

Use Less Stuff™ Holiday Campaign November 20 through January 1

The Columbia Public Works Volunteer Program is promoting the annual **Use Less Stuff Holiday Campaign** from November 20 to January 1. This is to bring attention to the fact that waste reduction is to everyone's benefit and is everyone's responsibility.

Did you know that the holiday season alone generates 25 million TONS of trash? That is an EXTRA one MILLION TONS of trash per week. If everyone was conscientious and avoided waste, think of how much trash we would save from the landfills.

The following tips for *using less stuff* were taken from the Use Less Stuff (ULS) Report, *38 Days, 38 Ways to Reduce Waste*:

- Buy rechargeable batteries for toys and other items that are used frequently.
- When mailing a present, use a brown paper sack to wrap the box.
- For wrapping gifts, use old maps or Sunday comics, or kids' artwork.
- Make a realistic food shopping guide- avoid having too many leftovers.
- Send leftovers home with guests in plastic containers collected from other food purchases
- Buy a tree that can be planted afterwards or buy an artificial tree.
- When purchasing film for a camera, buy rolls of 36 instead of 12.
- Decorate the house with natural or edible items, e.g., branches, pine cones, berries, and decorated cookies.
- Buy lights that are wired in parallel- if one goes bad, the others still work.
- Put your lights on a timer- it will save energy and money.
- Buy in bulk items you will use a lot of and that have a long storage life.
- Send holiday cards only to those people that you do not see throughout the year.
- Cut off the front of old holiday cards and make your own or make them into postcards.
- Make gifts out of items that you already have around the house:
 - *Old clothes and jewelry for a dress-up box
 - *Tools and gadgets for a young inventor.
 - *Make potholders and oven mitts from old ironing board covers.
 - *Old clothes, drapes, robes, and tablecloths can be used to make doll clothes.
- To cancel the junk mail and catalogs coming to your house, send a postcard or letter with your full name, address, sign it and mail it to the Mail Preference Service, Attn: Dept. 6947196, Direct Marketing Association, P.O. Box 282, Carmel, New York 10512 or visit their website at <http://www.dmaconsumers.org>.
- Or give a gift that was purchased or received and that is not being used by you. (It's the thought that counts!)

Today, we recycle about 45 million tons of reusable materials, but we still throw away 160 million tons. By not buying as much, we will have less to throw away and less to recycle. Recycling is helpful but takes energy. **Using less stuff** can ultimately save yourself and your community money.

For more information on reducing waste or to volunteer with the Public Works Volunteer Program, call 874-6271 or send an email to the Public Works Volunteer Program at pw-volunteer@gocolumbiamo.com.