowers are whisper-quiet, allowing you to hear your children playing and to enjoy the birds chirping. You can still listen to your music on headphones, but you won't have to!
- You'll enjoy a brisk walk and some resistance training while you mow.
- Reel mowers are virtually maintenance-free. Occasionally, the bearings and cutting edges may need a little lubricant and a slight adjustment. The cutters will need to be sharpened every couple of years.
- You'll never struggle with the pull cord on a manual mower. Simply start walking and the mower starts, too.
- Reel mowers take less space in the garage or shed.
- Push reel mowers are the cheapest to purchase, operate, and maintain.

A manual reel mower isn't right for every yard. The mowers are best suited to smaller yards, such as those that are 10,000 square feet (about one-quarter acre) or less. However, many of today's yards are no bigger than this.

If you'd like more information about reel mowers (or about electric mowers), ask at your hardware store, lawn and garden center, or home supply store. You can also learn more at www.cleanairgardening.com, www.planetnatural.com, www.gardeners.com, www.reelin.com, or www.reelmowerguide.com/.

WHAT'S UP?

As you may remember, last fall the Washington Food Industry and local grocers introduced a campaign to encourage and increase the use of reusable shopping bags through Spokane County. Two different student groups stepped up to the challenge, adding their own variations.

Forty-five students from M.E.A.D. Alternative High School took a class assignment and turned it into a community project to provide greener options for their community. Their main goal was to educate adults and children about plastic bags and try to persuade them to use reusable cloth bags. These students have provided presentations to a number of area elementary and middle schools. Following the presentation on plastic bag usage, reusable shopping bags were used as prizes during a trivia game. The younger students were challenged to go home and tell their parents about plastic bags and encourage them to make the switch to reusables.



Students at the West Valley City School Holiday Craft Fair got hands-on experience with gifts they could make at home, such as baking sugar cookies, frying potato pancakes, sewing pajama pants, painting tree ornaments, recycling puzzle pieces onto picture frames, and creating handmade cards. One of the popular activities was decorating the green reusable bags to personalize them. Students also decorated bags for each of the staff.

Jan Gee and the Washington Food Industry provided the green shopping bags, buttons, and reminder window clings for both projects.

Watch at your favorite grocer for an emphasis on buying and using reusable bags during "Bring Your Own Bag" month in April.

We want your suggestions, questions and comments!

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70% POST-CONSUMER NEWS CONTENT, USING SOY INKS

Spring House Greening set for April 18

Need help disposing of your household hazardous waste? On Saturday, April 18, seniors and the physically challenged will receive assistance with pickup and disposal of Household Hazardous Waste during the 2009 Spring House Greening event. This event is sponsored by RSVP (The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program), the Spokane Regional Health District, and the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System. Assistance from volunteers, neighborhood councils, C.O.P.S., and S.C.O.P.E. contribute to the continued success of this event.

Household Hazardous Waste includes materials such as old batteries, lawn/garden products, oil-based paint, varnish, oil, cleaning

solvents, poisons, and other chemicals. If these products are not disposed of properly, they can be harmful to one's health and cause serious damage to the environment.

Many of these items are still perfectly useful or can be recycled. Each of the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System's transfer stations offers a reuse table where citizens can pick up unused paint and common household chemicals for free—especially after Spring House Greening.

For assistance, leave a message at 228-3193 to coordinate pickup and safe disposal of your Household Hazardous Waste. A volunteer will return your call.

What do you know about event recycling?

The Washington State Department of Ecology has launched a new **Event Recycling** section on Ecology's Solid Waste website. This is the result of an outreach campaign that began in June 2008 on Washington's public event recycling law, which has been in effect since June 2007. Recycling is now required at official gatherings and sports facilities. Beverage vendors are responsible for providing and funding the recycling program. A recycling program must include and provide clearly marked recycling receptacles or reverse vending machines; collection of aluminum, glass, or plastic bottles or cans that contained beverages sold by the vendor; and transportation and recycling services for the collected materials. More information and guidance for setting up a successful event recycling program can be found at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/eventrecycling/.

Thank you, composters!

Each spring and fall, our volunteer Master Composters provide training and the System (with partial funding from the Department of Ecology) provides bins to residents who want to do more backyard composting. In the past five years, about 2,600 home composting bins have been given away, translating into an estimated 7,600 tons of waste reduction during those five years. Home composting also reduces fuel consumption (you don't have to take the material anywhere) and conserves water resources, thus reducing your carbon footprint.

The Master Composters will host two different educational opportunities:

- April 11, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., North County Chipping and Compost Event, Fire District 4, Station 49, Highway 395 and Monroe Road
- April 25, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Compost Fair at Finch Arboretum's Arbor Day Festival, 3403 West Woodland Boulevard

Those who complete the required number of learning stations and are Spokane County residents will receive a free compost bin (one bin per household). For both events, ID that verifies Spokane County residence is required. Please arrive one-half hour prior to the closing time in order to complete the training.



Master Composter Lisa Mount, right, explains to Compost Fair visitors about the right mix of materials to make hot compost.



For the first time, the Community Colleges of Spokane participated in RecycleMania this year. RecycleMania is a friendly competition among college and university recycling programs helping them promote waste reduction activities. Over a 10-week period, schools report recycling and trash data, which are then ranked according to recyclables collected per capita, total recycled, trash per capita, and recycling rate.

At the Spokane Community College kick-off event in January, after a screening of the movie *Garbage*, coordinator Elizabeth Love Sheehan spoke to students on the SCC campus. She said, "We will create the culture of recycling on our campus." Sheehan noted that SCC would be in competition with the Spokane Falls Community College Campus. The school started officially counting recyclables on February 1 and reported an increase each week of the competition. The competition officially ended on March 27. So, look for a more complete report in the July issue.

Donations — Good or Bad?

When donating items to a place that accepts used material, please be thoughtful. If you suspect that an item is "trash," it probably is. Since most organizations have to pay for their garbage service by the ton, a "donation" of an unusable item ends up costing them money instead of helping them.



(c) iStockphoto.com / Mank Wragg

The City of Spokane Public Library does accept donations of some materials. In fact, in 2008, it added the equivalent of \$41,000 in donated materials to the collection. However, they also had to throw away unwanted donations which cost them a fair amount of money. Some donations that are not added to the library's collection are given to the Friends of the Library for sale in their bookstore or their twice-annual sales. The Friends then return the funds raised to library programs, such as summer reading.

These are the types of material that the library welcomes as donations:

- Gently used bestsellers
- Books, both fiction and non-fiction
- CDs (commercially made), both music and audio-book
- DVDs (commercially made)

The library cannot use, and thus will not accept, these items: textbooks, magazines, encyclopedias, abridged books, damaged materials, and homemade CDs and DVDs.

If you have two boxes or less, you can drop them off at any city library branch. If you have more than two boxes, please bring them to the downtown library loading dock during business hours.

For more information, please call 444-5307 or 444-5321.

Menke named Solid Waste System Director

Russ Menke, who has 30 years' experience as a solid waste consulting engineer, was appointed the Director of the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System in February 2009. Prior to January 2008, the System director had also been director of the City of Spokane Solid Waste Management

Department, which provides refuse and recyclables collection in the City of Spokane.

In January 2008, the director duties were split, with Scott Windsor leading Solid Waste Management. Menke began serving as Interim Director of the Regional System in February 2008. Separate leadership for the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System was finalized by the Spokane City Council in July 2008, and in August, the search for the new director began.

In making the appointment, Mayor Mary Verner said, "Our partners want to ensure that the interests of all Spokane County's local governments and citizens are represented." She continued, "Russ Menke has the experience and strengths to lead the system so it serves the needs of the entire community."

The Spokane Regional Solid Waste System was created by an Interlocal Agreement between Spokane County and the City of Spokane in 1988. Since then, 12 regional cities and towns and Fairchild Air Force Base have joined the Spokane Regional Solid Waste System, which operates as a department of the City of Spokane.



Spokane Regional Solid Waste System

WASTE TO ENERGY REPORT CARD

Working Together!

October–December 2008



Wheelabrator Spokane Inc.

Garbage In
70,028.17 tons disposed
62,683.70 tons processed at the WTE Facility
2,218.43 tons of ferrous metal recovered from the ash for recycling
17,710.62 tons of ash disposed at Rabanco

Electricity Generation
38,828 MWh produced
6,873 MWh used to run the facility
31,350 MWh sold to Puget Sound Energy

Notice of Violation None

Revenues after Electricity Transmission Expenses
\$3,308,282