

# MCLEAN COUNTY SOLID WASTE PROGRAM 2018 THIRD QUARTER REPORT



THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER HAS COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN FULFILLMENT OF THE SOLID WASTE AND WASTE REDUCTION EDUCATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 1, 2017.

## LEADING INDICATORS: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS<sup>1</sup>

**Goal:** Visit **70%** of eligible classrooms in McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal for elementary school recycling and waste reduction education programs. Reaching this target means directly engaging with approximately 1,500 students.

- Year to date: There are 83 Fourth grade classrooms in McLean County, which includes all public and private schools. In September, EAC made 21 classroom visits and met 465 students. This represents 25% of our goal.

**Goal:** Visit **60%** of public libraries within McLean County, Bloomington and Normal and provide a summer reading program on recycling and waste reduction topics. Reaching this target means directly engaging with approximately 300 library patrons.

- Year to date: There are 14 public libraries in McLean County. In June and July, EAC made 11 library visits and reached 294 people. This represents 79% of local libraries, which exceeds our annual goal.

**Goal:** Provide recycling and waste reduction presentations for **25** local groups or approximately 750 individuals including civic groups, scouts, preschools, non-target school groups, university classes.<sup>2</sup>

- Year to date: 35 programs, which reached 826 people, which exceeds our annual goal.

**Goal:** Promote recycling and sustainable practices to direct audiences utilizing social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube with a target of **30,000** interactions annually.

- Year to date: 97,834 interactions, which exceeds our annual goal.

**Goal:** Provide and promote comprehensive online resources on recycling and waste disposal for Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County with a target of **12,000** visits to these pages annually.

- Year to date: In the first three quarters of 2018, our online waste and recycling resources were visited 50,735 times, which exceeds our annual goal.

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<sup>1</sup> The totals below represent Year-To-Date numbers. Specific details of this Quarter's activities are described on the pages that follow.

<sup>2</sup> In practice, the EAC provides these programs for nearly 100% of those requesting the services.

## SOLID WASTE COORDINATOR ACTIVITIES

- Facilitated public communications on the closure of the landfill. The McLean County Landfill reached capacity and ceased accepting additional waste at the end of September. Closure processes proceeded immediately, with the “cap” installed and seeded within a few weeks. The landfill end-of-life was anticipated for the last 10 years, making it a significant factor in the new 20-year waste management plan.

The McLean County Waste Transfer Station will continue to accept waste to be transported to the Livingston County Landfill for disposal. Disposal costs are not anticipated to increase in the short term due to economies of scale, however, in order to assert greater control over future waste disposal costs, the new waste management plan identifies six priority areas to focus efforts going forward.

- Ongoing efforts to stay abreast and communicate details of ever-evolving e-waste recycling systems in Illinois to ensure that McLean County residents continue to have reliable and accessible electronics recycling available.
- Continued efforts to develop educational materials and plans to assistance with implementation of multi-family housing recycling in the Town of Normal.
- Ongoing updates to Recycle Coach recycling directory application.
- Initiated fundraising and planning for fall 2019 McLean County Household Hazardous Waste Collection.

## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Worked with District 87 school district to plan compost training program for junior high student volunteers to help inform and assist peers recycle and compost correctly during the lunch period.
- Presentation for Little Jewels students on recycling and composting (75 students)
- Information booth at Sugar Creek Arts Festival promoting EAC programs and mission (224 interactions)
- Information booth at LeRoy Replex Health Fair promoting EAC programs and mission (32 interactions)
- Information table at Downtown Bloomington Farmer’s Market to promote Illinois Prairie Community Foundation funded-program for new downtown recycling bins (47 interactions)
- Information booth and composting promotion at Sweet Corn Blues Festival (871 interactions, 8 carts of composting collected)



- Information booth at Children Discovery Museum's Worldwide Day of Play celebration to promote recycling education (89 interactions)
- Presentation for Pepper Ridge Ecology Club on composting and best practices (22 students)
- Presentation at Sustainability Forum for University High Biology and Environmental Science students and staff (73 students)
- Information booth at Bloomington Township Day to promote recycling and composting as part of P.O.T.S. program (23 interactions)
- Information table at District 87 Summer Feeding Program locations promoting recycling and vermicomposting:
  - Irving Elementary (23 interactions)
  - Stevenson Elementary (23 interactions)
  - Bent Elementary (15 interactions)
  - Sheridan Elementary (40 interactions)
- Summer Reading Program at area libraries "Adventures of a Plastic Water Bottle":
  - Carlock Public Library – 15 attendees
  - Heyworth Public Library – 51 attendees
- Recycling and Waste Reduction fourth grade presentations:
  - Glen Elementary (2 classes, 36 students)
  - Northpoint Elementary (3 classes, 81 students)
  - Olympia North (2 classes, 48 students)
  - Calvary Christian (1 class, 12 students)
  - Cedar Ridge (4 classes, 86 students)
  - Colene Hoose (3 classes, 72 students)
  - Trinity Lutheran (2 classes, 34 students)
  - St. Mary's (1 class, 18 students)
  - Benjamin Elementary (3 classes, 78 students)

## MARKETING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Implemented "Reducing Barriers for Sustainable Recycling" program funded by the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation – IPCF Green Endowment.
  - In Normal, 28 curbside recycling carts were provided to low-income households. Each participating household reports usage data that the EAC will use to measure the success of the program in terms of how reduced economic barriers affect recycling behaviors. Each household receives educational newsletters with additional information on proper disposal and recycling of non-traditional items in Bloomington-Normal.

Efforts continue to promote this program to eligible households; despite outreach

through multiple different means, the application rate remains lower than anticipated.

- In Bloomington, four permanent recycling receptacles were installed at the corners of the McLean County History Museum block. The EAC will analyze usage data collected by Bloomington Public Works to determine the degree of success of the program.
- EAC staff leveraged the IPCF grant in order to secure four additional permanent recycling receptacles for the downtown Bloomington area through donations by area recycling and waste haulers. The addition of these receptacles will expand the existing available options and the convenience of recycling in multiple areas throughout downtown.



- Coordinated large-scale recycling initiative at the nineteenth annual Brüegala Beer Festival at the Normal Corn Crib in partnership with the Bloomington-Normal Jaycees. Twenty-five volunteers and five EAC staff members worked over the two-day event and diverted 3,962 total pounds of recyclable material from the landfill.

- Participated in Bloomington Township Day celebration to promote recycling and composting awareness in conjunction with the revival of the local plastic garden pot recycling program. (23 interactions)

- EAC facilitated composting of cobs and other waste at the Sweet Corn Blues Festival. Nearly ton of compostable material was collected for proper recycling. (871 interactions)

- Provided educational activities on recycling at Children's Discovery Museum Day of Play event Uptown Normal. Children worked on sorting the correct materials for recycling and pledged to spread recycling awareness. (89 interactions)



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- Social Media:

- Promoted waste reduction, recycling, composting and proper disposal of household hazardous wastes through social media. EAC posted messages on its Facebook, Twitter, accounts on solid waste topics, with a resulting 42,532 views of these posts.

- Newsletters:

- Produced quarterly EAC paper newsletters featuring solid waste updates including information on the four new recycling receptacles installed in

downtown Bloomington through the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation grant-funded project. Mailed to 291 households in September.

- Sent monthly issues of the EAC Action News email newsletters to over 880 email addresses to promote general recycling and waste reduction.
- Answered 342 phone calls and other inquiries about the disposal of household hazardous waste and recycling.
- Recycling & Waste website interactions:
  - Received approximately 14,002 visits to solid waste, recycling, and hazardous waste related pages within EAC's website.
  - Recycle Coach recycling information web/phone app: there were over 4,500 users and over 15,400 interactions during the third quarter period.
- Administration and promotion of McFreecycle, a free listserv on the internet for the free exchange of materials in McLean County to avoid disposal of useable items. 1,931 current members with an average of 30 messages exchanged monthly. While membership continues to increase, usage of the service appears to be declining. This is likely due to redundant "free items" services now available as a part of social media platforms like Facebook and Nextdoor.com.

