



**Annual Report
of the
North Andover Solid Waste Advisory Committee
for Calendar Year 2005**

The cost of dealing with our solid waste (trash and recycling) represents 37% of the Public Works budget. The North Andover Solid Waste Advisory Committee (NASWAC) continues to focus on reducing our incinerated tonnage and increasing our recycled tonnage.

The NASWAC's significant accomplishment in 2005 was the implementation of a program to enforce the town's mandatory recycling bylaw and the State's waste bans, a program almost two years in the making, facilitated by a bylaw change voted at last year's Town Meeting.

The baseline for measuring the success of the program was calendar year 2004. Incinerated tonnage had been increasing steadily, by an average of 400 ton each year. At this rate, we could expect to burn 11,637 ton in 2005, and to recycle 1,918 ton.

When developing the program, our underlying assumption was that people really did want to do the right thing and just needed to understand what that was. The three month education campaign consisted of:

- a tri-fold brochure mailed in the October, November and December 2005 water/sewer bills and December tax bills
- a quarterly newsletter, One Person's Trash, delivered to each household in town via Town Crossings beginning on 1/3/05
- several articles in local newspapers
- large banners strategically placed around town
- large magnetic signs placed on the recycling trucks
- "Please Remember" information flyers distributed by the DPW, for 2 to 3 weeks in advance of the change, to residents disposing of recyclables as trash.

The curbside enforcement of the State Waste Bans and the Recycling bylaw began on January 31, 2005. The big news? We ended the year having reduced our incinerated tonnage to levels not seen since 1999. Our individual efforts really do add up ...

thank you! Instead of increasing by 400 ton, we burned 1,344 ton LESS than 2004! This represents a savings of nearly \$180,000. Our recycling increased by 277 ton, increasing our recycling rate from 14.4% to 18.8%.

The success of our program has been recognized state-wide and our program model is being replicated in a dozen communities across the Commonwealth.

Other program firsts in 2005:

- Created an email account specifically for trash and recycling questions (recycle@townofnorthandover.com) and answered over 300 emails from residents.
- Provided low-cost rain barrels to residents through a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.
- Provided water conservation devices, free-of-charge, to residents. These devices were distributed by NASWAC at the Sheep Shearing Festival, and the Fourth of July Festival.
- Through financial support from the North Andover Rotary Club and Wheelabrator North Andover, NASWAC organized a Poster and Essay contest open to all students in North Andover focused on Reuse and other environmental issues.
- Participated in a regional Zero Waste Day which featured eight charitable organizations gathered on the same day to accept donations from residents. A great way to get rid of stuff you don't want anymore without adding to our trash tonnage!
- Through a partnership with a local document destruction company, Shred-Pro, two collections were held for the collection and on-site shredding of confidential documents from North Andover residents.
- Household Hazardous Waste collection events continue to be an integral part of the town's solid waste offerings. Many products sold for household use should not be placed in the trash. We help to raise awareness about toxic products and proper disposal and safe alternatives.
- We applied for, and received several grants from the Mass-DEP, including our annual recycling Calendar mailing, kitchen scrap buckets – a must-have for the home composter, and pollution control devices called Diesel Oxidation Catalysts for two of the town's DPW vehicles.

School recycling initiatives:

- Organized our first collection of used (sometimes stinky) sneakers for the Nike Reuse-a-Shoe program. Sargent Elementary School held the collection in the Spring and collected over 200 pair of sneakers (that's over 300 pounds). Donated shoes are disassembled and used to create premium sport surfaces like football fields, basketball and tennis courts, and running tracks.
- Instituted beverage container recycling at Kittredge, Sargent and Franklin elementary schools. At least 600 beverage containers per week are recycled rather than being thrown away.
- Sargent School ran an end-of-year paper recycling clean-up. Instead of throwing away old documents, extra recycling totes were available for teachers to use.

Our plans for 2006?

We all know that we can reduce the amount of trash we burn by recycling as much as possible. But significant waste reduction can also come from keeping good stuff out of the trash in the first place. One project in the works for the last weekend in June is a **Town-Wide Yard Sale**. Participants hold yard sales at their own homes, but register with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and we do all the advertising -- in and around North Andover. This will become an annual event you can count on as a way to easily de-clutter your home and make some money at the same time. For more information ... you got it ... on the website!

www.northandoverrecycles.com

Under the direction of science teacher Gregg Pascoe and aided by NASWAC and by a grant from Wheelabrator, the North Andover Middle School has instituted a beverage container recycling program. They are estimating a collection rate of 100 containers per day! They are also working with students to initiate and improve recycling at home and will represent North Andover at a recycling symposium in Boston in the spring.

We are very interested in working with Atkinson and Thompson elementary schools and with NAHS to implement beverage container recycling at those remaining schools. Also, we will expand the end-of-year paper recycling program beyond our pilot school, Sargent elementary.

Our goals focus on new and existing programs which support the Committee Charter as approved by the Board of Selectmen. The charter in its entirety can be found on www.northandoverrecycles.com. An excerpt:

We will continue to:

- Maximize the potential of obtaining grant money to help the town of North Andover finance recycling and other waste reduction programs;
- Work with appropriate DPW personnel to maximize the market potential of our recyclables;
- Support North Andover's Neighborhood Recycling Program – the grassroots initiative that seeks to identify a 'recycling captain' for each street. Recycling Captains help disseminate information to neighbors and raise concerns to the Committee. As of May 2005, 1007 households are represented by Recycling Captains, which represents about 14% of the households served by our curbside programs. We are looking to double that number by July 2007;
- Continue to promote recycling in public venues so that planning for recyclables becomes integrated with the event planning process for any group requesting use of public parks or facilities. Recycling at Town Meeting, or any other event, should not be an afterthought, it should be an integral part of event planning;
- Continue to work with the School Department and individual schools to strengthen the recycling programs at all town schools;

- Develop the Recycling web site into an interactive and informative source of information, a place residents can turn to for answers to their questions and links to more in-depth information;
- Aggressively look for opportunities to reduce our trash further. Our per household disposed tonnage is still much higher than neighboring towns;
- Promote composting – up to 15% of your household waste is food waste that can be composted.

A heart-felt 'thank-you' to each of you who have made our programs successful. We look forward to another great year.

Respectfully submitted,
 Tina Klein, Chair
 Steve Daly, Vice Chair
 Bill Hmurciak, DPW Director
 Mark Caggiano, Selectman
 Joan Kulash
 Karen Kline
 Joanne Parrill
 Leslie Young-Lemire
 Deb Lynch

