

Municipal Solid Waste in Other Communities

Toutle, Washington

Toutle is a rural community in Washington state and has a population of about 2,500 people. Approximately 2,620 tons of waste are generated in a year. This waste is disposed of in the county landfill, which is 20 miles away. Semi-annually, there is a special collection of household hazardous waste. In addition to the landfill, a recycling program exists for various items including wood, motor oil, antifreeze, plastics, glass, and aluminum. The amount of waste generated per person continues to increase, so people have had more incentives to recycle in recent years. In fact, recycling is one project that the Toutle Lake High School's Ecology Club has been promoting. The high school population is about 200. The Ecology Club has not only set up a recycling program in the school, but also encourages waste reduction. The recycling program is run by the students with teachers' help. The club has placed color-coded recycling bins for high-quality paper, aluminum, and cardboard in the school. The revenue generated from aluminum collection is then used by the club to promote recycling. The Ecology Club members also visit teachers, administrators, and cooks to encourage waste reduction.

Source: John Brugman, biology teacher at Toutle Lake High School, Toutle, WA.

New Orleans, Louisiana

New Orleans is an urban area with a population of approximately 496,900. A minimum of 328,500 tons of waste is generated in a year. Waste is picked up twice a week and is taken to landfills for disposal. A recycling program was introduced in 1995 to collect cans, glass bottles, plastic drink bottles, newspapers, cardboard, office paper, and old phone books. Curbside collection of recyclable materials is available once a week. Currently, curbside recycling collection is only for households—not for apartment complexes. Local citizen groups offer a special collection of household hazardous waste at different sites on certain days. Future plans in the community may include extending recycling collection to include apartment complexes and introducing a composting program.

Dominican High School in New Orleans has a population of about 1,000 students and 75 faculty and staff members. The school's maintenance director runs a recycling program that collects aluminum cans, cardboard, office paper, and six-pack rings. In addition to recycling, waste reduction and reuse programs are in effect at the school. For example, magazines and paperback books are given to local programs such as those at hospitals and prisons. At the end of each semester, notebooks are collected. Used pages from notebooks are recycled with the office paper, and unused paper is cut and distributed to teachers for use as quiz sheets. In addition to those programs, the school's Science Club is planning a system to collect papers in the classrooms.

Source: Jean May-Brett, environmental science teacher at Dominican High School, New Orleans, LA.