

# ONEIDA-HERKIMER SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY

December 12, 2013

## **PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Jamie Tuttle, Recycling Coordinator (315) 733-1224 Ext. 2300

### **'Tis the Season to Recycle**

The holiday season is a time of giving and sharing with family and friends. While enjoying these traditions, you can also take steps to make your holidays green. Did you know that from Thanksgiving through New Year's Day, the nation's trash increases by an extra one million tons per week? Fortunately, many opportunities are available for residents of Oneida and Herkimer Counties to keep holiday celebrations safe, happy and environmentally friendly.

"Solid waste reduction and recycling is an important issue that we need to address not only during the holidays, but every day. Because of the increased amount of trash during the holiday season, the Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority wants to make reducing and recycling as much of this waste as possible, a reality," said Jamie Tuttle, Oneida-Herkimer Solid Waste Authority School Recycling Coordinator.

"This year marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> year that holiday gift wrap will be accepted for recycling in Oneida and Herkimer Counties. To recycle holiday gift wrap, fold or flatten the gift wrap and place it loosely in your recycling container. **Do not put gift wrap or recyclable material in plastic bags.** Please do not recycle foil or metallic wrapping paper or metallic ribbon or tape. Wrapping paper will only be accepted during the two weeks after Christmas," said Tuttle. "Cardboard tubes from gift wrap may also be placed in your recycling container. Always consider reusing wrapping paper before disposal."

Holiday greeting cards may also be recycled. Each year, 2.65 billion holiday cards are sold in the United States. That is enough to fill a football field ten stories high. Place your greeting cards, catalogs, gift boxes and other recyclable paper in with your regular recyclables. These items can be recycled all year long. Styrofoam and packing peanuts **are not** recyclable and foam items should be placed with your regular trash.

Holiday lights should be stored for use again next year. **If they are broken or unwanted, they cannot be placed in your recycling bin.** The CNY Veterans Outreach is accepting donations of old Christmas lights this holiday season. The lights will be recycled and proceeds will go toward the construction of housing units for homeless Veterans. The Veterans Outreach Center is located at 726 Washington Street in Utica and is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM for drop offs. To schedule a large pickup of lights, call 765-0975. You may also deliver Christmas lights to the Utica Residential Convenience Station on Leland Ave during normal business hours for proper recycling at no charge, or dispose of them with your regular trash.

The Authority's green waste compost facility allows this region increased recycling opportunities, including Christmas tree recycling. Contact your local municipality to see what the collection schedule is for Christmas trees. If your municipality does not have a collection schedule, residents can deliver trees for composting to the Authority's Utica Convenience Station on Leland Avenue during normal business hours, Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and Saturday from 7:00 am until 2:00 pm. "Make sure all decorations and tinsel are removed. All Christmas wreaths should be disposed of with your regular garbage. Real and artificial wreaths are held together with wire and plastic, so they cannot be safely composted. By using reusable decorations and avoiding items such as tinsel, which is hard to remove and reuse again, you can reduce waste," said Tuttle.

Disposing of leftover cooking oil from deep fryers does not have to be a challenge. Residents in Oneida and Herkimer Counties have the capability to recycle their cooking oil and kitchen grease. Residents are able to drop-off cooking oil and kitchen grease at the Residential Convenience Station on Leland Ave in Utica year-round. Residents may deliver liquid cooking oils and grease at no charge, year-round during normal business hours. Residents should transport used oils or grease in sealed, unbreakable, leak-proof containers. The material is then collected and recycled into animal feed.

"In order to close the recycling loop, you need to buy recycled products," stated Tuttle. "While you are shopping for gifts, purchase items made from recycled-content. Many polar fleece and other clothing items are made from recycled plastic soda and water bottles. Purchase wrapping paper, gift boxes, gift bags, and holiday cards made from recycled paper. With a little pre-cycling, waste reduction and proper recycling of the materials we generate, we can all make our holidays a little greener," Tuttle concluded.

For more information regarding recycling and waste disposal, please visit [www.ohswa.org](http://www.ohswa.org) or call the Authority's Main Office at 733-1224. You can also visit our Facebook page—Oneida Herkimer Solid Waste Authority—to ask questions and find more information on these topics.

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#### Other Holiday Recycling Tips:

- Save your holiday decorations for reuse next year. Donate decorations to local schools, churches, town offices or non-profit organizations. Use natural ornaments such as pine cones, shells, dried flowers or berries to decorate with.
- The average American home receives more than 200 mail order catalogs each year – mostly at holiday time. Call the company's toll free number and ask that you be removed from their mailing list. Remove your name from unwanted catalogue and junk mail lists by writing to:  
DMA Mail Preference Service  
Direct Marketing Association

P.O. Box 643  
Carmel, NY 15012-0643

Give your address and every variation of your name under which you receive mail. If you do receive magazines and catalogs, please recycle them.

- If you send holiday cards, look for ones made of recycled paper. Save the cards that you get in the mail, cut off the front pictures, and reuse as "postcards" next year. Or, send "electronic cards" or make a phone call instead!
- Use last year's holiday cards as gift tags.
- If you buy gifts, look for durable and re-usable items and resist the latest "fad" at the mall. Think of how many pet rocks, mood rings, and cabbage patch dolls ended up in the landfill!
- Look for gifts with an environmental message: a nature book, a refillable thermos bottle, a canvas tote bag, a battery re-charger or items made from recycled materials. Choose solar powered instead of battery powered products. Or better yet, ones that require no power at all.
- If you go out shopping, bring your own tote bags and avoid coming home with an armload of plastic bags holding just one item.
- Use a digital camera instead of those that require film. That way you can delete the picture you don't want and print only those you like.
- Avoid leaving Christmas lights on all night. Place them on an electric timer to switch off while you are sleeping.
- Recycle your poinsettia plant for next year by pruning it back severely and placing it in a shady place. Allow it to dry out and start watering it again in May. The poinsettia will be in full blossom for the next holiday season.
- Other environmentally-smart gifts include homemade ones: home baked cookies, bread or jams, a plant or tree. Purchase gifts that don't create any waste at all: concert or movie tickets, dinner at a restaurant, or an IOU to help rake leaves or repair a leaky faucet, or ones that get "used up": candles, soap, or seeds for next year's garden.
- Wrapping paper is often used once and thrown away. Try using colorful pages torn from magazines to wrap small gifts, and old maps or the Sunday comics for larger boxes. Avoid using paper entirely by using reusable decorative tins, baskets or boxes. If you do buy wrapping paper, look for recycled paper. Reusable cloth ribbons can be used in place of plastic bows. Finally, unwrap gifts carefully and save wrappings for reuse next year.