

RECYCLING...ARE WE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION?

Most people will agree that recycling is a good thing. It's a message we hear from many sources. And most people are willing to recycle. But the fact is that the majority does not follow through on good intentions. According to some recent studies, most American communities are stuck at a participation rate of 25 to 30%, or worse. Low prices and diminished markets for recyclables are adversely affecting municipal and private recycling programs. But why would that translate into individual lack of participation?

Is this a trend? Are people tired of the recycling message? Is it worth the effort? Are we experiencing "recycling fatigue"?

The statistics aren't too encouraging. According to **BevNet**, a beverage industry website, the recycling rate for plastic water containers was 30.9% in 2008, a 32% increase over the 2007 rate. So, even with a major growth in recycling rates, **nearly 70% of water bottles didn't get recycled!**

An article on **Waste Age**, notes that Americans recycled 54 billion aluminum cans in 2007, representing 53.8% of the cans that were sold. This means that **about 50 billion cans weren't recycled.**

An EPA report says that 28.1% of glass was recycled in the U.S. in 2007, which is mostly attributed to mandatory glass recycling (deposit bottles) in 11 states (Pennsylvania isn't one of those states). So, it appears that about **70% of glass bottles are not recycled.**

There is some encouraging news. A news item on **RedGreenandBlue**, a website that covers environmental politics, reports that in 2009 San Francisco recycled 72% of its municipal solid waste. The city even requires that construction debris be recycled. Seattle had increased its recycling levels to 50% by 2008. And the island of Nantucket recycled at an incredible 90% level in 2007.

New Hope has some really good recycling news too. Students at New Hope-Solebury Middle School and High School have been earnestly developing and supporting a school-wide recycling program. The NH-S schools and St. Martin of Tours School have Abitibi paper recycling collection containers in their parking lots, which account for thousands of pounds of paper being diverted from landfills (and actually raise money for the schools).

The Village II Community Association is working very successfully with its trash hauler to recycle a wide range of materials including cardboard and most plastics, and they have set aside an area where VII residents can swap items they no longer want, but that are still usable.

The New Hope Eagle Fire Company contracts to have its cardboard recycled. Many businesses in town recycle bottles, paper, cardboard, cans, even cooking grease. The Borough recycled much of the demolition debris from the renovation of the old rectory that will soon house Borough offices, and town employees are diligent about putting their

cans, bottles and paper into recycling bins. And of course, there are lots of conscientious households who fill their barrels every week.

But New Hope can do better. . . . we can go beyond the national average of 25-30%. With a little more effort, one bottle or can or newspaper at a time, New Hope could become a green leader among communities. Can we count on you?

For more information on recycling or to offer a recycling tip, email the New Hope Borough Recycling Committee at newhoperecycles@gmail.com

The New Hope Recycling Committee
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