



The Waste Not

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OUR VISION

To provide Brown County municipal commercial and industrial customers cost-effective and sustainable solid waste management systems with the focus on resource recovery primarily through recycling, and energy recovery

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South Landfill Fire Incident Highlights Proper Disposal of Potentially Hazardous Materials



Credit: Irfan Khan Alvi / Getty Images

Readers of The Waste Not will remember in the previous issue we reported on the importance of proper disposal of batteries as a way to avoid fires at solid waste and recycling facilities. These incidents have become increasingly common and have created multimillion dollar financial and operational damage in the solid waste industry. This industry-wide issue became a local one, as a fire broke out at the Brown County South Landfill during the late night on June 9th.

The fire could not be pinpointed to one source, but it was likely a damaged lithium battery that material settled and shifted onto. Landfill fires are typically trickier to handle than a structure fire, as the materials will burn under the surface and can tunnel to other areas of the cell. Thankfully, due to the quick response of the Greenleaf Fire Department and South Landfill equipment operators, the fire was suppressed and extinguished with no underground spread or damage to structure or equipment.

Increased efforts through social media outreach to educate residents of Brown County began immediately after the June 9th incident. "Rechargeable batteries, even those in devices, have the potential to start fires when damaged," said Chris Blan, Resource Recovery Technician. "Think of all the devices in your home that need to be charged or are battery powered. Each of these devices can be a fire risk if improperly disposed of."

The Brown County Hazardous Material Recovery Facility works hard to educate residents of N.E. Wisconsin on proper disposal of materials as well as to provide a residential drop off of materials at little to no cost. Find more information on what is accepted at www.browncountyrecycling.org/hmr-acceptable-material.



Footage from the time of the fire shows the height of the flames, which dwarfed the Excavator equipment.

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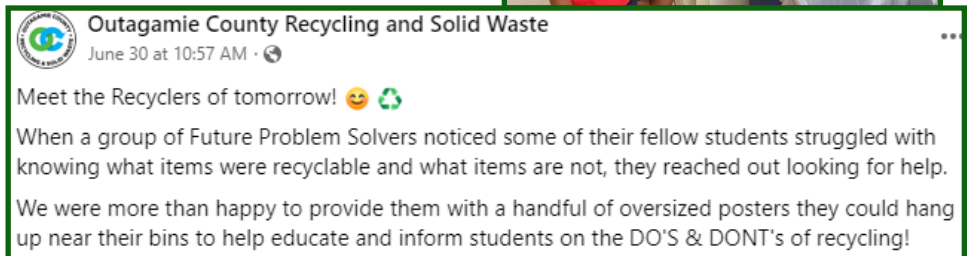
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Back to School for Sustainable Scholars

Outagamie County Recycling and Solid Waste recently posted to social media a great example of in-classroom recycling efforts made by students in the Fox Valley. The students pictured below identified that there were others struggling with knowing what was recyclable. With the help of Tri-County Recycling, DO's and DON'Ts posters were installed around the school.

With the next school year on our heels, it is time to start shopping for back-to-school for the scholars in our lives. Here are some things to consider to make this academic year more eco-friendly:

- Purchase "new" school clothes second-hand. Check out end-of-summer rummage sales for outfits to impress the class. Avoid fast fashion.
- Do an inventory on the supplies you already have. You can avoid purchasing a brand new set of scissors or a full box of pencils if you know what you have from last year.
- If you are close enough to the school, consider a morning bike ride or walk to school. Some fresh air and daily exercise will wake up your snooze-button-happy scholars while you reduce your carbon emission impact.
- Pack a lunch to avoid pre-packaged products. Remember to send re-usable cutlery!
- Encourage students to join environmental clubs and participate in recycling campaigns while in school.



BATTERIES
NOW
 INCLUDED



**Batteries are
 EVERYWHERE!**

Starting in **August 2023**, the Hazardous Material Recovery Facility will start accepting batteries & battery containing devices **FOR FREE!**

If a device makes noise, moves or lights up without plugging it in, it has a battery.

Batteries, even built in ones, can cause fires if they end up in trash or recycling. **STOP** these batteries and devices from hitting your trash and recycling bins!

For batteries that can be removed from devices, tape off terminals with non-conductive tape and store in a non-metal, leak proof container before dropping off at the HMR.

New Method of Recycling Flexible Plastics, Project in Early Stages

While plastic food packaging and zip-closure bags are not recyclable in the Tri-County Recycling system, there is hope on the horizon that these flexible plastics will have a new destination besides the landfill in the not too distant future. In a recent article with Wisconsin Public Radio, a new plastic recycling process was reported on called “solvent-targeted recovery and precipitation” or STRAP that has been developed by researchers supported by grant funds by the U.S. Department of Energy. The project is lead by UW-Madison professor George Huber in partnership with Amcor, Michigan Technological University, and Convergen Energy (based in Green Bay, WI).



Credit: www.remadeinstitute.org

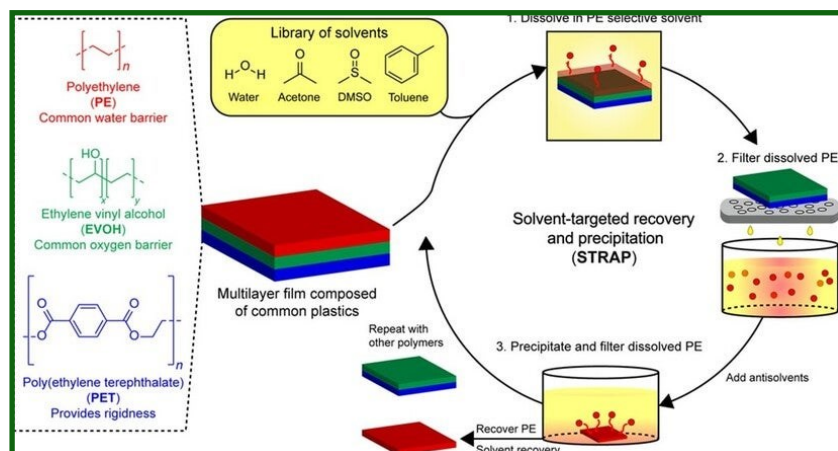
"It's a super important industry for the state of Wisconsin, but we don't really have technology to recycle most of these plastics that are being produced," [Huber] said. "Wisconsin should also try to become the leader with plastic recycling and how we can more sustainably use the plastic material — I think it's a critical thing for the plastic industry."

Flexible plastics that are composed of a mixture of several types of plastics are not recyclable through traditional means.

"What we do with STRAP is pick a solvent that will selectively dissolve one plastic. We then keep that hot while it's dissolved, we separate the solvent from the undissolved plastic and then we cool it down," Huber said. "The plastic precipitates and then you get the pure plastic back that you can use to reuse your original material or remake your original material."

Ted Hansen, Convergen Energy CEO, explained that the company already receives nonrecyclable materials needed for STRAP and currently converts the materials into fuel pellets used by utilities and companies for steam and electricity production.

Four steps for commercializing or upscaling STRAP into a reality are the lab phase (where the project is now), pilot phase in a larger scale lab, a commercial demonstration, and lastly a true profitable commercial facility. The earliest that a Convergen Energy facility would open is 2025, but it could be 2027 depending on funding.



Graphic courtesy of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin Public Radio

Source: Wisconsin Public Radio, “New recycling technique developed in Wisconsin could help keep flexible plastics out of landfills” by Joe Schulz.

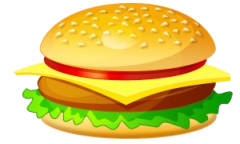
Have Lunch With Us!

Customer Appreciation Days 2023

All customers are invited!



Waste Transfer Station - 3734 W. Mason St.
Tuesday, **September 19, 2023**
10:00 am - 2:00 pm



Recycling Transfer Station - 2561 S. Broadway
South Landfill - 1258 Mill Road, Greenleaf
Wednesday, **September 20, 2023**
11:00 am—2:00 pm



We appreciate your business! Thank you!

Follow Us

For facts, general information and ideas on how to reduce waste, follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest! We post information you want to know several times a week.

If you are interested in reading more about a resource recovery topic online or in our newsletter let us know! We would love to hear from you.



Brown County Port & Resource Recovery Department

Recycling & Hazardous Material Recovery Facilities

2561 S. Broadway | Green Bay, WI 54304

Waste Transfer Station

3734 W. Mason | Green Bay, WI 54155

South Landfill

1258 Mill Road | Greenleaf, WI 54126

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