



Happy Holidays from All of Us to You!

We hope you are finding ways to celebrate this special time of year with friends and family while also remembering to recycle at social gatherings and to reuse packaging when possible. May the gifts you give and receive be environmentally friendly, durable and useful. From all of us at Will County, have a warm and wonderful holiday season.

[Visit Our Website](#)

Gift Giving: How to give without generating waste

Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday period than any other time of year. The extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage! This waste has been growing due to online shopping that results in more boxes and protective packaging in use. While recycling is part of the solution, we do need to find ways to reduce the waste.



For many, shopping is an emotional experience and buying something when feeling bad may change that feeling but more often than not, the items we purchase do not give us joy. Human beings take joy from shared experiences with family and friends.



This holiday season, consider purchasing tickets to sports events, concerts, theatre shows or the movies. Take someone to dinner at a local restaurant or bundle up and go for a hike in a park or forest preserve. Host a game night, build ginger bread houses together or homemade personal pizzas. Start a book club by reserving a room at the local library. There are opportunities year round to share yourself with your loved ones that don't generate the waste of an unneeded over-packaged gift.



Holiday Wrapping Recycling Rules

Not all paper wrapping, envelopes and cards are recyclable. Please only place clean, dry paper-based items in the recycling cart. No metallic, plastic, satin, bows, ribbons, glitter infused or foil lined items. These are contaminants and can render a 2,000 pound bale of paper non-marketable. When wrapping, be sure to use bags or decorative boxes that can be reused. Otherwise, stick to bright colors to make your gift stand out!



Charge It! (Your EV at Kohl's)

There are at least 10 Kohl's Department stores in the Will County area and many of them offer EV Charging stations for their customers. Kohl's is a leader in Energy Efficiency with all local stores being Energy Star Certified and LEED accredited. They have recently pursued sustainability efforts for clothing to reduce the environmental impact related to it; including setting a goal of 50% recycled content in all polyester items. In addition, they are a return location for Amazon, successfully cutting transportation miles for themselves and for all of Amazon customers that make use of the service. [Learn more by clicking here!](#)



Clean that Dryer Vent and Prevent Fires

A poorly vented dryer poses a significant fire hazard. According to the National Fire Protection Association, nearly 17,000 clothes dryer fires are reported each year, and the leading cause of these fires is failure to clean dryer vents and exhaust. Additionally, the clogged combustion air intake can cause the dryer to run longer to completely dry items and cause concerns for gas-fired water heaters. SEDAC Tips:

- Clean the dryer lint filter before and after each load of laundry.
- Regularly check the outdoor vent flap to make sure it opens when the dryer is on and is not blocked or covered by snow or stuck open due to lint.
- Every 6 months, or more often if you notice that it is taking longer to dry your clothes, clean lint out of the vent pipe and clean the dryer exhaust and intake.



1. Clean the exhaust vent every two years.

This is the most important thing to do to help prevent fires, says Michelle Maughan, dryer expert at Sears. Remove the vent from the back of the dryer and clean out any lint built-up.



2. Check the vent cap outside.

It's common for lawn debris, dirt or snow to build up around the vent. Clear it out every so often to let the air flow freely.

Reduce Business Electric Costs

Businesses generally use a lot of power. This means there are many ways they can become more efficient and reduce the amount used, cutting some of those costs. Visit ComEd's [Ways to Save](#) page for Businesses to learn more about how you can receive a free assessment, make use of incentives, increase employee comfort and productivity while reducing operational costs and much more!



Solarize Chicagoland Completes First Year

This was the first year that Will County partnered with CUB, Cook, DuPage and Kane Counties to offer residents an opportunity to add solar to their property. We are pleased to report the **Solarize Chicagoland program surpassed its goals this summer, achieving commitments to install nearly 1,000 kilowatts (kW) of solar on 135 properties in the Chicago-area, including 8 in Will County.** The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) and Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) launched this solar group buy program in April, and the program's participation deadline was September 30. The impact of these installations will offset emissions equivalent to approximately 800,000 pounds of coal burned. Collectively, customers will also save an estimated \$98,300 in electric bills in the first year alone. Due to group purchase power, participants were able to add solar for less and with more confidence than doing on their own. If you are interested, there will be another round of Solarize Chicagoland in 2020! Stay tuned!



Water Recycling for Conservation

This may sound extreme but there are three wastewater treatment facilities in the United States that take the water from resident's sinks, tubs and toilets and turn it into drinking water! The technology has been around awhile but many people find it hard to swallow. Scottsdale, Arizona is the newest facility to invest in it, and until 2018 they had to inject the ultra clean water back into the ground before pumping it out due to State laws against using treated wastewater as potable water. That law was changed and today, residents are able to safely drink their recycled water. Note: All water on the planet is recycled naturally. There is no more water today than there was thousands of years ago.



What happens to the curbside recyclables (2nd in series)

After the truck collects your recycling from the cart, it delivers it to a MRF (Material Recovery Facility) where it must be sorted. The materials collected from 1,000 homes are dumped by one truck onto a concrete floor where it is mixed with material from many other trucks and scooped into a conveyor to be sorted.

The driver of the front-loader will try to push large items that are not recyclable to the side or hand carry them off the floor. These may be large plastic toys or propane tanks. Many of these unwanted items can cause significant damage to sorting equipment or injury to personnel.

Glass is heavy and is dropped out of the mix first, as the conveyor rises three stories into the air. Shaker tables and other equipment are used to pull out large cardboard. There are people working to also pull the cardboard and to grab items that are not recyclable from the line. Large items missed below and plastic bags are top contaminants.



Celebrate Energy Conservation Day on Dec 14

World Energy Conservation Day is celebrated on 14th of December to highlight the importance of the ways we choose to use energy in our day-to-day life, the scarcity of some of the fossil fuels used to make it and the impact the burning of those fuels has on sustainability of our global eco-systems. It focuses our concentration on significant issues facing the future of mankind with respect to energy. It is both a call to conservation of resources and a switch to energy sources that rely on renewables, such as wind, solar and hydro.



Master Composters Trained and Offering Assistance

Fourteen local residents took the only Master Compost training offering in the State of Illinois in November. The University of Illinois Extension Office offers the curriculum and students pay it forward by assisting people that have questions about their personal compost piles. Another class will be offered in April but if you are composting over the winter and have an issue you can't solve, please give these talented folks a chance to assist. Please [click this link](#) to complete a form asking for assistance! If you are interested in taking the Spring Composting Class, or simply learning more about all the programs offered by our local U of I Extension Office, please visit their [website](#)!



Clean the Indoor Air

Stuck indoors during the cold? Be sure to clean your air by changing the filters on your furnace and by adding some plants that work to provide you with fresh oxygen. These plants can aid in the removal of pollutants such as formaldehyde, benzene, trichloroethylene and carbon monoxide. Here are eight options - there are more, but be sure they aren't toxic to pets.

Bamboo Palm
(prefers partial sun)



Dragon Tree
(tolerates low light)



English Ivy
(full shade to full sun)



Gerbera Daisy
(prefers warm temp)



Mother-in-Law's
Tongue (easy care)



Mass Cane/Corn Plant
(prefers humidity)



Pot Mum
(needs sun)



Spider Plant (prefers
indirect light)



Waste Reduction Tip: Use and ReUse Glass Containers

All of us purchase food in glass bottles and jars, which results in empty bottles occasionally. While these containers are recyclable, we can save even more energy by reusing them. Instead of buying plastic storage containers or worrying that the pantry shelf storage containers match, switch to using the glass jars already in your possession. They can keep items fresh and they won't change the flavor or odor of the food kept in them. If you have a baby in the house, you may have a matching set for screws, nails, bolts and nuts for the garage!



Tip from the US EPA

Give the gift of energy savings. Buy rechargeable batteries to accompany electronic gifts and consider giving a battery charger as well. When you choose ENERGY STAR electronics, appliances and other products, your gift will have the latest features, save energy and money, and protect the environment. Shop for great ENERGY STAR gifts. <https://www.energystar.gov/products/holiday>



Green Drinks - Jan 15 in New Lenox

Brook McDonald, CEO of The Conservation Foundation, will be the featured speaker at the first Green Drinks of 2020. He will be sharing the results of a very interesting study done in Will County. If you want to promote open land and conservation of natural resources, you'll want to attend. As always, the event is free of charge but any food or drink you order is your responsibility. See you at Gatto's at 6pm!



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Sites



EV Charging



Commuter Options



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Wind Info



Water
Conservation



Geothermal Info

Upcoming Events

**String Light
Recycling**
Will County Office
Building
Will County Land
Use
Sunny Hill Nursing
Home
Homer Glen Village
Hall
All Electronic Drop-
Off Sites
Dec 1 - Jan 31

**Energy
Conservation Day**
Global
Saturday
December 14

Green Drinks
Gatto's
New Lenox
Wednesday
January 15
6-8pm

Recyclepalooza
Appointments Open
in late January
Joliet
Saturday
April 18



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