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For Immediate Release

Reducing Consumption
By Mary Pitcher, Recycling Coordinator

Manistee, Michigan - Recycling is important and Manistee County residents currently have many recycling options available. For information on pick-up and drop off locations around the County, visit the Manistee County Recycling webpage at: www.manisteecountymi.gov

In today's world everyone understands that recycling is important, but what if we could reduce the need to recycle? Would that not be even more beneficial to our community and environment? In addition to recycling it is essential to reduce unnecessary consumption. For example, perhaps you request paper bags at the grocery, thinking that you are doing the right thing because you recycle them. Consider instead that recycling consumes resources in the form of energy consumption. Transporting recyclables to facilities for recycling and converting those recyclables into another usable product requires consumption of natural resources and fossil fuels. Whenever possible don't accept unnecessary materials into your life. Reducing the need to recycle could be each person's greatest contributions to the overarching goals associated with recycling.

In your day to day life, think about everything you acquire. Ask yourself, "is there another way to do this"?

Packaging is one of the easiest forms of waste to eliminate. Taking reusable bags to the grocery store is becoming a common practice. The key seems to be remembering to have them in the car and to take them into the store!

Using refillable containers is another way to drastically reduce unnecessary consumption. Use them! Take a refillable cup to the coffee shop. Purchase a refillable water bottle and eliminate disposable plastic water bottles from your life. Use refillable containers for food storage instead of plastic wrap and sandwich bags.

Purchase concentrated laundry soap. 2X concentrated formulations, means that the same number of loads can be washed with half the amount of detergent. Not only do you consume less plastic bottles, fossil fuels consumed for shipping is also less per load.

When ordering mail order, inquire as to the packaging used. Alternatives to Styrofoam packaging are suitable in most applications. If they are not able to offer an alternative to Styrofoam see if you can find the product elsewhere.

Eliminate junk mail and paper catalogs. Consider shopping online instead of from paper catalogs. Eliminating unwanted catalogs saves paper and therefore trees. Contact businesses that send an unwanted catalog and ask to be removed from their mailing list.

This saves everyone including the business that is wasting advertising dollars. When contributing to an organization, or when catalog shopping, be clear that you do not want your name sold or shared with other organizations or businesses. You can do this with a note when you order something or send your dues, you can send them a separate note or you can call their national office on the phone.

All of these suggestions might not fit into your lifestyle today. However, if everyone reading this implemented one or two of these changes into their everyday lives, the results could be quite significant. So take the challenge, commit to making your contribution not only to recycling but to the reduction in the need to recycle. You will be surprised at how easy some of these simple suggestions can be integrated into your day-to-day life.

The Alliance for Economic Success is working on behalf of Manistee County to expand and improve on recycling options for the county's citizens. This project is funded in part by a USDA Solid Waste Management Grant. For additional information or to share suggestions and comments, contact Recycling Coordinator Mary Pitcher at the Alliance at 231-723-4325.