

Town of Pittsfield Recycling Committee 2007 Recycling Focus

At their Regular December Meeting, the Recycling Committee established their focus for the calendar year of 2007. The Committee will focus upon activities for **re-use**.

During the period of 2002 - 2005, the Recycling Committee concentrated on the "recycle" in the "recycle, re-use, and reduce" motto for the State and started their focus upon "re-use" in 2006.

The results have been staggering! Pittsfield's recycling rate had consistently been in the 40% percentile throughout the 1990's and early 2000's. With the Town's focus upon recycling, our rate soared to 72.3% in 2003; 68.98% in 2004; 67.34% in 2005 and is expected to continue to be exceptional in 2006. This took place because of the amazing efforts of our citizens, employees and officials. Congratulations to everyone for a job well done! We have found over and over again that recycling saves money. For example, the Town has recycled over 1000 tons of materials through 11/30/2006, much of which has been sold. The Town's revenues through 11/30/2006 for the Recycling Program were \$60,916.46 while the cost to recycle the materials was \$79,837.29. This means that the net cost of recycling through 11/30/2006 was \$17,920.83. On top of this, one must consider the savings of \$58,245.02 in disposal fees because the tons recycled did not have to be disposed of by trucking them to a landfill facility and paying tipping fees. So in addition to protecting the environment, recycling does save money.

We will continue to promote and coordinate our community's fun activities such as

- Earth Day in April;
- Arbor Day and Trash to Treasure Day in May;
- Make A Difference Day and Trash to Treasure Day in October; and
- Maine Recycles Week in conjunction with National Recycling Week in November.

Trash to Treasure Days will all have rain or snow dates established in case of implement weather.

Draft Re-use Goals for our Program are:

Goal #1: The Town will review options to have an interim re-use materials swap or bargain bulletin board; staging location; or other method for people to connect up to post their materials which have value and should not be discarded. This may involve using the Town's web site; other web sites; working with various groups and/or businesses in Town. In other words, a re-use interchange for exchange.

Goal #2: The Town will develop a Re-use Bulletin Board for displays and tips at the Pittsfield Municipal Building.

Goal #3: The Town will develop Re-Use Tips for copying and/or availability on media such as the Town's website and Public Access Station. In addition, Re-Use Tips will be provided to the School System and interested Businesses.

Goal #4: The Town will design a Re-Use logo to promote this program in conjunction with interested school classes/grades.

Goal #5: The Town will hold an Inventor's Challenge Contest with interested school classes/grades. The purpose of this unique challenge will be to create an invention from recycled or re-used materials. The focus will be to spark creativity and imagination within aspiring students while focusing on alternatives to energy consumption. The nation's reliance on fossil fuels has sparked controversy on finding innovative ways to conserve energy while preserving the environment for future generations. Any individual who believes that recycling/re-use should be a major concern for future energy conservation should undertake this challenge.

Goal #6: If feasible, the Town will conduct a cost/benefit review of a Re-use or Bargain Barn for the "Too Good To Toss" items for useable office furniture, household items; books; toys; furniture; etc. including locating volunteers to draft a plan to build the facility and then to organize and run it.

This would be a great community project that could involve many groups in Town as well as the students at the schools. It was recommended that the Town contact the school system to determine if we could have governmental classes check into the costs of building this by reviewing other towns' projects, the resources the Town has available and putting together a proposal. Involving a number of classes would be a good learning experience for the students and show them the practical application of recycling even more materials.

Goal #7: If the project is found feasible, the Town will seek a donated site for the Re-use or Bargain Barn and donated building materials to construct the Re-use or Bargain Barn within the constraints of the Town's finances and arrange for volunteers to build the facility. For example, could the Re-use or Bargain Barn be built of re-use materials?

Goal #8: Throughout this year, the Town will work with community groups such as Pennywise at the First Congregational Church to determine if our activities can compliment each other's goals. Working together often provides many benefits. Pennywise is a great project to provide items to people for re-use for a low cost.