

The Newsletter
of the

Chicago Recycling Coalition



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January 2007

What Goes Around

It's a New Year for Recycling in Chicago!!!

Pop the champagne (and recycle those bottles)! After 11 years of mixing our recycling and garbage with its blue bag program, the City of Chicago has unveiled a plan to implement blue-cart source-separated residential recycling (and separate yard-waste pickups, too!) across the city, starting with 7 wards in 2007. And this fall, the city has already opened up 15 new drop-off recycling sites from West Pullman to Rogers Park.

Since 1990, the Chicago Recycling Coalition has advocated for city-run, responsible, source-separated recycling. When the blue bag began in 1995, we were discouraged, but never gave up. Sometimes working with others and sometimes alone, we monitored the blue bag's failures, compared Chicago with greener cities, and educated the community as to local recycling resources. Thanks to the work of the media, local aldermen, pro-recycling staff in Chicago's departments of Streets and Sanitation and Environment, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (which committed \$8 million over 4 years to the blue-cart implementation), the program that should have died long ago is finally on its way out.

So it's truly a Happy New Year – and the perfect time for new resolutions!

In 2007, the CRC resolves to:

- Monitor and analyze the results from the new blue-cart and drop-off recycling and advocate for citywide blue-cart expansion.
- Build participation for "real recycling" through education and outreach.
- Promote a strong ordinance requiring private haulers to provide separate recycling pickups for all multi-unit buildings.
- Keep you up-to-date on new waste reduction and recycling resources through our website (www.chicagorecycling.org), newsletter, and events.
- Hold a celebration this spring to honor those who fought the hardest for Chicago's new recycling program. (Stay tuned for details.)

And a few suggested resolutions for your list:

- Stop using the blue bag. Never worked, still doesn't.
- Start using one of the many city and private drop-off sites for recycling (full list on p. 4), although it may mean finding a friend with a car.
- Start recycling your batteries, computers, old paint, solvents, etc. at city-run sites (full list on p. 5).
- If you're lucky enough to get a blue cart in 2007, use it – and encourage your friends and neighbors to recycle, too! If not, contact your alderman to ask that the program expand quickly citywide.
- Join the Chicago Recycling Coalition, attend our January fundraiser (see p. 8) and spring celebration, and become part of the growing, proactive recycling community.

Gossip from the world of recycling:

stINC.

Don't take the money!!

Our friends at the **Southeast Environmental Task Force** and **Citizens for Landfill Alternatives** have notified us that the **Gateway Endowment Foundation** (funded by **Waste Management**) has sent a letter to organizations and elected officials on the Southeast Side, announcing that \$50,000 in grant money is now available for local community projects. Environmental and neighborhood organizations, educational groups, and residents are invited to submit applications.

The letter states: "Funding for additional grants will be made available if the CID *transformation project* is allowed to move forward." (emphasis, ours) It suggests there could be up to \$16 million more in the pipeline. However, the letter does not clearly state that this \$16 million depends on Waste being allowed five more years of landfilling at the CID site. It only talks about the large park that could be installed there after the trash settles.

Clearly this is an attempt to reverse the 20-year landfill moratorium that was passed by City Council in June 2005. We join with SETF and CLA in urging groups and individuals NOT to apply for these grants or accept the money. The CID landfill is finally scheduled to close in 2007. Waste Management wants to show public support for its plans and would love to "pay" to use your name to help keep it open!

We always thought we'd see you again

As reported by *Resource Recycling* magazine, Chicago's first recycling coordinator, **David Robinson**, has been back in the news. In the mid-nineties he left Chicago to direct Philadelphia's recycling efforts. But things haven't worked out so well. Last spring he pled guilty to several federal counts, including conspiracy to defraud. Along with a few cohorts, he took \$13,000 of city money to throw lavish birthday and farewell parties for Philly's former Streets Department Commissioner. He must have thought he was still in Chicago...

Board comings and goings

People move in, people move on. In the former category is WGN radio personality **Mike**

Nowak. Mike first got in touch with us to ask board president Betsy Vandercook to talk on his show. And faster than you can say "bag the blue bag," he got hooked on the battle to change Chicago's recycling. Not surprisingly, his radio show, "Let's Talk Gardening" (midday Sundays, 720 AM), covers the environmental gamut, and in his "spare time," Mike serves as founder and president of MELA, the Midwest Ecological Landscaping Association.

Meanwhile, leaving the board are **Sundee Wislow** and **Karen Freel**. Sundee's legacy was to help the city develop its successful battery recycling program. She's now the executive director of The Friends of Troy Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin. Karen served on the board for over ten years, with a focus on membership and board development. Unfortunately for us, her day job with an Ounce of Prevention has become too demanding (after all, she's their VP of Public Affairs). A huge THANK YOU to both Sundee and Karen!

And the envelope please...

Each year the **Illinois Recycling Association** chooses one person to be **Illinois's Recycler of the Year**. For 2006, the honor (and recycled green-glass plaque) went to our own CRC president, **Betsy Vandercook**, showing that our advocacy work is no longer a well-kept Chicago secret. Actually, it's no longer an Illinois secret either – See the *Waste News* reprint, p. 3.

What Goes Around

is a publication of the

Chicago Recycling Coalition



We welcome your
comments and questions.

You can reach us at:
info@chicagorecycling.org or
P.O. Box 87442, Chicago, IL 60680-0442
Web site: www.chicagorecycling.org

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From *Waste News*, Crain's national waste industry newspaper

'Chicago changes singular recycling strategy'

By Joe Truini

Only groceries may be filling bags in the not-so-distant future in Chicago as the city apparently plans to sack its much maligned blue-bag recycling program and significantly expand a pilot single-stream cart system.

The decade-old blue-bag recycling program recovers about 8 percent of the city's residential waste. Mayor Richard Daley has vexed local and state recycling advocates by holding onto what they consider an ineffective program that mixed recyclables in blue bags with trash.

In April 2005, Chicago distributed 96-gallon carts to 700 Beverly neighborhood households to test a single-stream curbside recycling program. The pilot has achieved an 80 percent participation rate and a 23.5 percent recycling rate as of the end of August, collecting a total of 520 tons of recyclables that the city has sold for an average of \$40 per ton.

The separate collection pilot program has been a good learning experience, but it has taken place on a small scale, said Michael Picardi, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation.

"Now we want to take what we've learned and apply it to other communities," he said.

The city plans to expand that program in 2007 to the remaining Beverly residents and six other wards. In all, 80,000 people in seven wards across the city will have separate bi-weekly collection of recyclables through the new single-stream program by August.

City crews also will pick up yard waste weekly in plastic or paper bags from residents in those seven wards. For the people in neighborhoods without the new program, the city has set up 15 single-stream drop-off locations that accept the same material as the cart program, which includes most plastic and glass containers, any type of paper and most scrap metals.

"It's just such a huge step forward just to get the stuff away from the garbage," said Betsy Vandercook, president of the Chicago Recycling Coalition. "I think it was a combination of things that came together. I think it was years of bad press, a lot of analysis."

An \$8 million grant from the Illinois Depart-

ment of Commerce and Economic Opportunity also didn't hurt. Daley turned to the state to ease the financial burden of expanding the program. The DCEO will pay the grant over four years to fund the purchase of the 96-gallon blue recycling carts.

"I want to thank Gov. [Rod] Blagojevich for investing in this very worthwhile program," Daley said. "It will solidify Chicago's reputation as the most environmentally friendly big city in the nation."

That sentiment likely is part of the reason Daley has thrown in the towel on the blue-bag program, which he thought would recycle a quarter of the city's residential waste, Vandercook said.

"He wants part of his legacy to be Chicago as, if not the greenest, one of the greenest cities," she said. "On his own volition, he's put himself in the category to compare Chicago to San Francisco, to Seattle, to Portland, to Toronto, to New York City.

"If he wants to be on the A-list, recycling's got to change."

Expanding the single-stream cart program to all 660,000 Chicago households and the remaining 43 wards will take time as well as money.

But some city officials are optimistic it could happen sooner rather than later, said Vandercook, who has met with the city to help it improve its recycling performance.

On several occasions I have heard city administrators talk about even as short as a three-year time frame," she said. "I think three years would be exceptionally optimistic."

Though the city's decision to expand the single-stream cart system appears to have come out of the blue, the Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation and the Chicago Department of Environment, as well as others, have put a lot of work into the new program, Vandercook said.

"I think that's how change occurs," she said. "It seems like nothing's moving, but actually there are currents underneath, and then all of a sudden it seems like a very quick change."

(Reprinted with permission from Waste News, a Crain Communications publication, Nov. 6, 2006.)

[Almost] Everything you need to know to recycle in Chicago (right now!)

For your convenience, we have compiled Chicago's most important recycling resources into two handy pages. Feel free to copy (two-sided!) and share with friends and neighbors – and start recycling today!

More than ever before, Chicagoans have the opportunity to properly and effectively recycle much of their waste. The new resources available signify a major shift in city policy, and are due in part to the long-term advocacy work of the Chicago Recycling Coalition. Our ultimate goal is for the city and private haulers to provide clean, separate recycling and yard waste collection to every Chicago household, but the programs listed below provide a sound basis for further expansion.

Recycling Drop-Off Centers in Chicago

The following 15 drop-off recycling cen-

City of Chicago Drop-Off Centers

City Facility Campus, 1424 W. 39th St.

Near South, 1758 S. Clark

Calumet Park Beach, 9801 S. Avenue G

Auburn Gresham, 7811 S. Racine

Household Products & Electronics

Collection Center, 1150 N. North Branch

Chicago Center for Green Technology,
445 N. Sacramento

North Lawndale, 1817 S. Pulaski

West Pullman, 11615 S. Indiana

Pasteur Park, 5825 S. Kostner

Marquette Park, 6734 S. Kedzie

Riis Park, 6110 W. Fullerton

Portage Park, 4100 N. Long

Kosciuszko Park, 2732 N. Avers

Rainbow Park, 3111 E. 77th St.

Far North Side, 6441 N. Ravenswood

ters were set up by the City of Chicago, Department of Streets and Sanitation in the fall of 2006. All locations are open seven days a week during daylight hours. Acceptable materials: paper, cardboard, aluminum and steel cans, and plastic and glass bottles. All materials can be mixed together. Not acceptable: food waste, yard trimmings, plastic bags, Styrofoam, and plate glass. For more details, see the city's website at www.bluecartschicago.com. (Just don't believe all the blue-bag hype.)

The following drop-off recycling centers have been serving the Chicago community for many years. Some collect paper only, others, beverage containers as well. For more details, see our website at www.chicagorecycling.org and click on "Recycling in Chicago | Where Can I Recycle? | Sites Serving Individuals."

Private & Not-for-Profit Centers

Huron Paper*, 2545 W. Fulton

M-F 7am-3pm

Recycle Plus**, 1334 N. Kostner (in alley in back)

M-Th 6am-3pm, F 6am-noon

Recycling Services*, 3301 W. 48th Pl.

M-F 7am-10pm, Sa 7-11am

Resource Center - North Park Village**, 5801 N. Pulaski

M-Su 9am-5pm

Resource Center – Railyard, 1325 E. 70th St.

M-Su 9am-3pm

Resource Center – Wrightwood, 2600 N. Lincoln

(by the 7-Eleven). *Open 24/7 (gate sometimes closed)*

Resource Center-Uptown Recycling, 4716 N. Sheridan

7am-7pm (Closed Wed. & Sun.)

Smurfit Recycling*, 626 E. 111 St.

M-F 6am-3pm

**Accept only paper and cardboard; no bottles or cans*

***Only drop-off locations that accept plastic bottles*

Chicago's Blue-Cart Recycling Program

Over the next eight months, Chicago's Department of Streets and Sanitation will be expanding its successful 19th Ward recycling pilot by placing large blue recycling carts behind every single-family home and apartment building (up to four units) in seven wards. One city truck will collect clean, separate recycling every two weeks; another will collect yard waste (to be placed in paper or plastic bags) every week for eight months a year; and a third will pick up the garbage – again weekly.

NOTE: Both Chicago's blue-cart and drop-off recycling programs are “**single stream.**” This means that paper, cardboard, cans, and bottles can be co-mingled; it is the same system used by most other cities from San Francisco and Seattle to Evanston and Oak Park. It is NOT the same as mixing recycling with garbage!

The city has designated the wards below to receive the first bins. If you don't live in

Blue-Cart Installation 2007 Schedule

Ward	Installation Month
19th Ward (in addition to the original pilot)	February
Wards 5 & 8	April
Wards 1 & 37	June
Wards 46 & 47	August

one of these, tell your alderman you want to be next on the expansion list!!

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal & Computer and Cell Phone Recycling

It's “one-stop” drop-off now for these items, as the city has opened its first permanent facility to accept these materials. The location is on Goose Island at 1150 N. North Branch (off of Division Street).

Open for drop-offs: Tuesdays, 7am-12pm; Thursdays, 2pm-7pm; first Saturday each month 8am-2pm.

Materials accepted include: Antifreeze,

motor oil, gasoline, oil-based paints, thinners, spray paint, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, cleaning and hobby chemicals, fluorescent lamps, bulbs, and mercury. Also: computers and cell phones.

Other electronics (TV's, DVD's, etc.) as well as all the materials listed above will still be accepted at city-run special collection days. For a full, updated listing, see the website of the Illinois EPA at: <http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste/> and click on “Collection Schedule.”

Household Battery Recycling

Chicago has also initiated a citywide program to collect your spent batteries, including disposable and rechargeable. No car batteries, please.

Battery Collection Sites

(Look for the clear plastic tubes)

83 Chicago Public Libraries

114 Walgreen's Drug Stores

Web Resource Summary

Chicago Recycling Coalition:

www.chicagorecycling.org

City of Chicago Recycling Site:

www.bluecartschicago.com

Illinois EPA HHW Info:

www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste/



Chicago Recycling Coalition

P.O. Box 87442

Chicago, IL 60680-0442

Blue bins and beyond

Observations from local enviros...

I've lived in a suburb where curbside recycling has been available for more than a decade. It's great, participation is high, and **I applaud Chicago for ramping up this program.** It will be interesting to see how Chicago residents, who have been so progressive in many other areas, respond to this opportunity. If Chicago wants to earn the title of "greenest city in the country," this program will be a huge step forward.'

Debra Shore

Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

'Like many concerned citizens, I'm relieved that the City of Chicago is beginning to get its recycling act together. However, I remain skeptical. Mayor Daley would have you believe that blue bags don't exist anymore. Yet, they're still featured prominently on the city's website. Hmm. The blue bin pilot program in Beverly was wildly successful, yet it's being rolled out to only seven wards in 2007. Hmm. Reportedly, large residential buildings are recycling at a "whopping" five percent rate. Hmm. I think I'll keep my champagne on ice. I'm still worried that the bottle might not get recycled properly.'

Mike Nowak

Logan Square resident, Board member of Chicago Recycling Coalition
Host, "Let's Talk Gardening," WGN Radio

'For too long recycling has been "on the books" with the books sitting unopened in "green" Chicago. The city's recycling ordinance requires office buildings and high-rises to keep a current recycling plan available for public review and to accept a minimum of three types of material, with an option to implement waste-reduction strategies, such as using long-lasting energy-efficient bulbs. **But how many buildings currently adhere to Chicago's recycling requirements and how many tenants and building managers are even aware they exist?** Will we continue to throw away resources or will we all step up to the plate to save the energy invested in recyclable materials? What response will we as Chicagoans make to the challenge of global warming and curbing climate change? "Reduce, reuse, recycle" may not be the mantra you had in mind for 2007, but it is a resolution more of us should make.'

Sue Lannin

Rogers Park resident

Served on Mayor Harold Washington's Task Force on Solid Waste Management

'Recycling will provide jobs and drive economic development, but we still need to work on the serious air pollution problem in Chicago. With the end of the blue bag program in

sight, the challenge will now be to clean up the trash-collection truck fleet, especially since more vehicles will likely be needed to collect the recyclables. New diesel trucks, starting with the 2007 model, are required under federal law to reduce tailpipe soot emissions by over 90 percent. And new, much cleaner "ultra low sulfur" diesel fuel, mandated by USEPA, was phased in nationwide this past fall, allowing "particulate trap" controls on these new trucks to slash harmful pollution. Better yet, now that the cleaner fuel is used everywhere, these same devices can also be retrofit onto trucks already in a fleet. Cleaner fuel alone only gets you small air pollution reductions; pollution control devices get the real clean air gains. For the health of all Chicago residents, all of the city's trash and recycling trucks should be retrofit with traps, and not less effective devices which only remove a small fraction of the harmful soot.'

Brian Urbaszewski

Director of Environmental Health Programs
American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago

'This is the breakthrough we've been waiting for. The only way to go is with a separate collection system. This program will need to be tweaked before it is something that we can wholly endorse. The goal is to keep tonnage out of landfills and this is a big step.'

Ken Dunn

Director and Founder, The Resource Center

'I'm thrilled to see Chicago moving in a positive direction for recycling. I hope the implementation of the new program will be without delay and available to all residents of the city. Getting rid of the blue bag will go a long way to combat the negative impression many people have of recycling. This perception is a major challenge to those of us who are professionals in the field.'

Julie Cahillane

33rd Ward resident

Manager of Recycling & Refuse, Northwestern University

'The new program is an example of how a few dedicated community leaders were able to take on City Hall, fight some incredible odds, and win a real recycling program by hard work and never giving up. It's a recycling program that gives Chicagoans the ability to make a difference every day to keep Chicago clean and improve our environment.'

Brian Imus

State Director, Illinois PIRG

Join the CRC!

The Chicago Recycling Coalition is the only advocacy organization in the city that concentrates on local recycling and waste issues. The past support of our members made it possible for us to fight for over a decade against blue bag recycling, resulting in the city's plan to implement a new source-separated blue-cart program.

But our work is not done!

The city's program is barely underway and needs to be continually monitored and promoted. And then what about source reduction, composting, electronics waste recovery, and even a bottle bill for Illinois? Please use the enclosed envelope to help us to help all of Chicago reduce waste, conserve resources, and become a truly greener city.

Thank you for your generous support!

(Donations received as of 12/1/06)

Anonymous (1)
Dave Aftandilian
Matthais Aschenbrenner
Andy Baldeschwiler
Joe T. Berry
Katharine Blumenthal
Erika Bradley
Carol Brewer
Marian Byrnes
Kathleen Crittenden &
Kelvin Rodolfo
Joanna Daniel
Julie Dick
Albert Ettinger &
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& Neilly
Betsy & Bill Vandercook
Karen Vierneisel
Janet Vernon
Hope Whitfield
Monica Rausa Williams
Sylvia Woo

*And special thanks to
Avenue of the Heart & The
Underground Wonderbar!!*

Help CRC improve its website!

CRC is looking for help in maintaining and improving our website. We are seeking someone with experience using a web development and content management tool called Mambo. Our site was developed using this tool, but the original designer is no longer available. While we have learned quite a bit about day-to-day use and administration, we have some technical issues/questions that are beyond our abilities.

If you are a web developer with experience using Mambo, and would be interested in helping us, contact us at info@chicagorecycling.org. Or feel free to pass on to others who fit this bill. Ideally we would love donated services, but a modest fee may be possible.

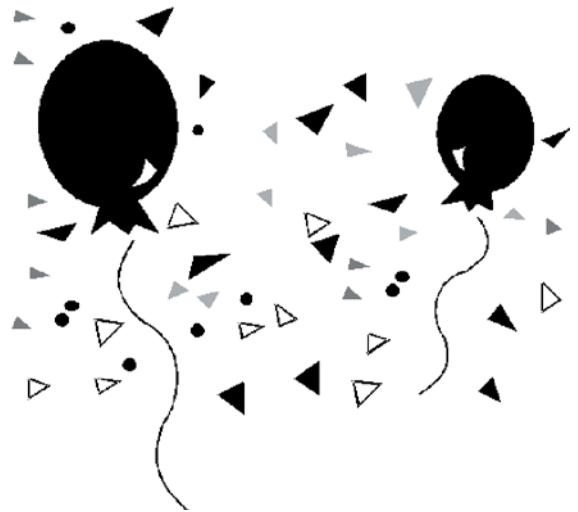
Raise a glass to the Chicago Recycling Coalition!!

Thursday, Jan. 25 at T's Bar in Andersonville

We're making your environmental activism easy - all you have to do is eat, drink & be merry! Of course, you'll also have a chance to meet CRC activists who helped to change the face of Chicago's recycling and find out more about what you can do to help make Chicago blue-bag-free.

But most of all, come to have fun! Activities are still being planned but a pool tournament, recycling games, and more are in the works.

T's is donating 10% of the back room drink tab to the CRC – so come all the way to the back when you enter. We'll be there! Drop by anytime after 7:30, Thursday, Jan 25th, T's Bar, 5025 N. Clark Street (773) 784-6000.



In this issue . . .

From *Waste News*: “Chicago changes singular recycling strategy” p. 3

[Almost] Everything you need to know to recycle in Chicago (right now!) pp. 4-5

Local enviros have something to say about Chicago recycling p. 6



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