

Weekend

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SPRING GREENING



PHOTOS BY JEANA-DEE ALLEN/THE STATE NEWS

Cardboard is pushed out of the way at the Granger Waste Management Co. on Feb. 25.

East Lansing, MSU strive to make residents, students recycle, think green

By Jeff Kanan
THE STATE NEWS

As the threat of global climate change becomes more real, local efforts to reduce waste are more important than ever. At MSU, campus officials have set a goal to decrease waste by 30 percent by 2015. And in East Lansing, recycling coordinators have seen an increased effort by students to reuse materials and clean up after themselves. Last year, East Lansing saw a four-year trend in lax recycling reversed when the city's amount of collected recyclables increased, and MSU's efforts have led to the ongoing construction of a processing center for recyclable materials. The moves represent positive change that city and university officials hope to keep going.

Reversing the trends

From 2005 to 2007, East Lansing's volume of collected recyclables decreased, largely due to declining newspaper volumes and the closing of drop-off sites near campus.

But in 2008, the city saw a 4 percent increase in recyclables collected, in part because the public became more familiar with new drop-off site locations that have been established over the past several years, said Dave Smith, an environmental specialist for East Lansing.

The city's two drop-off sites are located at the Department of Public Works building at 1800 E. State Road, and the East Lansing Public Schools Administration Building, 841 Timberlane St.

In the past, drop-off sites were located near the East Lansing Fire Station as well as in Val-

ley Court Park, but those locations had to be closed during the past five years due to zoning and fire safety issues, Smith said.

Smith said the main contributor to East Lansing's recycling lapse was a decrease in the volume of newspaper being consumed and recycled.

"It seems pretty clear with the advent of the Internet and other industry trends, it seems that it's affected newspaper volumes," Smith said.

East Lansing collected close to 1,700 tons of recyclables in 2008, 240 of which were newspapers. In 2004, when the city reached a peak for recyclables collected, nearly a quarter of the 2,100 tons collected were newspapers.

The city's recycling program is funded mainly by a solid waste millage. The tax pays completely for residents' recycling fees,



Recyclable materials are compressed at the Granger Waste Management Company on Feb. 25.

although \$5.00 is required for curbside bins, Smith said.

The amount of recyclables collected in East Lansing at the drop-off sites is similar to the amount collected off curbsides. In 2007, drop-off site materials rose from 792 to 916 tons, while curbside materials decreased from 802 tons to 734.

Drop-off distances

More than a decade ago, the

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Increased recyclables for East Lansing

In 2008, East Lansing saw an increase in collected recyclables after three years of declining volumes.

The city collected 1,651 tons of recyclables through its curbside and drop-off program in 2008, about a 4 percent increase from 2007.

For 2008, 734 tons were from the curbside program and 916 from the two drop-off sites.

In 2007, there were 802 tons collected from the curbside and 792 at drop-off sites.

SOURCE: DAVE SMITH, ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST FOR EAST LANSING

To see a video of what happens to recyclables put out on the curb, visit statenews.com.