Welcome to the Zero Waste Farmers' Market!
by Dan Matsch

Picture this: it’s a beautiful Saturday morning in Boulder and you’re sitting out side the Farmers’ Market polishing off the last of a delicious meal prepared by one of the Boulder Farmers’ Market’s food vendors. That’s left in front of you is the usual assortment of disposable cups, plates, utensils, napkins, a straw, and the last bits of food that you just can’t finish. Head for the trash can, right? Nope, it’s ALL COMPOSTABLE!

Compost Tea is Back!
by Dan Matsch

If you are a regular reader of the Eco-Cycle Times or you shopped last year at the Boulder Farmers’ Market, you may already be hip to the hottest new brew in town, Microbe Brew. Actually, it’s a tea made from worm castings and it’s to indulge your soil, not your self, but this season you can again find Microbe Brew at the Eco-Cycle tent at the Boulder Farmers’ Market (13th Street, between Arapahoe and Canyon) every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. New this year is a money-saving rebate on Microbe Brew, thanks to the City of Boulder Water Conservation Office. Because of the City’s ability to hold water in the soil and reduce evaporation, the Water Conservation Office is encouraging its use as a water-saving fertilizer by offering a 50% rebate to City of Boulder residents who purchase Eco-Cycle’s Microbe Brew. Please bring a utility bill as proof of residency. (Non-Boulder residents don’t despair… bring the coupon on this page!)

What is compost tea?
If you’re new to compost tea, Microbe Brew is a living liquid full of diverse beneficial soil microbes. When sprinkled onto your garden soil or lawn and then watered, these microbes consume organic matter and minerals in the soil and turn them into humus, a highly stable organic compound that is the only plant food found in nature. Microbe Brew is not a fertilizer—it’s a sustainable alternative that balances and accelerates the natural process that is already taking place in your soil.

To make the tea, we start with worm castings (a.k.a. worm poop), the most balanced compost in the world already teeming with soil microbes. Next, we “brew” them in a special tank that essentially acts as a Petri dish for beneficial microbes to reproduce to a very rapid pace for 24 hours. Then we bring the brewing tank right down to the Market on Saturday mornings and pour the resulting tea directly into gallon and quart containers as customers order it. Freshness is very important because the tea has no shelf life—it must be applied to the soil within 10-12 hours of leaving the brewer or the microbes will run out of oxygen and go dormant.

How is compost tea used?
Compost tea can help plants in any soil, including houseplants, turf, gardens, and perennial flowerbeds and shrubs. No preparation of the soil is necessary before applying the tea. It can be a great first step toward your 05 garden that you can do even if you soil is still wet or even snow-covered. It can be especially effective in spring when your soil is just waking from the winter, during periods of heavy soil feeding such as the vigorous vegetative growth stage of early summer and the flowering/fruuting stage, and in times of stress such as hot spells or after mowing the lawn. Occasionally, you can get growth-spurt results if the soil is very depleted (as with most houseplants out there), but more often the results are steady growth unchecked by stress (a major advantage in the up-and-down climate of spring and summer in the Front Range) and more flowering and fruiting. Compost tea can also suppress disease, especially when applied to the leaves. Come see us at the Market for more details on application.

Microbe Brew sells for $6/gallon or $2.50/quart (plus an additional 50% refundable container deposit), covering roughly 200-400 square feet and 50-100 square feet respectively. In addition to the discounts mentioned above, we will again offer our “frequent buyer” card that gives you a free gallon for every five gallons you purchase.

If Saturdays at the Boulder Farmers’ Market don’t fit with your schedule, you may also purchase the tea at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials at 3030 “old” Pearl Street (see center pull-out section of this newsletter for a map) on Wednesdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Compost Tea Coupon

50% off Eco-Cycle’s Microbe Brew
Water your soil with life!

Present this coupon when you visit us at the Boulder Farmers’ Market on Saturdays or at the ChRM (5030 “old” Pearl) on Wednesdays where we will be selling compost tea from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
A Slow Motion Assault on the Native Spirit

It is most often a joy and privilege to work in the recycling and Zero Waste world. I get to experience some amazing developments happening all around the world, communities slowly awakening to the problems of reckless resource use and of landfilling and incinerating. Sometimes, though, it can also be a very sad world. While we are making progress, the assault on Earth continues in many contexts, small and large, slowly and quickly. By our larger communities, the impacts of what we are doing to our environment are less obvious, and we can fairly effectively keep waste and our resource depletion "out of sight, out of mind." But in smaller, more isolated areas like in the tribal communities, the devastation to both the environment and the human spirit is omnipresent, and they are clearly the canaries in the coal mine for the whole planet.

I have just returned from working with the leaders in the Alaskan recycling world, both native and non-native. Their physical environment is resource rich, and also encumbered by big and small environmental challenges. Living in isolation from systems to handle their discards, the people living in what are called "off-road" and towns, compared to ANWR, that may seem like a small-scale issue, but as a result, their children are growing up with alarming rates of asthma and the run-off from the ash is polluting their drinking water. It is an immediate in-your-face environmental assault on these native folks daily face.

In both places I had the honor to listen to the elders speak of things deeply rooted in both the human spirit and the earth. The slow and deliberate way that these elders spoke in public served as a sort of meditative pacing, allowing all of us to catch our breath and notice our thoughts. I now have a better understanding of why tribal councils took days to discuss matters. The elders from Alaska and Saipan each council focused on illuminating the sacred link to the land. And yet, the younger people in each culture seemed angry that even though the wisdom was old and well understood, little was changing for the better. From my perspective, we weren't just up against modernity, but also with their elders for not doing enough to prevent this crisis or to take charge of it now for the sake of future generations.

The one positive for these people is that at least they can see firsthand that our current approaches to resource use are fatally flawed, and because they can see the direct correlation to their health impacts affecting them too, and we as the elders, or generations in charge, need to get as connected to the problem, and on the last track for a solution.

Goodbye to Bob Gibson, Eco-Cycle Grandfather

We are deeply saddened by the recent passing of one of our finest and oldest Eco-Cycle friends and founders, Bob Gibson. Bob was a "man of Boulder," knowing everyone, and he linked the Eco-Cycle idealists with the local people and tools to help us as an organization navigate the transition from adolescence into young adulthood. The single greatest contribution Bob gave to us in the early 90s was his personal guidance in our infamous muddy yard. There were days that the mud was a foot deep outside the office door, and people lost shoes as they tried to walk through it. Once we had a semi-trailer load of newspaper tip and sink. Bob cut a deal with Public Service Company, and we cooked up a recipe of cement, fly ash from the power plant and the mud, and after we smoothed it out, we had a hard surface for the next three years until we could afford to lay down asphalt. It changed Eco-Cycle forever, just as Bob did. We all miss him.

Eco-Cycle Receives Three New Awards

Eco-Cycle is excited to share with Boulder County residents three awards received from prominent Colorado nonprofit conservation organizations. These distinctions would not be possible without strong participation in and commitment to Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste programs by you, our community members.

Colorado Recycles presented Eco-Cycle with the "Colorado Recycler of the Year Award for Most Unique Project," honoring our Zero Waste Event Program. Eco-Cycle was presented with the award on the 3rd October at the celebration in Longmont, just one of many Zero Waste events Eco-Cycle coordinates each year. The successful program transforms local and regional festivals into microcosms of a Zero Waste world where all products are non-toxic and reusable, recyclable or compostable.

Additionally, the Colorado Association for Recycling presented Eco-Cycle with the "Outstanding Colorado Recycling Program Award" recognizing the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM). The CHaRM, now in its fourth year of operation, accepts everything from electronics to textiles, and has at least one new material each year. The list of difficult materials and recyclables.

Most recently, Boulder’s Center for ReSource Conservation presented Eco-Cycle with the 2005 Waste Reduction ReWard for advancing the diversion of waste from landfills through inovations in recycling, reusing and composting programs. Eco-Cycle is thrilled to have been recognized by these organizations and hopes that the distinctions will increase awareness of Zero Waste efforts in our community.

Thank you, Bob Gibson, for all the support you’ve shown Eco-Cycle over the years. We will all miss you.
Local Eco-Heroes Working Toward Zero Waste
by Linda Smith, Caroline Mitchell, Erin O'Leary, Matt Mader, and Ed Green

Eco-Cycle’s mission is to help make our community a model for Zero Waste. The only way we’ll make it happen is by working together. There are many individuals, groups, and municipalities throughout our area who are demonstrating the commitment, leadership, and inspiration we’ll need to get there, and we thank them for the work they’re doing.

Eric and Katharina Booth Lead Opposition to “Mt. Erie” Expansion

Already known as ‘Mt. Erie’ among locals, the Front Range Landfill has applied to the Town of Erie to triple in size and double in height. If approved, residents Eric and Katharina Booth have been instrumental in organizing residents of adjacent Vista Ridge, employees of nearby companies, and other Erie residents opposed to the expansion. The idea that the Front Range Landfill would grow another 122 acres didn’t sit well with them. Their goal is to develop a healthy and sustainable community.

All too often, expanding landfills is the first resort in addressing the problem of increasing amounts of solid waste produced throughout Colorado’s Front Range. Erie residents would rather see the waste currently imported from neighboring communities diverted from the landfill through recycling and composting programs.

Eco-Heroes such as the Booths are taking a stand for their environment and their community. The fact that the landfill owner, Republic Services, has offered Erie one million dollars in advance fees on the landfill expansion is approved, and that Colorado law doesn’t encourage alternative waste management approaches, makes the residents of Erie the underdogs in this fight and our Eco-Heroes all the more courageous.

City Council Member Brosz Out Front on Growing Recycling in Broomfield

Broomfield City Council member Gary Brosz has traveled throughout Europe and Japan and has been inspired by the recycling and composting programs he’s seen there. This inspiration has made him a driving force on Broomfield’s Solid Waste Task Force in the effort to provide Broomfield residents with a low-cost citywide curbside collection program. Council member Brosz estimates that Broomfield is currently recycling about 5 percent of its waste, yet a recent City survey suggests that a large majority of residents want this number to reach a recycling goal of 30 percent or higher. In order to reach that goal, Council member Brosz states that Broomfield will need to “stop throwing trash over the fence into other communities,” and start diverting its waste away from landfills. Broomfield is on the right path as no other community in Colorado has reached a 30 percent diversion rate without first implementing a city-sponsored curbside recycling program.

City Manager Pedrow Moves Longmont Drop-Center Into the 21st Century

If you thought the Eco-Cycle Longmont Drop-off Center was popular before, you should see it now! And the thanks for this new facility goes to Eco-Hero Gordon Pedrow. Since Pedrow became City Manager in 1993, Eco-Cycle and the City of Longmont have continued to improve and expand their public/private partnership that began over 20 years ago, and the new Drop-off Center is just one result of this successful partnership. Pedrow is “proud of the fact that we moved from an inferior recycling facility to an outstanding facility that reflects the vision of the responsible recyclers of Longmont.”

This new facility is a community gem, and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Residents are enjoying the expanded hours along with the new layout that increases safety and cleanliness, and mud-free recycling. In addition to handling traditional recyclables, the Center is now holding special collection events four times a year. At these events, hard-to-recycle items such as electronic plastic bags, books, clothing, and shoes are collected. Additionally, Eco-Cycle and the City have partnered to monitor the Tree Limb Diversion Center, thereby minimizing contamination in the mulch, making this recycled product a viable and valuable resource for residents.

Lafayette Sets Boulder County Zero Waste Event Record at Oatmeal Fest

One bag of trash, just 35 pounds of garbage. That’s all that was sent to the landfill at the end of this year’s Lafayette Oatmeal Fest. The 3,700 folks who attended breakfasts, attended the health fair, and ran the Quicker Quaker 5K race recycled and composted a whopping 98 percent of their discards, making this the most successful Zero Waste event yet at the county to date.

The Lafayette Waste Reduction Advisory Committee has been working hard to make their City’s events waste-free, and it’s paying off. Co-chairs and Eco-Heroes Kathy DiCenzo and Sara Tucker work side-by-side with Public Works Director Doug Short (pictured above), City Council member Will Toor and citizens of Lafayette who are shaping a recycling culture. In addition to running the Recycling Center, they are brain-storming ideas for potential programs and partnerships to further decrease the waste that businesses and residents send to the landfill. Each viable idea is being analyzed for its cost and landfill diversion potential, and then a roadmap will be created to bring it to fruition. In the end, the team will create a toolbox full of waste reduction ideas for the City Council to use to continue building a community on the cutting edge of Zero Waste.

Boulder Planning Big Steps Forward

Kudos to Boulder City Council Member Karen Imbierowicz, who serves with other volunteers on Superior’s Waste Diversion Advisory Committee.

According to Imbierowicz, there are three important aspects of the ordinance. First, it guarantees curbside recycling to residents who live outside the Rock Creek Homeowners Association, which already contracts with Blue Mountain trash and recycling. Second, the ordinance tackles a problem that has plagued other communities in Boulder County – requiring that trash haulers provide recycling to multi-family housing developments. Third, it means that haulers will fund further waste diversion programs as well as provide temporary start-up funding for greenhouse gas reduction programs. One coming new program with Trash Tax funding is a pilot collection of yard and food waste collected on an annual basis. This data will be reported to the County and will help the Town of Superior determine its waste diversion rates and programs.

Now that every residence in Superior has access to curbside recycling, Imbierowicz looks forward to tackling yard waste. Congratulations, Karen Imbierowicz and the Town of Superior!

Four Cheers for Karen Imbierowicz and the Town of Superior

The Town of Superior recently approved an ordinance which requires that all trash haulers provide their residential customers with curbside recycling services. This effort was led by Eco-Hero and Town Trustee Karen Imbierowicz, who serves with other volunteers on Superior’s Waste Diversion Advisory Committee.

According to Imbierowicz, there are three important aspects of the ordinance. First, it guarantees curbside recycling to residents who live outside the Rock Creek Homeowners Association, which already contracts with Blue Mountain trash and recycling. Second, the ordinance tackles a problem that has plagued other communities in Boulder County – requiring that trash haulers provide recycling to multi-family housing developments. Third, it means that haulers will fund further waste diversion programs as well as provide temporary start-up funding for greenhouse gas reduction programs. One coming new program with Trash Tax funding is a pilot collection of yard and food waste collected on an annual basis. This data will be reported to the County and will help the Town of Superior determine its waste diversion rates and programs.

Now that every residence in Superior has access to curbside recycling, Imbierowicz looks forward to tackling yard waste. Congratulations, Karen Imbierowicz and the Town of Superior!

Boulder Trash Tax Paying Off

Kudos to Boulder City Council members Mark Ruzzin and Crystal Gray (pictured below) and former City Council member Will Toor (pictured at left) for their recent leadership in increasing waste diversion services through the City of Boulder’s Trash Tax. The Trash Tax currently co-funds popular programs such as the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM), yard and wood waste drop-off facilities, recycling bins in public spaces and more. The recent increase will fund further waste diversion programs as well as provide temporary start-up funding for greenhouse gas reduction programs. One coming new program with Trash Tax funding is a pilot collection of yard and food waste which began in two Boulder neighborhoods in April of this year. The pilot mimics San Francisco’s Fantastic Three collection program, which serves as a model for the nation. Toot see great potential in these programs: “I believe there is much support in our community for moving toward a much lower waste society, both in terms of solid waste and the use of energy. Trash Tax funding helps us achieve both these goals.”

Tons of FREE Crafts at the Lafayette Oatmeal Fest

If you think your child is too young to recycle, you should be at the Lafayette Oatmeal Fest! The 3,700 folks who attended breakfasts, attended the health fair, and ran the Quicker Quaker 5K race recycled and composted a whopping 98 percent of their discards, making this the most successful Zero Waste event yet at the county to date.

The Lafayette Waste Reduction Advisory Committee has been working hard to make their City’s events waste-free, and it’s paying off. Co-chairs and Eco-Heroes Kathy DiCenzo and Sara Tucker work side-by-side with Public Works Director Doug Short (pictured above), City Council member Will Toor and citizens of Lafayette who are shaping a recycling culture. In addition to running the Recycling Center, they are brain-storming ideas for potential programs and partnerships to further decrease the waste that businesses and residents send to the landfill. Each viable idea is being analyzed for its cost and landfill diversion potential, and then a roadmap will be created to bring it to fruition. In the end, the team will create a toolbox full of waste reduction ideas for the City Council to use to continue building a community on the cutting edge of Zero Waste.

Boulder Planning Big Steps Forward

Kudos to Boulder City Council Member Karen Imbierowicz, who serves with other volunteers on Superior’s Waste Diversion Advisory Committee.

According to Imbierowicz, there are three important aspects of the ordinance. First, it guarantees curbside recycling to residents who live outside the Rock Creek Homeowners Association, which already contracts with Blue Mountain trash and recycling. Second, the ordinance tackles a problem that has plagued other communities in Boulder County – requiring that trash haulers provide recycling to multi-family housing developments. Third, it means that haulers will fund further waste diversion programs as well as provide temporary start-up funding for greenhouse gas reduction programs. One coming new program with Trash Tax funding is a pilot collection of yard and food waste collected on an annual basis. This data will be reported to the County and will help the Town of Superior determine its waste diversion rates and programs.

Now that every residence in Superior has access to curbside recycling, Imbierowicz looks forward to tackling yard waste. Congratulations, Karen Imbierowicz and the Town of Superior!

Boulder Trash Tax Paying Off

Kudos to Boulder City Council members Mark Ruzzin and Crystal Gray (pictured below) and former City Council member Will Toor (pictured at left) for their recent leadership in increasing waste diversion services through the City of Boulder’s Trash Tax. The Trash Tax currently co-funds popular programs such as the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM), yard and wood waste drop-off facilities, recycling bins in public spaces and more. The recent increase will fund further waste diversion programs as well as provide temporary start-up funding for greenhouse gas reduction programs. One coming new program with Trash Tax funding is a pilot collection of yard and food waste which began in two Boulder neighborhoods in April of this year. The pilot mimics San Francisco’s Fantastic Three collection program, which serves as a model for the nation. Toot see great potential in these programs: “I believe there is much support in our community for moving toward a much lower waste society, both in terms of solid waste and the use of energy. Trash Tax funding helps us achieve both these goals.”
Eco-Cycle Congratulates the Winners of our 2005 Zero Waste Services Awards
by Marti Matsch

In the past two years, Eco-Cycle has been offering more than just recycling services to our 800 business and institutional clients. Our commercial customers don’t just recycle anymore, they “eco-cycle” with Zero Waste Services, the most comprehensive program available. With Zero Waste Services, businesses can recycle their traditional recyclables, as well as compost their biodegradable materials—such as food and landscaping waste; recycle their hard-to-recycle materials such as computers, patio wrap and books; and utilize our educational tools and programs to help reduce waste in the first place. Once we’ve done everything to keep materials out of the landfill, we’ll provide hauling for “whatever’s left,” continually working with companies to get to Zero Waste, or darn near.

At a business appreciation event this spring, Eco-Cycle recognized some of the best of the best of our Boulder and Broomfield County clients, companies who have partnered with us to use various elements of the Zero Waste Services program and are sending an important message—trash can, for the environment, and for the company’s bottom line.

Our winner in the “Going Beyond Recycling by Composting” category was Boulder’s Old Chicago. General Manager Chuck Holcomb says his restaurant has been able to cut its trash collection from four days per week down to one.

Boulder County clients, companies who have partnered with us to use various elements of the Zero Waste Services program and are sending an important message about their commitment to reducing their trash hauling expense!

• Eco-Cycle Times

by Caroline Mitchell and Marti Matsch

reducing their trash hauling expense!

Eco-Cycle has been offering more than just recycling services to our 800 business and institutional clients. Our commercial customers don’t just recycle anymore, they “eco-cycle” with Zero Waste Services, the most comprehensive program available. With Zero Waste Services, businesses can recycle their traditional recyclables, as well as compost their biodegradable materials—such as food and landscaping waste; recycle their hard-to-recycle materials such as computers, patio wrap and books; and utilize our educational tools and programs to help reduce waste in the first place. Once we’ve done everything to keep materials out of the landfill, we’ll provide hauling for “whatever’s left,” continually working with companies to get to Zero Waste, or darn near.

At a business appreciation event this spring, Eco-Cycle recognized some of the best of the best of our Boulder and Broomfield County clients, companies who have partnered with us to use various elements of the Zero Waste Services program and are sending an important message—trash can, for the environment, and for the company’s bottom line.

Our winner in the “Going Beyond Recycling by Composting” category was Boulder’s Old Chicago. General Manager Chuck Holcomb says his restaurant has been able to cut its trash collection from four days per week down to one.

According to Dale Hobbs at the Boulder Valley School District (BVSD), our big “Going for Zero Waste… or darn near” award winner, has set a new national standard in the hospital industry for environmental stewardship. In addition to collecting traditional recyclables at their ten locations throughout Boulder, electronics are recycled at the CHaRM, food waste is composted, linen no longer suitable for use are recycled, and disposable blue wrap used for sterilization has been replaced with durable, reusable containers. According to BCH Environmental Coordinator Kai Abelks, in 2003 BCH generated 22 tons of blue wrap waste, in 2004 they achieved a net savings of $111,000 by no longer purchasing blue wrap and by reducing their trash hauling expense.

Congratulations and many thanks to our award winners, nominees, and to all the 800 businesses partnering with Eco-Cycle to go beyond recycling to Zero Waste.

This spring, Eco-Cycle recognized several businesses at varying stages on the road to Zero Waste. The categories and nominees are below with the awardees highlighted.

Outstanding Recycling Programs: Small business category

Brady Hotel
Cold Reproduction Center
Doc Store
Meals on Wheels – Longmont
Moore & Bishopt Architects
Penny Lane Coffeehouse
Trident Bookstores

Medium business category

Cisco Systems
Gannett Food Share
Millennium Harvest House Hotel
Morrell Graphics
Pharmacia Integrated Pharmacy
Special Transit
WhiteWave Foods

Large business category

Angen
Avon PorterCare Hospital
Level 3 Communications
Longmont United Hospital
Maxxis
Roche Colorado Corporation
Spectra Logic

Thanks to Our Partners in Responsible Recycling:
Eco-Cycle thanks these two companies for partnering with us to create a recycling solution for the products they distribute and to support the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM).

Daily Camera for supporting the plastic bag/newspaper sleeve recycling program.

ListenUp for supporting our electronics recycling program.

Thanks to Our Partners Who Make Our Programs Possible:
These businesses manage our Zero Waste services possible by providing the infrastructure for processing, reuse or collection of materials from businesses.

A1 Organics – our composting processor
Jared Pols Foundation – providing refuse alternatives for working electronics collected at the CHaRM
One Way Disposal – our partner in Zero Waste Services, providing disposal of the few materials left in the garbage can
Weyerhaeuser – providing markets for paper recyclables

ListenUp Joins the CHaRM as a Partner for Responsible Recycling
Our First Electronics Retailer Partner Helps Make Electronics Recycling Possible
by Caroline Mitchell and Marti Matsch

If you lived in the European Union and you had an obsolete computer or broken electronic product, you could take it back to the manufacturer for recycling because E.U. “Take-Back” laws require the manufacturer to do so. Here in the U.S., we have no similar federal legislation, and as a result, our landfills are bulging with electronics. In lieu of federal Take-Back regulation, Eco-Cycle has been working to create a model electronics recycling program built on partnerships.

The Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) opened in 2001 as a partnership between the City of Boulder, Eco-Cycle and the recycler—all helping to financially support the program. Missing from this equation were the electronics manufacturers and retailers, and their share of the responsibility for recycling the products they sell. They’ve been missing, until now! Eco-Cycle is excited to announce that ListenUp, a local electronics store, has become our first electronics Partner for Responsible Recycling.

As a partner, ListenUp provides educational information in their store about the CHaRM program. Customers who purchase new electronics at ListenUp receive a coupon for recycling an electronic item at no charge. Back at the CHaRM, visitors who recycle electronics receive a coupon for a discount at ListenUp.

The partnership has proved successful for both parties. Many of the more than 550 coupons distributed since December to CHaRM customers have been redeemed at ListenUp, increasing ListenUp’s sales volume. Additionally, Boulder ListenUp Store Manager Bob Murphy noted that “many customers are pleased to see us partnering with Eco-Cycle and working for the responsible handling of electronic scrap.”

We’re getting the same feedback on our end. ‘CHaRM visitors are excited to hear that ListenUp is working with Eco-Cycle and that we’re making headway in the inclusion of all responsible parties in electronics recycling,” said CHaRM Manager Dan Matsch.

Innovative approaches such as this program are necessary to handle our growing electronic waste problem. An estimate of 315 to 600 million computer processors will soon be obsolete in the U.S., according to the Computer TakeBack Campaign, a coalition working to encourage electronics producers to responsibly recycle end-of-life electronics. If piled up from sea level, this quantity of computers could cover six acres and reach the altitude of Denver, Colorado.

Not only is waste abundant, but its toxic nature makes electronics recycling a matter of public health. Electronics contain significant amounts of lead, mercury, cadmium and other heavy metals that will eventually contaminate our ground water if landfilled. In fact, the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, which works to call attention to and improve the environmental health practices of the high tech industry, reports that 70% of the heavy metals currently found in landfills are from electronics.

Recycling electronics is expensive due to the complex mixture of materials composing them and the technology required to safely disassemble them. Therefore, the combined efforts of all interested parties— manufacturers and retailers, consumers, governments and nonprofits—are crucial to the responsible recycling of these materials. “We are encouraged and excited that ListenUp was the first retailer in the community to step up and be part of the solution for electronics waste,” stated Matsch.

“Eco-Cycle’s goal is to engage other manufacturers and retailers in the partnership and provide a model for other communities in the United States.”

Boulder Community Hospital saw the “Going for Zero Waste… or darn near” award. According to BCH’s Kai Abelks (pictured), in 2004 the hospital achieved a net savings of $111,000 by no longer purchasing blue wrap and by reducing their trash hauling expense.

This spring, Eco-Cycle recognized several businesses at varying stages on the road to Zero Waste. The categories and nominees are below with the awardees highlighted.
Colorado Scores an "F" in Recycling
What will it take just to get a score of average?
by Marti Matsch

If all the states in the Union were rated for their environmental beauty, Colorado would no doubt be near the top. Unfortunately, the same could not be said for the score we would receive for our state’s efforts to take care of our beautiful environment. In a recent study conducted by recycling and composting industry magazine BiCycle, which rated 47 of the 50 U.S. states on recycling and landfill diversion, Colorado appears almost at the bottom with a landfill diversion rate of merely 3%—far below the national average of 30% diversion. States you may not think of first for environmental advocacy handily outpace us: Nebraska is at 15% landfill diversion, Iowa at 42%, and Ohio at 24%. The highest scores were Maine and Oregon at 49% and Minnesota at 46%.

There are some bright spots in the state, of course. Boulder County’s landfill diversion rate is estimated at 23%, with the City of Boulder estimating a rate of near 50% for residential recycling and composting. Our Loveland neighbors are also breaking records with 58% for their residential diversion rate. When you consider that these communities’ higher numbers are factored into Colorado’s overall average, you get a sense of the dismal state of recycling in the rest of our communities. Why is Colorado lagging so far behind our fellow states? We asked some of our colleagues in the Colorado recycling field for their assessments.

“Colorado’s recycling rate is sooooonoo pitiful because there is no leadership or support from our state government for recycling. In Colorado, local communities are left to manage waste streams entirely on their own, without any guidance or incentives from the state. Local communities usually see disposal in landfills as the cheapest and easiest option for handling our waste resources because of the faulty economics that create unrealistically low landfill tip fees and the false assumption that burying waste carries little to no liability.”
- Carly Wier, Executive Director Summit Recycling Project

“While some may point to cheap disposal as the culprit [of Colorado’s low recycling rate], I think the real problem lies with the lack of leadership from the state.”
- Bruce Phibbs, Superintendent City of Loveland Solid Waste Management Division

“The fees at our landfills are some of the lowest in the nation, and there is virtually no state support for recycling: there is no agency charged with overseeing recycling, there are very limited funds for recycling and there are no directives requiring or even encouraging recycling.”
- Marjie Girk, Executive Director Colorado Association for Recycling

“Putting trash into a hole and covering it up with dirt is big business in Colorado. Profit margins are high and our arid climate means we’re technically a great place to site landfills (there is less risk of groundwater contamination). Not only are we bucking a system that has been strongly established, powerful landfill industry, but the economics of recycling are hard to balance when it only costs $15-20 per ton to dump trash in Colorado (compared to $50-70 or more in many other parts of the country).”
- Susie Gordon, Senior Environmental Planner City of Fort Collins Natural Resources Department

Landfills: Broken, Dangerous, Expensive
by Kate Mangione

Landfills are no longer inert mounds of decomposition and wasted resources—they’re perpetual community liabilities whose troubles could outlast the next seven generations. Disturbing new reports by groundwater specialist Dr. Fred Lee and economist Dr. Peter Anderson confirm the long-term perils of landfills and reaffirm that the waste management decisions of today will impact our communities for decades, centuries, and perhaps beyond.

Anderson and Lee roll back the thin layer of plastic lining on the modern landfill to uncover fundamental design and operational flaws, toxic threats to our air and water, monitoring systems with highly suspect long-term reliability, and as the final layer in the coffin, wildly inadequate financial guarantees for future liabilities. The groundwater cleanup costs in the future could make the savings and loan bailout in the 1980s look like petty cash. While landfill technology has certainly advanced over the last 30 years, it is not as modern landfill liners are more potent than carbon dioxide, and numerous hazardous air pollutants such as mercury, benzene, toluene, and chlorofrom. Landfill decomposition also produces a soupy mixture known as leachate. As the leachate flows over the heavy metals, household chemicals, and other hazardous materials increasingly buried in our landfills, it becomes toxic.

Modern leachate that escapes through the liner will seep deep into the earth and contaminate groundwater supplies.

Containment Will Ultimately Fail
Landfills are designed to capture and contain leachate and to mitigate hazardous air emissions. However, EPA staff and consultants expressed concerns about the safety of modern landfills years before the regulations were adopted: “Even the best liner and leachate collection system will ultimately fail due to natural deterioration.” (EPA, 1988 as cited by Anderson and Lee). The plastic sheeting will tear and decay from installation, stress cracks, holes from the waste placement, and organic solvents, such as those readily purchased for household use.

How Much Does “Perpetual Liability” Cost?
To protect the surrounding community and environment from any air or water contamination, the landfill operator must put aside funding to maintain the monitoring system for at least 30 years. This may seem a reasonable time frame until you consider that Roman Empire landfills are still actively generating leachate!
Landfills cont’d from page 5

Simply extending this care period merely postpones the inevitable: our current approach is to store hazardous materials and to monitor their decomposition. And to boost, there is no reliable way to determine when the line will fail, which may eventually start, or when the landfill will cease to be a threat—we’re planning for 30 years in the future when we should be planning for centuries or millennia.

Then there’s the cost of future maintenance and contamination cleanup, likely to fall on future generations and future taxpayers. If the line ever fails along after the landfill operator has come and gone. These are not paltry sums: Anderson and Lee estimate that California’s landfills may eventually cost taxpayers around $26.4 billion, while the Anderson and Lee reports forecast an 80 percent reduction in recycling potential and near 50-percent rates posted by other states. Viable alternatives like recycling, composting, and the full package of Zero Waste offer a low-risk investment in jobs and resources in contrast to the perpetual liability of landfills. Landfills are a short-term solution with a long-range outlook for trouble. So Colorado, it’s your decision: are you investing in your future or are you being haunted by your past?

For the complete details of landfills’ dangerous defects, see "Flawed Technology of Subtitle D: Landfiling of Municipal Solid Waste" available at www.gnder.com.

What to do with an old mall? Re-use it, of course

by Erin O’Leary

Cruising along 28th Street in Boulder, you’ve no doubt seen the hole in the sky where the Crossroads Mall once stood. The mall has been demolished and cleared, to be replaced with the new Twenty Ninth Street open-air shopping center. Leading the reconstruction, residents expressed concern to City of Boulder officials about a large demolition in the middle of town and the associated building waste. In response, the City collaborated with site owner Westcor and the nonprofit community to develop a colossal 80 percent landfill diversion plan.

From the start, Westcor embraced the challenge of “doing it the Boulder way” and committed to an environmentally-sound demolition. As the buildings came down, Westcor recycled an amazing 2,000 tons of steel, concrete and asphalt that were gathered up and used to bring the south end of the site above the floodplain. Miscellaneous metals such as copper were recycled, as well as the refrigerant from HVAC units. Boulder Center for Resource Conservation played a key role by spending two months salvaging all the reusable materials from the Mall – a service the non-profit organization provides for all demolition projects. An astonishing number of doors, windows, sinks, toilets, faucets, benches, flooring, furniture and tons of building materials were given another life and saved from the landfill. A two-day “yard sale” was held on the Crossroads grounds where ninety percent of the items were sold. Salmon Creek and Boulder Creek are clearly gratified by the amount of materials that were reused,” Portner stated.

Westcor plans to expand its environmental commitment into the building and operation of Twenty Ninth Street. Adams and Eco-Cycle’s Executive Director Eric Lombardi have been engaged in detailed discussions on how to create a cut-edge recycling and waste management program to attract high-profile tenants to the Crossroads Mall. “We’re trying to make a two-day ‘yard sale’ was held on the Crossroads grounds where ninety percent of the items were sold. Salmon Creek and Boulder Creek are clearly gratified by the amount of materials that were reused,” Portner stated.

What to do with an old mall? Re-use it, of course. Boulder community as the chief beneficiary,” said Lain Adams, Senior Property Manager for Twenty Ninth Street. “And we feel Westcor understood and exceeded the public’s environmental values.” Seth Portner, Operations Director at the Center for Resource Conservation, agrees with Adams. "From a diversionist’s point of view, the Crossroads Mall demolition project has been extremely successful and we are particularly gratified by the amount of materials that were reused," Portner stated.

An impressive 80 percent of the material resulting from the Crossroads Mall demolition has since been recycled or reused, thanks to a collaboration between the City of Boulder, Westcor, and the non-profit community.

Four Boulder Schools Move Toward Zero Waste

by Kate Nelson

Four Boulder schools are taking a bold new approach to trash – they’re trying not to make any! The Boulder Community School of Integrated Studies, High Peaks Elementary, Douglas Elementary and Horizons K-8 are going for Zero Waste by adopting a comprehensive waste reduction strategy. The Green Star Schools pilot program builds on the success of the 18-year-old Boulder Valley School District/Eco-Cycle recycling partnership by adding two important new elements: waste reduction projects and Westcor: a school-based recycling program. The schools are driven by the fact that they’ll be among the first in the United States to take such dramatic steps toward making less trash.

The program began with an audit of kitchen, cafeteria, classroom and restroom waste to identify what was being thrown away in the first place. The waste audit helped of Eco-Cycle employees, student classes at each school spent an afternoon dumping and digging through their daily waste. The kids were surprised by what they found – paper that could have been recycled, unopened milk cartons, piles of plastic bags and more.

“About 25 percent of our waste stream is compostable,” says Cyndra Dietz, Eco-Cycle’s School Recycling and Environmental Education Program Coordinator. “Adding compost collection to a school’s recycling program will greatly reduce the amount of garbage it produces, thereby also reducing the amount of trash the school district has hauled to the landfill.”

Green bins for compost now stand beside drink containers in cafeterias and classrooms in integrated studies units. Boulder’s Center for ReSource Conservation played a key role by spending two months salvaging all the reusable materials from the Mall – a service the non-profit organization provides for 30 years into the future when we should be planning for centuries or millennia.

Then there’s the cost of future maintenance and contamination cleanup, likely to fall on future generations and future taxpayers. If the line ever fails along after the landfill operator has come and gone. These are not paltry sums: Anderson and Lee estimate that California’s landfills may eventually cost taxpayers around $26.4 billion, while the Anderson and Lee reports forecast an 80 percent reduction in recycling potential and near 50-percent rates posted by other states. Viable alternatives like recycling, composting, and the full package of Zero Waste offer a low-risk investment in jobs and resources in contrast to the perpetual liability of landfills. Landfills are a short-term solution with a long-range outlook for trouble. So Colorado, it’s your decision: are you investing in your future or are you being haunted by your past?

For the complete details of landfills’ dangerous defects, see "Flawed Technology of Subtitle D: Landfiling of Municipal Solid Waste" available at www.gnder.com.

What to do with an old mall? Re-use it, of course. Boulder community as the chief beneficiary,” said Lain Adams, Senior Property Manager for Twenty Ninth Street. “And we feel Westcor understood and exceeded the public’s environmental values.” Seth Portner, Operations Director at the Center for Resource Conservation, agrees with Adams. "From a diversionist’s point of view, the Crossroads Mall demolition project has been extremely successful and we are particularly gratified by the amount of materials that were reused," Portner stated.

An impressive 80 percent of the material resulting from the Crossroads Mall demolition has since been recycled or reused, thanks to a collaboration between the City of Boulder, Westcor, and the non-profit community.

What to do with an old mall? Re-use it, of course. Boulder community as the chief beneficiary,” said Lain Adams, Senior Property Manager for Twenty Ninth Street. “And we feel Westcor understood and exceeded the public’s environmental values.” Seth Portner, Operations Director at the Center for Resource Conservation, agrees with Adams. "From a diversionist’s point of view, the Crossroads Mall demolition project has been extremely successful and we are particularly gratified by the amount of materials that were reused," Portner stated.

An impressive 80 percent of the material resulting from the Crossroads Mall demolition has since been recycled or reused, thanks to a collaboration between the City of Boulder, Westcor, and the non-profit community.
Zero Waste Strategy Pads Nova Scotia’s Wallet

Nova Scotia is widely known as a national and international leader in waste diversion—and it’s paying fantastic dividends. A full cost accounting analysis of Nova Scotia’s Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy revealed net savings of between $31.2 and $167.7 million for one year alone (the broad range related to price estimates for greenhouse gases). The Canadian province achieved 30 percent diversion through disposals bans, beverage container deposits, “Take-Back” programs for difficult materials, and by providing curbside recycling and organics services to 99 percent and 76 percent of its population, respectively. And the news keeps getting better—the report identified several additional areas where Nova Scotia could save money and resources.

Cashing in on Organics Diversion

Under a new waste trading system in the United Kingdom, landfills diverting increasing quantities of organic materials may make millions selling their credits to other landfills. The U.K. implemented the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) to meet the E.U. landfill directive, which requires a 30 percent reduction in landfilled biodegradable waste by 2020. LATS caps the amount of organics that each local authority can send to the landfill, and those who landfill less than their allocation can sell the difference at market price. This flexible, market-based system rewards local authorities that cost-effectively divert organics and allows other regions to temporarily pay out of the mandate until their programs are up and running, all while LATS decreases the total quantity of landfilled organics. As the U.S. favors market-driven solutions, this should be a great project to watch.

Makers of Fat Tire Slim Down Their Footprint

Full on taste but light on environmental impact is the beer at Fort Collins’ New Belgium Brewery. From motion sensor lights, daylighting, and sun tubes to radiant floor heating and swamp cooling systems to citrus-boxed cleaners, biodiesel, and offices decked out with recycled and recyclable materials, New Belgium’s environmental commitment is as refreshing as any of their ales. Their on-site wastewater treatment facility fuels a co-generator that provides 60 percent of the Brewery’s power while wind energy provides the rest. The treated wastewater serves evaporative cooling, cleaning, and landscaping needs, and the nutrient-rich sludge is sold for composting. Through recirculating heating and cooling systems and world-renowned brewing efficiency, the Brewery has nearly halved the average industry ratio of barrels of water to barrels of beer. The brewery pulls its livestock feed spent grain as cattle feed, and of course, recycles dozens of materials. A toast to New Belgium!

Nothing Slips by in Norway

To more accurately reflect the environmental impacts of incineration, Norway has taxed fourteen pollutants emanating from incinerator stacks. Ranging from $3.17 (U.S.) per gram for hydrogen fluoride to a whopping $366,000 per gram for dioxin, the tax averages $76 per metric ton incinerated. Other costly pollutants include dust, hydrogen chloride, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, mercury, cadmium, lead, chromium, copper, manganese, arsenic, and nickel. Carbon dioxide emissions cost about $6 per metric ton. Waste management taxes are nothing new in Norway where they’re used to promote waste prevention and recovery: Landfills aren’t off the hook either—landfilling organic or mixed waste carries a tax of $60-80 per metric ton.

Ubiquitous Bag No More in San Francisco

The City of San Francisco is willing to bet that a new tax will make shoppers think twice about using disposable supermarket bags, and evidence from around the world implies that it’s a safe wager. The City is in the final stages of approving a 17-cent tax on disposable supermarket checkout bags. The 50 million bags used annually in San Francisco financially burden the City through disposal and street cleaning costs, contamination at recycling and composting facilities, and future landfill liabilities—collectively totaling $17.7 million. Around the world, regions of Bangladesh, Taiwan, Ireland, South Africa, Somalia, India, Australia, and Alaska tax or ban disposable bags because they wreak havoc on the environment and epitomize waste and convenience. And so the age-old question of “paper or plastic” has been answered: “No thanks, I brought my own.”

The devastation wrought by the tsunami in Asia has been great, and the need for international funds continues. It is at this time, when immediate needs have passed and the story is no longer headline by the press, that donations are critical for the clean-up and restoration work still to be done. Employees of one of our sister organizations, Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance (GAIA), are working in the affected countries to promote Zero Waste systems in the rebuilding of their communities. With your support, GAIA will help local organizations to set up recycling and composting programs in the temporary camps and rebuild communities; encourage choices of ways that we’re with them in the long struggle to rebuild healthy and sustainable communities. GAIA is a trustworthy and effective nonprofit that Eco-Cycle has long supported. They are an international alliance of 75 countries working to promote Zero Waste and other safe, sustainable alternatives to waste incineration. The funds will be re-granted to organizations in each of the four hardest-hit countries where GAIA has active members currently engaged in relief and rebuilding programs: Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to this fund, please write a check or money order to The Ecology Center-GAIA/Tsunami Fund, and mail it to GAIA, 1442A Walnut Street #20, Berkeley, CA 94709. To donate securely online, or for more information, please visit GAIA’s website at www.no-burn.org. If you have questions or would like to donate, please contact our friend and colleague on the GAIA Steering Committee, Ann Leonard, at aleonard@no-burn.org or call 510-883-9490 x1.

Thank you for your generosity.

Eco-Cycle Wishes to Gratefully Thank:

Corporate Supporters
IBM: Sponsorship of the “I Care About Clean Air” program
Micro Motion: General support of Eco-Cycle McStain Enterprises: Sponsorship of computer and lab equipment donations in Louisville & Longmont Roche Colorado Corp.: Sponsorship of the “I Care About Clean Air” program Shapins Associates: General Support of Eco-Cycle New Perceptions, Inc.: General Support of Eco-Cycle Foundations
Broomfield Community Foundation: Educational display at Broomfield Drop-off Center Community Foundation Serving Boulder County: The Rollie and Josie Heath Gift Fund: General Support Longmont Community Foundation: Educational kit at the Longmont Drop-off Center We thank the following Eco-Cycle members for their recent financial contributions to Eco-Cycle:
Founders’ Society
Cindy and Darcy Kerr Dr. Sally Parsons Richard Matsch
Director’s Circle
Debbie Crowell Kenneth Low Classic R. Michael T. Paterson
Patron Level
Kate Bennett Carolyn Benito William C. Bradley Steve Bjughus Tim & Browerie Leach Julianne Snider & John Keltner Green Tie Gala Sponsors
Aspen/Snowmass Avery Brewing Company Ball Corporation Boulder Community Hospital EcoBuilding Ecotour M. Frohman Fetzer Vineyards Jared Polis Foundation Mido Printing Roche Colorado Corporation Auction Contributors
Recycling Guidelines
See center pull-out for

Our Community
Eco-Heroes to Thank in

Spring – Summer 2005
Eco-Cycle TIMES
Listened Partners with CHARM • Compost Tea is Back • Zero Waste Services Awards

Why do we support Eco-Cycle? – Our community model for Zero Waste!

Join Eco-Cycle in making our community a model for Zero Waste!

Yes! I want to support Eco-Cycle’s Zero Waste Future Fund.

NEW way to contribute – secure, paperless, and easy. Donate your support online at www.ecocycle.org.

Enclosed is my
❑ $20
❑ $50
❑ $75
❑ $100
❑ $120
❑ $240
❑ $40
❑ $1,000 (Founders’ Society) – Find out more about the
❑ $500
❑ $200
❑ $75
❑ Other $__________

All memberships include a subscription to the Eco-Cycle Times.

Payment Method:
❑ Visa
❑ MasterCard
❑ Amex
❑ Check enclosed (made payable to Eco-Cycle)

Card #__________________________________ Expiration Date_____________
Signature____________________________________________

❑ Please accept my donation in honor/memory of _______________________________________

Please send me additional information about:
❑ Including Eco-Cycle in my will. Please call/email me
❑ Giving a gift of appreciated stock to Eco-Cycle
❑ Becoming an Eco-Cycle volunteer at a Drop-off Center or as an Eco-Leader for my neighborhood
❑ Eco-Cycle’s Business Recycling Program

Name____________________________________________________________
Address__________________________________________________________
City_____________________ State_________________ Zip_____________________
Phone (day)__________________________________ (evening)___________________
Email______________________________________

❑ Save paper and check here if you would like us to email your thank you.

Thank you for your support. Eco-Cycle aims to be as responsible when it comes to your privacy rights as we are when it comes to the environment. To this end, Eco-Cycle will not trade, rent, or sell member names, phone numbers, addresses, or emails to any individual or organization.

Eco-Heroes to Thank in Our Community
They don’t actually wear capes or leap tall buildings in a single bound, but these individuals, groups and municipalities are making a big impact in our local efforts to make the Boulder area a zero waste and recycling leader.

Why do we support Eco-Cycle? – Our community model for Zero Waste!

Because it’s as American as apple pie and as Boulder as tofu.

Because you’re either on the bus or you’re not on the bus.”