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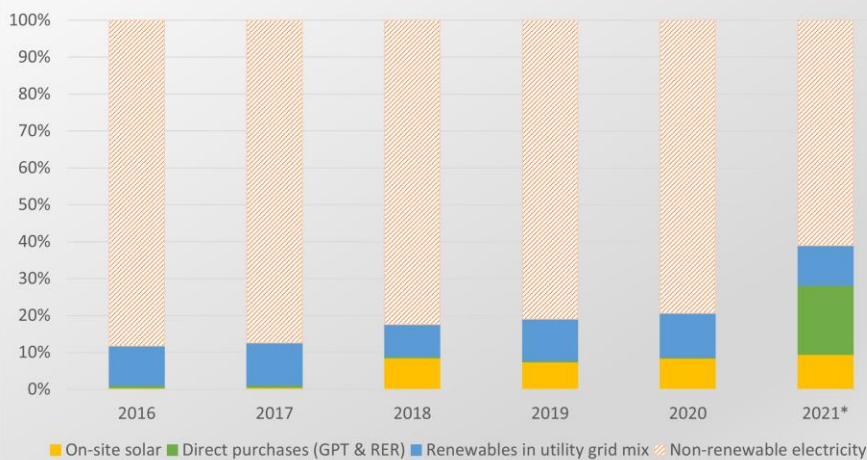
O'Brien Solar Fields Begin Production

https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/environment/mge-completes-fitchburg-solar-farm-20mw-project-powering-local-businesses-governments/article_ce5608d4-80ba-5f1f-bcc9-193584cc9d7f.html

The large solar project that has become increasingly visible at the corner of Seminole Hwy and Lacy Rd over the past year is now fully complete! Madison Gas & Electric announced last week that the O'Brien Solar Fields, designed and constructed by EDF Renewables at the O'Brien farm in Fitchburg, is operational and producing solar energy for seven commercial customers who signed special "Renewable Energy Rider" contracts, including the City of Fitchburg. This 20-megawatt solar array is the largest such project in Dane County, and the 0.5-megawatt portion reserved for Fitchburg through its RER contract will double the City's renewable energy usage, from around 20% to nearly 40% of operational electricity being supplied by carbon-free energy sources.



City of Fitchburg Renewable Electricity By Year



**Note: 2021 figures include an estimate of kWh usage for the year and are based on a full year of production from the O'Brien Solar Farms. From June through December, renewable electricity usage should approximate 40%, but annual figures won't show that percentage until 2022.*

Recycling: Changes for Plastic Bags in Fitchburg

<https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21834/Discontinuation-of-Curbside-Plastic-Bag-Recycling-?bidId=>

This month's Green E-Newsletter is mostly on recycling, inspired by the following update to curbside recycling for all Fitchburg residents.

In April, Pellitteri Waste Systems announced a change to curbside recycling policies in Fitchburg. Bundles of plastic bags are no longer accepted in bins for residential curbside recycling, and those bags should instead be taken to local retailers where plastic bags can be dropped off for recycling. While Fitchburg was somewhat unique in residents being able to include these bundles of bags in their curbside bins, changes to recycling material markets necessitated this new practice.

Plastic bags **can** still be recycled, along with other thin plastic films, and you can check with local grocery stores and retailers for collection bins or use this online search tool to find some of the nearby locations that accept these bags: <https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/recycling-bags-and-wraps/find-drop-off-location/>

RECYCLE empty, clean & dry plastic bags & wraps at store drop-offs

NOT in Curbside Recycling

Also look for any packaging with this How2Recycle label

Recycle if Clean & Dry

Store Drop-off

PLASTIC WRAP

how2recycle.info

NO candy bar wrappers • chip bags • six-pack rings • degradable bags • prewashed salad bags

Carryout bags too!

Find drop-off locations at [PlasticFilmRecycling.org/drop-off](https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/drop-off)

PlasticFilm Recycling

**As a general rule for plastic film recycling, if you scrunch up the plastic with your hand and it immediately bounces back or loudly crinkles, you should throw it out rather than including it with your plastic bags to recycle. Additionally, plastic film that is dirty, biodegradable, lined with other materials, or stiff rather than pliable, should be thrown away.*

Recycling: Some Basic Facts on Recycling in the United States

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle>

Eco-Recycling: a relatively recent phenomenon

The process of recycling has deep historical roots, going back as far as paper fiber recycling in Japan and China over 1,000 years ago, and with materials shortages leading to more recent national efforts during the American Revolution and the 20th-Century World Wars. The connection of recycling to environmental causes is far newer, becoming one of the major focal points of the early environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the first Earth Day in 1970.



Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) by the numbers



- In 2018, Americans produced 4.9 pounds of MSW per person, per day, adding up to 292.4 million tons
- 23.6% of that MSW was recycled, and another 8.5% composted, adding up to 32.1% of all MSW being diverted from landfills
- It is estimated that 13% of what goes into trash cans is actually recyclable, while 19% of what goes into recycling bins is actually trash
- Over 24% of material sent to landfills in 2018 was food. Cutting back on food waste is one of the key steps we can take towards making significant progress in reduction of both waste and climate emissions

Recycling and Recyclables facts

- Each year Americans *throw out* enough aluminum to rebuild the nation's commercial airline fleet four times over
- Paper makes up the largest proportion—66%— of recycled materials
- The benefits of recycling translate to the climate as well, as in 2018, the greenhouse gas reductions associated with recycling, composting, and waste combustion amounted to the equivalent of removing over 41 million cars from roads
- Aluminum cans are not only the most recycled single item in the US, but recycling does not degrade the metal, so a can has no limit to how many times it can be recycled!
- Items should be cleaned before being recycled, as dirty or food-covered cardboard and plastic film can clog up equipment and result in high costs for facilities



Room to improve, but we're making progress!

Our total generation of waste has been steadily growing as our population and consumption have increased, but by percentage the picture looks a lot brighter! From 1960 to 2018, the United States population grew by over 80%, but our combined recycling and composting grew by over 1500%, as landfilled waste dropped from 94% of MSW to 50% over that time. Adding in other food-waste management and combusting certain wastes for energy recovery, we've made great strides over the past 60 years!

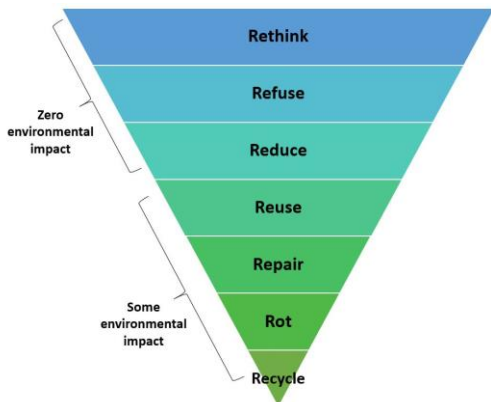


Recycling: Remember the 3 R's....or is it 7?

<https://www.dunedin.gov/live-work-play/dunedin-green-scene/the-7-r-s-refuse-reduce-repurpose-reuse-recycle-rot-rethink>



If you were in school, or have learned about the benefits of recycling, at any point since the early 1970s, there's a good chance you learned about the 3 R's of waste reduction: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. This phrase, along with the associated triangular-arrows logo, became one of the most successful and universally-known slogans of the 20th century, and is a fundamental principle of environmentally responsible living. While recycling has frequently become the primary focus when it comes to cutting back on the environmental impact of our consumption, it's not by accident that it comes last among the three parts of that slogan. Recycling still has an impact, from transportation to/from facilities to energy, water, and other inputs involved in the recycling process. By reducing our consumption to begin with, and then reusing materials before putting them in either the recycling or trash bin, we can more successfully cut back on those resources needed to create or rejuvenate the products we use.



More recently, those 3 R's have been expanded to 7, as the full range of options available to us as consumers contains more nuance than a three-word slogan can capture. The flow of this pyramid still begins with a reduction in materials, follows with giving objects a new purpose rather than getting rid of them, and ends with recycling as the final option to minimize our reliance on landfills. "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" is still far easier to remember and remains a perfect starting point for approaching waste reduction, but if you're looking for a little more detailed heuristic, try exploring the 7 R's!

The 7 R's:

- **Rethink:** Consider a shift in your approach to consumption and materials use, and your basic relationship to the world of goods around you
- **Refuse:** Turn down bags or other packaging whenever possible, bring reusable bags and mugs instead, and choose not to buy items that come with excess waste
- **Reduce:** Cut down on your resource use by making fewer purchases, or buying items secondhand or otherwise from repurposed materials
- **Reuse:** Find a way to repurpose "used-up" items (check out the [myriad lists](#) of [creative ideas](#) from [endless online sources](#), or come up with your own!)
- **Repair:** Many thrown-away items can be given a perfectly good second life with just a little extra attention to what ails them
- **Rot:** Food waste and many other objects can be composted or biodegraded, "recycling" organic compounds back into a more basic form to begin life all over again
- **Recycle:** If the previous six options have been exhausted, look to see if an item can be recycled, and if so, send it to the appropriate facility for its industrial repurposing

Recycling: End “Wish-Cycling” and Other Dos and Don’ts

<https://www.fitchburgwi.gov/2625/Recycling-Tips>

So you’ve worked on reducing your consumption and materials demand, you’ve gotten into the habit of reusing, buying used, and minimizing the waste you create, and you’re excited to keep on recycling! Most of us are still likely to consume beyond what we can eliminate through reduction and reuse, and recycling is the next important step for keeping waste out of the landfill as much as possible.

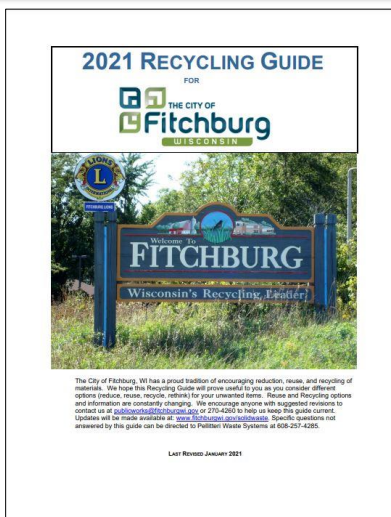
However, if something can’t be recycled, throwing it into a recycling bin anyway (a practice called “wish-cycling”) won’t magically change that fact. Putting non-recyclable items in a recycling bin can contaminate other materials with food and dirt, or create additional costs for waste companies and recycling facilities that must sort through these loads as well as dealing with equipment that gets jammed up from inappropriate additions. It’s important to recycle everything we possibly can, but just as important is the mantra, “*when in doubt, throw it out.*”

DO:

- Learn your local recycling program requirements
- Reduce consumption as much as you can, and buy things made from recycled & recyclable materials
- Ensure items are food-free before recycling them
- Break down and flatten cardboard boxes
- Bring reusable coffee mugs for refills, as many takeout cups are plastic-lined and not recyclable
- Take your yard waste, block Styrofoam, and scrap metal to the [City dropoff site](#) for recycling
- Set an example for your friends and family, and encourage and educate them about the “7 R’s”

DON’T:

- Put everything into your recycling bin with the thought that “they can just sort it themselves”
- Assume that what’s recyclable in one program is necessarily accepted in others
- Put plastic bags or other film in carts anymore
- Recycle cardboard (pizza boxes) with food grease
- Bag items to be recycled before putting them in a recycling bin (clear bags should be used for overflow recyclables placed next to your cart)
- Use recycling and waste reduction to shame others – recycling shouldn’t feel negative!



Still have questions? Check out the Fitchburg Recycling Guide for a more detailed, local rundown of recycling tips.

Next Shred/Recycling Event Set for November 6

Mark your calendars. The next City of Fitchburg Recycling Day Event (including shredding and recycling of confidential paperwork, as well as electronics recycling) will take place on Saturday, November 6 from 8:00AM-11:00AM. If you're looking to get rid of items in the meantime, please consider the options below:

Confidential Paper Recycling

- If you have access to a paper shredder, please shred your confidential paper items, place them in a clear plastic bag, and put the bag into your curbside recycling cart. These will be removed by hand once they reach the sorting facility and will be recycled. Please note that if you do not place paper into a clear plastic bag, it won't be possible to separate the material for recycling. (For more information on how the recycling process works at the local Pellitteri Material Recovery Facility, please check out this link! <https://youtu.be/Vwch1gwUgQk>)
- If you do not have access to a paper shredder, Pellitteri offers on-site paper shredding for a fee. Please call Pellitteri at 605-257-4285 for more information.
- If the paperwork that you are trying to recycle is not confidential (for example, magazines, junk mail, etc), please place this directly into your recycling cart.

Electronics Recycling

- Please take your electronics recyclables to Resource Solutions' Madison location. You can drop off without appointment, anytime during our regular business hours: Monday-Friday: 8:00a-4:00p Saturday: 8:00 – Noon. This facility is located at 5493 Express Cir, Madison. Please note, there is a fee to recycle many electronic items (also true for Fitchburg's Recycling Day Event as well). <http://recyclethatstuff.com/>

We look forward to seeing you in November!

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

Tree Diversity Tour

Join the Resource Conservation Commission and Tree Advisory Committee to learn about the value of tree diversity and identification of several local tree species planted at Quarry Hill Park.

Bring your own chair, water bottle, and mask (if not vaccinated), and get ready to learn all about trees and have a chance to win great door prizes!

TODAY, Thu. June 17, 6:30pm – 7:45pm

<https://www.facebook.com/events/151362193717007/>



Fitchburg Festival of Speed

Fitchburg is again hosting a day of biking, running, and more, with everything from a family-friendly run/walk to the exciting criterium, the WI Cycling Association's state championships. Register today to participate, or mark your calendars to come watch at Fitchburg's Agora pavilion.

Saturday, July 10 beginning at 7:30am

<https://fitchburgfestivalofspeed.com/>

Dane County Environmental Grants Open

Three environmental grants from Dane County are open for applications. The Dane County Environmental Council, Land & Water Resources Department, and Parks Department are partnering to issue grants for projects related to natural resource conservation, pollinator plantings, parks improvements, capital equipment, and more.

Applications Due August 2, 2021 by 4:30pm

<https://environmentalcouncil.countyofdane.com/Grants>





[Sustain Dane Master Recycler Course](#)

Take part in Sustain Dane’s new Master Recycler course, by attending two 90-minute online sessions and then conducting an educational/outreach project that applies what you learned. Two more sessions are planned for July, and registration is free for Sustain Dane members or \$15 for members of the public (full and partial scholarships are available).

Tuesdays July 13 and 20, 6:30-8:00pm

<https://sustaindane.org/program/master-recycler-2/>

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Tell your friends to subscribe to Green Fitchburg on the city website <http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx> > Green Fitchburg

- a. Visit Fitchburg’s “Notify Me®” web page:
<http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/list.aspx>
- b. Type your email address in the box and select “Sign In”
- c. To receive text messages enter your phone number and select “Save”
- d. Click (to subscribe/unsubscribe to emails) and/or (to subscribe/unsubscribe) next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe / unsubscribe (e.g. “Green Fitchburg” is the mailing list for environmentally friendly suggestions or events)

Please contact Phil Grupe, Sustainability Specialist, at phil.grupe@fitchburgwi.gov or 270-4259, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions for future Green E-News topics.

