

One World — One Chance

Let's All Do Our Part!

Reuse, Reduce, and Recycle!

By: Wayne Harmon



We only have one world and we only have one chance at preserving it for future generations. We hear this profound warning all the time and everyone knows that it's true, but sometimes even the most conscientious of us needs a little push to do what we already know is the right thing. It is everyone's responsibility to reduce the amount of trash we discard, reuse containers and products whenever we can, recycle all used materials possible and compost when practical, and respond to this serious solid waste dilemma by reconsidering waste-producing activities and by voicing our desire for less waste in all areas.

In keeping with this universal "Going Green" trend, the Piedmont Interstate Fair, Spartanburg, S.C., wanted to do its part to help educate, remind, and emphasize to our

patrons how important each individual person is in this effort to save our earth. The fair got on that bandwagon and went "green" and encouraged the community to follow in our

footsteps. The fair made a concerted effort to educate our visitors on why we should recycle, what to recycle, where to recycle, and how to start recycling. The program was very well

received by the public and we sincerely hope that all patrons are practicing the ideas they were exposed to during fair week.

To start off our campaign, the fair implemented many ideas on the grounds to conserve, reuse, and recycle. Two liter bottles filled with water were placed in all commode tanks to displace water and save with each flush. All paper and cardboard boxes from the offices and concessionaires was taken to local recycle bins. All appropriate light bulbs were changed from conventional to CFL bulbs for longevity and energy savings. The fair purchased and used only biodegradable cleaners and paper goods on the fairgrounds. All concessionaires were required to place their grease in a large grease collection container on the grounds. The grease was collected and recycled by Carolina By-Products of Gastonia, N.C. The Farm Animal Barn waste was collected with shavings and distributed to fertilize vegetable gardens in the area.

Coca-Cola is our exclusive beverage vendor during fair week. This year Coca-Cola sold only plastic bottles to the vendors and in the vending machines. Plastic bottle recycle containers provided by Coca-Cola were placed throughout the fairgrounds to collect the empty bottles for recycling in a new multimillion dollar, bottle to bottle recycling plant in operation in Spartanburg County, the largest in the world and the only one in the United States. The plant is a joint venture between Coca-Cola Bottling and United Resource Recovery Corporation. The plant processes used



plastic bottles back into food grade plastic with which new plastic bottles can be made. This program was a great success and will continue annually.

In our attempt to educate and excite the community about recycling, we dedicated a page on our web site to helpful tips and web sites that tell what and how to conserve and recycle multiple items from our daily lives. We posted throughout the fairgrounds, and gave away to anyone interested, colorful recycling posters. These posters used familiar sights like Mount Rushmore, Fred Flintstone, and Elvis Presley with catchy phrases reminding all of us to recycle. The fair also promoted recycling on our PA announcements throughout the week. We placed a lot of emphasis on recycling in the Commercial Building and the Agricultural Building by providing complimentary booths to Spartanburg Water Systems, DEHC Code Enforcement, Palmetto Pride, as well as the County and City Recycling Centers. Each of these agencies had multiple giveaway items, which always sparks the public's interest. These agencies offered all kinds of useful items with pointed messages about conserving and recycling; everything from pencils to pens, rulers to yard sticks, key chains to small flashlights, and the ever-popular stress reliever balls. The most popular stress reliever was a large blue drop of water with movable arms and legs. More importantly, each agency had a multitude of information concerning what items could be recycled and how and where to recycle in our county. DEHC Code Enforce-

ment displayed a demonstration model of an electric lawn mower. Visitors had the opportunity to receive coupons worth \$200.00 toward the purchase of an electric lawn mower if they turned in an old gas mower of any kind. Probably the least known fact that our patrons were made aware of was how much energy can be saved by simply unplugging small appliances any time not in use and turning computers, monitors, and printers completely off every time they are not in actual use. Going green can certainly save you green, money that is. That fact speaks to everyone's heart.

The fair also made a vigorous effort for the public to bring any old, unused, unwanted cell phones, whether in working condition or not, to a recycle box in the Commercial Building. These phones were taken to the Safe Homes Rape Crisis Coalition in Spartanburg to be refurbished, distributed and used by women forced to come to this shelter. Abused and battered women at the shelter can benefit greatly by having a cell phone with them at all times for protection. With a cell phone in her possession, a woman can always call 911 for help if she feels threatened.

Of all of the recycling programs we featured this year, none was more successful, more educational, or better received by the public than the Scarecrow Contest. Any class, club or group from any school was invited to build a scarecrow from all recyclable materials to enter in competition in the fair. Winning

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groups received cash awards from \$25.00 to \$100.00 for their school and pizza parties, doughnuts, or candy for each participant in the winning project. We had 59 entries from schools throughout the county. The materials these children thought to use were varied to say the least. The ingenuity and imagination displayed in each scarecrow was extraordinary, not to mention the entries were just plain fun. Some senior citizens groups and even individual families entered scarecrows from all recyclable materials with themes that

represented their views or homes. These scarecrows were displayed in a different area of the Agricultural Building but were not judged with the student entries. The fair received so many scarecrows, several had to be displayed outside the entrances to the exhibit buildings. It was such a joy to see the excitement on the children's and teachers' faces as the scarecrows came to the fair to be entered. One school district transported all their entries on a district maintenance truck accompanied by the school principal to be sure that each of their



projects arrived intact and placed in an advantageous location. Many of the teachers hung around most of the day as other scarecrows arrived to compare projects and assess their group's chances at winning. Whole classes came to the fair during the week in order to view their prize projects in person. We received hundreds of positive comments concerning the scarecrow contest and the fact that each scarecrow inspired the visitor to stop and think and do a better job of recycling for the good of all. The children in their enthusiasm managed to educate and inspire the adults to take better care of the earth. We thought it was very fitting that the winner of the Best in Show Award was a scarecrow holding a world globe in her hands. This winning creation was entered by Mrs. Pohl's First Grade Class from Roebuck Elementary School in Spartanburg.

We all want to be responsible citizens of the world. Conservation and recycling is a large part of that responsibility. At our fair, we found that after only one week of making a concerted effort to conserve energy and recycle whenever possible that it had become easy to do. We did not consider recycling a burden or look upon it as a chore but just a natural part of our everyday lives. Please visit our website at www.piedmontinterstatefair.com, click on the 2009 Fair page and go to The Fair Goes Green tab at the top of that page to receive useful tips and helpful web sites concerning conserving and recycling. The Piedmont Interstate Fair encourages each of you to do your part in saving our earth for future generations. ♦

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