

Article published Jul 19, 2007

## **Forming habits**

### **Recycling, one item at a time**

We recently took a few minutes out of shooting wastepaper hoops to think about what Tallahassee could do to get behind the green movement. The easiest act of conservation consciousness we could come up with was right in our hands: recycling.

"Recycling is the easiest way to take the first step toward going green," Anja DeLoach, recycling and special-services coordinator for the city of Tallahassee, told us.

Since trash collection in the city limits has moved to one pickup per week, the residential recycling rate has increased 30 percent, she said.

There are some pain-free, politically neutral ways to begin.

Decrease the amount of disposables that enter the home by buying in bulk; take care to buy materials made from recycled content (think notebook paper, etc.).

Being aware of the resources and centers available to help with recycling can help us all turn things around, too.

The city has made it easy to get your green on 24/7 by taking sorted recyclables to the Solid Waste Service Center at 2727 Municipal Way. The Leon County landfill, on Apalachee Parkway, accepts recyclables between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

A number of neighborhood grocery stores have receptacles for all those plastic grocery bags, egg cartons and brown paper bags piling up in kitchen cabinets and under the sink.

And apartment dwellers can lobby their landlords to request one of the city's recycling bins - it takes up an area roughly the size of a parking space. Or they can deliver them to a public recycling center themselves - or use a friend's bin.

As we found while looking around our "house" here at 277 N. Magnolia Drive, it takes only a little initiative to get the ball rolling on recycling. The *Democrat's* own Conley Lawrence voluntarily takes bags filled with our empty soda cans to one of the area recycling centers. Newspapers and newsprint are baled for recycling and sent to a facility in Gadsden County. This week's collection weighed in at 52,300 pounds. Oh, and we continue to print on recycled paper and use soy ink.

But as with any good-for-you habit that's initially hard to master, we still have a long way to go. Some city residents are paying an extra \$10 per month for a second trash container instead of cutting down on waste and cost by simply placing dry paper products (no pizza boxes or paper towels), glass, bottles and cans in a recycling container. Here at the newspaper factory, we're still working out the kinks on recycling the white paper used to print memos and other documents.

There's no limit to the small improvements that can be made by recycling. It's a matter of consuming less and taking three minutes a day to sort things out. Our challenge to you, and ourselves, is to take the time to give it a shot.