



Department of Public Works

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Electronics Banned From Landfills, State Wide Recycling Program Created** *City of Milwaukee Offers FREE Electronics Recycling for Residents*

**Milwaukee, WI (August 26, 2010)** – Wisconsin’s new electronics recycling law bans certain electronic items from landfills, such as TVs, computers, printers and fax machines, and also creates a state wide recycling program called E-Cycle Wisconsin. Effective September 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, city crews will NOT pick up, and no one may deposit in the trash any of the banned electronic items. City of Milwaukee residents may recycle electronics through the E-Cycle program for FREE at City of Milwaukee Self-Help Centers located at 6660 North Industrial Rd. and 3879 West Lincoln Ave. For more information on the centers, visit [www.milwaukee.gov/mpw](http://www.milwaukee.gov/mpw) or call (414) 286-2489 (CITY).

Electronic devices are a daily part of most of our lives and comprise a growing segment of the municipal solid waste stream. Until now, there has been no comprehensive system in Wisconsin for recycling electronics from households and K-12 public schools. As a result, local governments and taxpayers were often left paying the bill for recycling and cleaning up improperly managed electronics. Under the new program, manufacturers will bear the primary financial responsibility for the recycling of banned electronics. Passage of a producer responsibility electronics law in Wisconsin was a legislative priority for the City of Milwaukee. “With the new state law in place, the City of Milwaukee is providing convenient locations for residents to recycle their electronics free of charge”, said Mayor Tom Barrett. The City of Milwaukee has registered under the E-Cycle Wisconsin program as a collector and contracts with a registered recycler to process end-of-life electronics. “We expect to recycle a million pounds of electronics through our Self Help Centers over the next year alone,” stated Rick Meyers, Recycling Specialist for the Department of Public Works.

Electronics were banned from solid waste disposal facilities because they may contain harmful chemicals, including mercury, lead, cadmium and other heavy metals, as well as chemical flame retardants. “When landfilled or incinerated, these chemicals may pose a risk to human and environmental health. Responsible electronics recycling helps to avoid pollution that may occur from improper disposal”, said Ann Coakley, director of the Waste and Materials Management Program for the Department of Natural Resources. “Electronics are also an important source of raw materials for the manufacturing industry, as they contain valuable reusable materials including steel, gold, silver, copper, plastic and glass”, said Coakley. For more information on the law and E-Cycle Wisconsin program, visit [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us).

**The following electronics are banned from landfills under the new law.** All of these devices may be recycled by Milwaukee residents at Self-Help Centers for no charge.

- Computers (desktop, laptop, netbooks and tablet computers)
- Desktop printers (including those that scan, fax and/or copy)
- Computer monitors
- Televisions

More...

- DVD players, VCRs and DVRs
- Fax machines
- Computer mice and keyboards
- Other computer accessories such as hard drives, speakers, flash drives and modems
- Cell phones

#### **Fact list**

- Wisconsin is one of twenty-three states that have passed legislation to manage discarded electronics
- Wisconsin's law is similar to electronics recycling laws passed in Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana. Because the laws are similar, manufacturers, collectors and recyclers in these states will be able to follow similar procedures to create economies of scale.
- According to a 2006 DNR survey, 80 percent of Wisconsin households have at least one computer, 99 percent have at least one TV, and 85 percent have at least two TVs. Using these survey results, DNR estimated that there are nearly 3.8 million computers and 7.5 million TVs in Wisconsin households.
- In 2005, used or unwanted electronics amounted to approximately 1.9 to 2.2 million tons nationwide. Of that amount, only about 345,000-379,000 tons (17-18 percent) were recycled. (Source: EPA)
- In 2007, Americans threw away about 2.5 million tons of electronics, including TVs, computers, printers, scanners, faxes, keyboards and cell phones. (Source: EPA)

#### **About the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works**

The mission of the Department of Public Works is to promote the health, safety, mobility and quality-of-life for all City of Milwaukee residents and visitors by providing:

- Safe, attractive and efficient surface infrastructure systems;
- Solid waste collection, disposal, recycling and waste reduction;
- Safe, aesthetically-pleasing and sufficient drinking water;
- Storm water and waste water conveyance
- Support services and facilities for the Department of Public Works (DPW) and other City departments.

For more information, visit [www.milwaukee.gov/mpw](http://www.milwaukee.gov/mpw).

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