

# The Green Wire



Resource Conservation News February 2012



## Students Make a Difference

Thank you to all our students who are helping to make a difference for our local and global environment. The **Olympia High School Earth Corps**, above, recently collected and recycled used cell phones and electronics equipment. They and the **Capital High School Environmental Club** support programs to help students, staff, and community leaders learn about the value of conserving energy and natural resources.

Earth Corps reforestation efforts at Meyer's Point, on Henderson Inlet have helped remove contamination and allowed oyster beds to flourish. Club members planted trees, cleared trails and removed invasive weeds. Members choose activities and projects, from wildlife walks, canoe trips and planting parties to waste audits and electronics round-ups.

**OHS** science teacher and Department Co-Chair **Mr. Ed Bassett**, long-time club advisor, continues to participate in club planting activities. Earth Corps leader **Alice Henderson** helps advise club members. At **CHS**, science Department Head **Ryan Hook** serves as club advisor.

At **Olympia High School** Earth Corp students take responsibility for the commingled recycling program and the lunch-room composting program. Through their efforts we have been able to recycle cans, bottles and paper; essentially diverting hundreds of pounds of materials from the landfill and saving the District a substantial amount of money. Members are also helping to launch an innovative new program this month, with funding from the Thurston County Solid Waste Division and support from the Child Nutrition Program. OHS will soon be the first High School to provide fresh, local milk served in reusable cups from milk dispensers, eliminating the need for 700 milk cartons daily.

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## Using Re-Refined Motor Oil is Better

- Price may be lower
- Product lasts longer
- Uses 50% to 85% less energy to produce
- To make 2.5 quarts of motor oil it takes only one gallon of used oil. Compare this to the 42 gallons of crude oil required to produce that same 2.5 quarts of motor oil
  - ▽ When we use less crude oil we reduce drilling and transportation impacts
  - ▽ Reducing these impacts also cuts back on our carbon emissions
- Re-refined motor oil is certified by the American Petroleum Institute to meet exactly the same standards as motor oil derived from crude oil.
- All vehicle warranties are valid when re-refined oil is used.
- The OSD Transportation Department has received top marks for its work. We have always and will always send out our oil for recycling and properly dispose of all hazardous materials.
- According to RCW 70.951 The state legislature has stated that the reuse and collection of used oil is in the public interest because of its value as a resource and the harm that may be caused by improper disposal.

For more information about how you can use re-refined motor oil go to the Ecology website:  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/epp.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/epp.html)

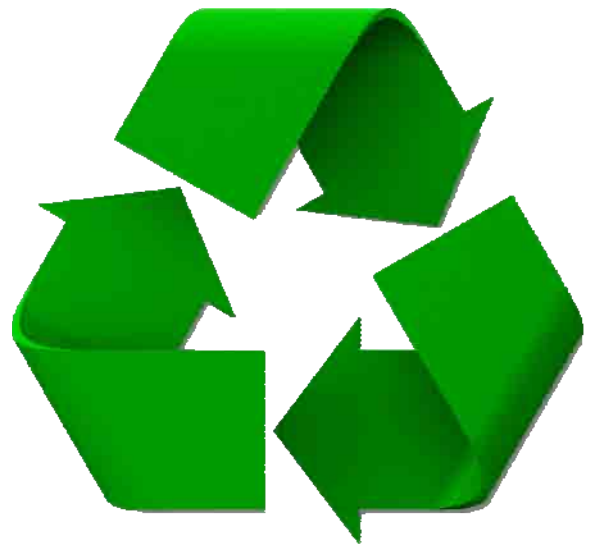
## Transportation Department Saves Money and Resources Using Recycled Oil

When the District started planning how to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions the Transportation Department immediately looked for options.

Supervisor Fred Stanley first sought grant funding to purchase a hybrid bus that used less fuel. The funding for hybrid buses dried up, but not the good ideas. Fred Stanley and Transportation Maintenance Supervisor Efen Arroyo decided to investigate the merits and performance of



re-refined motor oil. They discovered that the Department of Ecology advocates choosing re-refined oil because it saves energy, protects our waterways, and conserves a nonrenewable resource—petroleum. (Ecology Pub. 10-70-0200.) According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this type of oil may even outperform oil that has never been used. While this sounded good, Efen wanted to make sure that the oil performed as advertised. He ran extensive tests and then compared the costs of each oil and the frequency of oil changes required from each. He found that the re-refined oil cost one-third less and has the advantage of lasting up to twice as long between oil changes.



## Congratulations to Our Composters

A big thank you to the fabulous recyclers and compost helpers throughout the District. Our school composting programs succeed because student volunteers monitor the sort lines. Most staff and students are very careful to separate out their plastic and recyclables from the food and compost bins. When they forget, student and sometimes parent volunteers pluck out the item from the compost and place it in the correct container.

According to volunteers, sometimes students toss their brown bag lunch waste into the compost without removing non-compostable items such as plastic wraps, cellophane wrappers, plastic bottles or forks. Volunteers work hard to keep these contaminants out, but ask that everyone try to bring waste-free lunches. If plastic items are used please throw them into the garbage, keeping them out of the compost bins.

At **Garfield Elementary School** student leaders have diverted tons of materials from the landfill. About 1.5 cubic yards per week are sent to a central composting station. The rest of the clean food and paper waste is composted on-site in their Earth Tub. This compost is used to augment the soil in the school gardens.



**Roosevelt Elementary School** started a composting program this year with support from 4th grade teacher **Marylin Gentz**. Students and teachers have quickly learned to sort their materials, diverting 1.5 cubic yards per week.

Other schools with established composting programs continue to operate through the dedicated work of student, adult and staff volunteers. Thank you to the following schools for your composting help:

- Boston Harbor Elementary
- Centennial Elementary
- Hansen Elementary
- Lincoln Elementary
- Madison Elementary
- McKenny Elementary
- Pioneer Elementary
- Marshall Middle
- Washington Middle
- Olympia High School



## Idling = zero mpg

Have you ever left your car engine running while you waited to pick up your children, or while you waited in the drive-through line at your bank or a favorite fast food restaurant? Have you sometimes let your engine idle for several minutes to warm up your car first thing in the morning?

Most of us have. But when you leave your car or truck running while it's parked or sitting still, the engine produces air pollution. This pollution contributes to problems like smog and global warming, and is also harmful to our health. Exhaust hurts people with asthma, allergies, lung disease and other breathing challenges. Our vehicle exhaust contains air toxics, and other pollutants, which are associated with increased incidence of respiratory ailments, heart disease, and cancer.

We can stop unnecessary vehicle idling and help improve air quality and the respiratory health of our communities.

## Change Climate Change

Many of us find the scope of the climate change problem distressing. Worldwide climate change is impacting where people, animals and plants can live; leading to floods; droughts and economic uncertainty. Yes, the scope of global climate change is huge, but our actions can have a positive influence.

Millions of people are choosing to make individual changes to improve the climate crisis. As people are think about their higher gas and energy bills, many see reasons to conserve and be more energy efficient. Their support will help us to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, increase the use of renewable energy and help create green jobs.

We all can reduce our impact on the earth by taking small steps that can make a large impact on our carbon footprint. Choose well and we may slow down climate change. Check the RCM website below for ideas.



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## Close the Door

**Cambridge University research proves closing a shop door in winter saves up to 50% in energy usage and carbon emissions**

New research proves exactly how much energy is wasted by shops leaving their doors open with the heating on.

**The research found** that closing a shop door when heating is being used:

- Reduces energy usage by up to 50%
- Cuts annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by up to 10 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Enhances comfort of occupants, maintaining temperatures even when outside temperature plummets
- Maintains energy use at a standard low level
- Enables heating to be shut off long before the end of the day without affecting internal temperatures



The door at right, propped open with a garbage can, lowered the temperature to 43.5 degrees during the school day. Even 1,000 feet away from the open door, temperatures were below 60 degrees. All the heated air escapes out the door. Everyone inside feels cold, and as long as the door stays open the heat continues to pour outside.

We can pay over \$25 an hour to replace the heat that goes out a propped open door.

⇒ **If** you see a door propped open please close it. We cannot afford to waste energy, while opening ourselves up to additional security risks associated with this unapproved practice.



**National Sweater Day is Feb.9th**



**You can make a difference wear a sweater on Thursday February 9th and save some energy.**