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Make Every Day Earth Day - "Green" Your Choices - Save Resources - Be Happy

America Recycles Day 2025!

As the holidays approach, this becomes the most wasteful time of the year. All the packaging for the array of gifts and food, the food itself, purchased and prepared but not fully consumed. We tend to generate a lot of waste. With this in mind, we encourage you to recycle. Flatten the cardboard and chipboard as you place it in your cart, eat leftovers, shop thrift stores, and look for items made with recycled content. Find ways to reduce wasted energy and water, too! Let's be thankful for all the resources we use daily by using them wisely.

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Buy Recycled: Gifts & Necessities

With the Holidays approaching, gift buying is beginning. When you are considering what to buy your friends and family (and something special for yourself) consider items that support recycling. Remember that many retailers sell items made from recycled content.



Some are easy: most aluminum cans become aluminum cans, steel cans are turned into anything steel, from toys to support beams. While we wish glass bottles made more glass bottles, some glass goes to road beds and other uses. Plastic and Paper are more challenging. Some laundry and shampoo bottles become laundry and hair care bottles again but many colored plastics are destined to be dyed black because it is difficult to match colors to make desired brand related colors from recycled plastic.

Paper items vary with cardboard becoming chipboard (tissue and cereal boxes) or the wafer-board thick interior of cardboard. Copy paper, note books and tablets may be made from recycled paper but you need to check labels to be sure.

Pop bottles tend to be turned into carpeting but can become nearly any polyester item from shirts to shoes and backpacks! Coats, blankets, and more are usually labeled "made from pop bottles." Be sure to look for such labels this holiday shopping season!

From Yoga Mats to 3-Ring Binders, many everyday products are made from recycled content. Please look for items or ask for them from your favorite retailers.



Congratulations to Marta Keane

Marta Keane, Will County's Recycling Program Specialist for nearly 20 years, was recently recognized by the Illinois Recycling Foundation (IRF) with their highest honor, the Steve Apotheker Award. Her 35+ years of experience and dedication to improving recycling for residents has resulted in the implementation of recovery programs across the State, as well as throughout Will County.

With a long history of working on business and residential recycling, Marta came to Will County in 2006 and received a grant to improve office recycling. She forged partnerships to set up a network of Traditional and Electronic Recycling drop-offs. She expanded the gym shoe collection to include all textiles. With the support of the County Executive and County Board, she has written Solid Waste Plans with a goal of 55% diversion while working with ShareFest to offer Recyclepalooza events twice a year. Pharmaceutical, Paint and Battery recycling were undertaken and expanded statewide with her assistance. She has assisted townships and municipalities with curbside contracts and education. The County is proud of the website, willcountygreen.com and social media programs she oversees and excited to see her recognized by the IRF.



IRF President Clair Ryan and Executive Director Nathan Mihelich present Marta Keane (center) the 2025 Steve Apotheker Award at the Joint Circularity Conference held in East Peoria in October.

Passive Solar is a Winter Friend

As temperatures drop at this festive time of year many people look for ways to keep their houses feeling cozy. One way to keep your home comfortable without running up your electricity bill is to recognize the power of the sun.

Consider using energy efficient window coverings. During the day, open blinds and curtains on the south side of your house that receive direct sun light. This allows the sun to light up and warm up your interior.

Closing those window coverings and applying window films to windows can insulate and keep cold drafts at bay. Even [awnings can be installed and adjusted to regulate indoor air temperatures.](#)

Be sure to wear warmer clothes, such as sweaters and flannels, cover up with a throw blanket and insulate where appropriate to reduce heat loss. Small efforts can cut utility bills without reducing comfort.



Direct Sunlight?

- Let it inside in the wintertime!

In-direct light?

- Close the blinds and drapes to insulate and improve efficiency

Green Thanksgiving!

Throwing a party can result in a variety of waste but Thanksgiving Waste can be avoided with a bit of planning which may involve your guests!

- Spend a little time planning your menu and coordinating dishes with guests so you don't double up. Encourage everyone to bring reusable containers for leftovers—it's a simple way to reduce waste and share the feast.



- When you head to the store, bring reusable bags and skip plastic produce bags. Every small choice helps reduce waste.
- Choose items you can use for multiple dishes so if you have leftover ingredients you'll use them later.
- Set the table with durable dishes and utensils (local thrift stores have some if you need extra). If you must buy disposable, choose paper that will compost. Avoid single-use plastic.
- Start a backyard compost. With all the leaves, it's the perfect season. Toss potato peels and apple cores into it.
- Be sure to recycle glass bottles, aluminum cans, steel cans, plastic bottles, tubs, and jugs along with cartons (orange juice to chicken broth).
- Check with your local food bank or church to learn if they can accept any leftovers.

Decorate with pinecones, gourds, and pumpkins with festive, fresh smelling fun. All can be composted afterward.

Time to DRAIN the Rain Barrel

If you have a rain barrel installed adjacent to your downspout, don't forget to winterize it. Quick tips:

1. Drain your rain barrel.
2. Disconnect it from your downspout, so that it can't fill and freeze. If your downspout convertor leaves a hole when disconnected, attach the winter cap to cover the hole.
3. Rinse or clean the inside of the rain barrel.
4. Store it for winter or leave in place, with the spigot remaining open. Be sure to place the downspout convertor and hose inside for safe-keeping. If your rain barrel is open, or open and screened on top, simply store it upside down so that it can't fill.
5. Finally, make sure the splash guard is in place at the end of your downspout. You want to make sure the water is directed away from your foundation.



Gift Tip: Rain barrels made with recycled materials make excellent gifts!

Cleaning Tip: Add ¼ of a cup of distilled vinegar to a gallon of warm water with a teaspoon of a mild dish washing detergent. Swish it around with a mop or brush. Rinse it clean with water. This diluted solution is safe to empty onto your lawn.

Searching for Recycling Options

Since 2010, Will County has offered residents and businesses an online searchable database to assist with recycling options. In 2020, the Will County GIS department turned the database into a searchable map application for those that prefer searching in this way. In June of 2024, the Illinois EPA announced a contract with Recycle Coach to provide a statewide searchable database. Will County has been working to add our information to Recycle Coach this past year and launched last month. We encourage residents to download the Recycle Coach app. We are working with each of our communities to add their brush, leaf, and special collection information so the Recycle Coach app will become a vibrant resource. We are encouraging energy efficiency and water conservation tips to be added in the future, similar to our database on WillCountyGreen



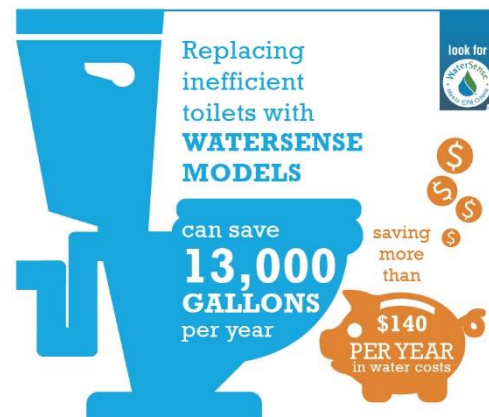
Take a moment to familiarize yourself with these search tools.

Please let us know if we are missing information or need to improve these tools in any manner.

Saving Water also Saves Energy

Toilets can use nearly 25% of an average home's indoor water consumption, according to the [USEPA's WaterSense program](#). If your toilet uses more than 1.28 gallons per flush, you can save thousands of gallons a year by replacing it with a high-performance, water-efficient [toilet labeled by WaterSense](#).

If you are a City of Joliet Water customer, you can also receive a [\\$100 rebate](#) for replacing your old, inefficient toilet (using



1.6 gallons or more per flush) with a WaterSense toilet.

WaterSense Labels help consumers make better choices, saving resources and utility costs with every use.

Find "Loop" in Will County

The US EPA funded Recycling spokesperson known as "Loop" was making it around Will County the past few weeks. From seeing the Gemini Giant in Wilmington to seeing Nequ Valley High School in Naperville, Loop has been spreading the word on his dietary needs. Loop loves to be fed empty glass, aluminum and steel containers. He likes empty plastic bottles, tubs and jugs. He gobbles nearly all paper, cardboard and chipboard coming from your home. Please learn more about him, his likes and dislikes at FeedtheCart.org Engage with us on social media to let us know if you see him on a billboard, in social media, or popping up with a message during your youtube time.

Loop is Sharing the Recycling Message throughout Will County!



Wilmington, Romeoville, Naperville, Joliet were just a few of Loop's stops!

Consider Buying Used

Anytime an item is repaired, rather than replaced, saves resources. Will County's website offers a page on this topic listing businesses with services to assist residents in preserving and maintaining items so they can be reused.

Consider cutlery, having knives and scissors sharpened can make them last longer and save money over the cost of replacement. Having a purse or shoes repaired, especially an expensive item, saves money, prevents waste and conserves resources.

Often, people do not consider the resources that are used to make an item. Leather must be treated and shipped hundreds of miles to be incorporated into shoes, jackets and other clothing items. Water, chemicals, energy are all resources used to make products. Imagine how much pollution is prevented when we repair an item instead of replacing it.



Visit our [Reuse and Repair Website](#) page and let us know of any additional resources that we should list.

String Light Recycling - extra sites

As you begin decorating for the holidays, you may find some strands of string lights not working. Perhaps you are finally ready to replace the older, high wattage lights with new LED string lights. Whatever your situation for not wanting old holiday light strings, please know we have recycling options for you.

You may utilize any of our eight locations where we accept electronics or you may



drop off string lights from now through January 31, 2026 at the:

County Building (302 N Chicago St, Joliet from 8:30am-4:30pm Monday thru Friday),

The Land Use Department (58 E. Clinton St, Joliet from 8:30am-4:30pm Monday thru Friday)

The lobby of Sunny Hill Nursing Home (421 Doris Ave) during normal visiting hours: 8:30am-8:30pm every day.

Drop-Off Locations for String Lights

8 Electronic Recycling Drop-Off Sites

3 County Building Locations and the Village Hall in Homer Glen

Upcoming Events

Nov 15: America Recycles Day

Dec 1: Paint Recycling Statewide Launch

Dec 1- Jan 31: String Light Recycling at some County Buildings

Dec 2: Giving Tuesday (consider giving to environmental charities)

Jan 1: Battery Recycling Statewide Launch

Jan 17: Electronics and Scrap Metal Collection in Shorewood



Water Conservation



Search for recycling and disposal options on willcountygreen.com



Geothermal Energy



Green Business Star



School Earth Flag



Take a Virtual Tour



Solar Energy



Info on Electric Vehicles



Wind Energy



Cleaning Alternatives



Donate Items



Composting



Plastic Bag & Film

Reporting Data

Sustainable
Infrastructure



Electronics Drop-Off



Household Hazardous
Waste Drop-Offs



Medication Take-Back

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