

From the Resource Conservation Coordinator, John Wasiutynski: Reuse county materials or share with others to save costs and the environment

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[Wednesday Wire \(/wednesday-wire\)](#)

It's no secret that at Multnomah County we're committed to sustainable work practices. From recycling to energy conservation to composting, we're always looking for eco-friendly solutions to carry out the work we do each day. And while such methods are great ways to help us achieve a greener Multnomah County, I hope you'll consider practicing another often overlooked approach: **reuse**.

Reuse means you put something you no longer need back into service, avoiding the economic costs of disposal, and buying new and the environmental cost of extracting raw materials. Multnomah County employees put reuse to work all the time. For example, Facilities and Property Management stockpiles and reuses workstations. And administrative staff at the Division of Assessment, Recording & Taxation make sure office supplies get reused before ordering new.

You can also look for ways of finding a creative reuse for waste materials. The Sheriff's Office sends used string from a laundry binding machine to a program from SCRAP, a nonprofit aimed at inspiring creativity through reuse and sustainability. The string gets reused in arts and crafts projects.

If you have excess materials that are still in good shape, try to find a new use for them. You can look for other people in your office building, or anywhere in our organization who can reuse the materials. County employees can also donate items to other government agencies and nonprofits when an appropriate reuse cannot be found within the county and provided that [Administrative Procedure FIN-13 \(https://commons.multco.us/administrative-procedures-and-executive-rules/multnomah-county-administrative-procedures#finance\)](https://commons.multco.us/administrative-procedures-and-executive-rules/multnomah-county-administrative-procedures#finance) is followed. In fiscal year 2012, the county donated more than 500 items to area nonprofits and diverted 25,000 pounds of materials from the landfill.

In honor of Reuse Week in Multnomah County (Oct. 14 - 20), please join the Office of Sustainability at the Board of Commissioners meeting on Thursday, Oct. 11 to honor the work of the county and community partners including the Community Warehouse, Free Geek, SCRAP, Schoolhouse Supplies, The ReBuilding Center and the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. These organizations provide jobs, and important skills and training to community members. And they also help ensure quality, low-cost goods are available in our community and that valuable materials are kept out of landfills.

For more information, contact John Wasiutynski, the Office of Sustainability's resource conservation coordinator, at john.wasiutynski@multco.us (<mailto:john.wasiutynski@multco.us>).



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