



# Newsletter

## Fall 2025

### Holiday Schedule

#### Thanksgiving

**Residential Collection:** Thurs. & Fri. collections are delayed by one day

**Drop Off Center:** Closes at noon on November 26 and reopens November 28, 7 am – 5 pm

Saturday Winter Hours begin November 29, 7 am – 2 pm

**Office:** Closes at noon on November 26 and reopens November 28, 8 am – 5 pm

#### Christmas

**Residential:** Thurs. & Fri. collections are delayed by one day

**Drop Off Center:** Closes at noon on December 24 and reopens December 26, 7 am – 5 pm

**Office:** Closes at noon on December 24 and reopens December 26, 8 am – 5 pm

#### New Year

**Residential Collection:** Thurs. & Fri. collections are delayed by one day

**Drop Off Center:** Closes at noon on December 31 and reopens January 2, 7 am – 5 pm

**Office:** Closes at noon on December 31, reopens January 2, 8 am – 5 pm

### Customer Spotlight: ST. VRAIN VALLEY SCHOOLS

#### *Student Voices Shape the Future of Waste Diversion; Green Star Schools Forge the Path*

For decades, recycling bins have quietly populated the landscape of St. Vrain Valley Schools—strategically placed in hallways, classrooms, offices, and cafeterias of every school and administrative building in the district. Although their presence is universal, their utility is often overlooked. Like familiar landmarks passed each day, they tend to blend into the background, becoming part of the scenery rather than a focal point for action. Despite their availability, many bins are underused.

But that's beginning to change. A recent student survey revealed a growing awareness and desire for improvement, with "getting better at recycling" ranked as the second-highest priority among respondents. This shift in student perspective is being echoed by parents and community members, who are increasingly reaching out to the district. Their message is clear: students need consistent access to recycling and composting programs, supported by the necessary education to understand both the why and the how.

The Schools' Executive Staff has demonstrated its commitment by allocating resources to expand the Green Star Schools Program, with a focus on recycling and composting education and outreach. Previously handled as a custodial responsibility, waste reduction and diversion efforts are now under the purview of the District Sustainability Department, which has prioritized integrating them into its sustainability plan. This intention will bring greater cohesion, energy, and purpose to waste management initiatives across all schools.

#### Green Star Schools

Schools across the district are collaborating with Eco-Cycle and Western to advance toward zero waste by enhancing their recycling systems, implementing school-wide composting programs, and engaging in targeted waste reduction initiatives. Western provides waste hauling services, compost contamination screening, and data collection through a partnership that has spanned two decades.

Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools® initiative, launched in 2005 with just four schools, now includes 23 schools in the St. Vrain Valley School District, serving over 11,500 students. The program empowers students to reduce waste at school and bring those same practices to their homes and communities. Data has shown that participating schools can divert up to two-thirds of their waste from landfills through composting, recycling, and waste prevention strategies. In 2023, Green Star Schools in the district achieved a waste diversion rate of 41.2%, with 5% composted and 36.2% recycled.

A key feature of the initiative is the transformation of school lunch routines. Students sort their lunch waste into designated stations: reusable items are washed and reused, recyclables are properly sorted, and food scraps are composted. Food Rescue stations are available to help reduce food waste by allowing students to place unwanted, eligible food items on a designated table. Other students can then take these items if they want them. This simple system not only reduces waste but also supports students who may face food insecurity.

## Waste, More Impact: Why Waste Reduction and Reuse Matter Most



According to the EPA's most recent data, waste generation in the United States has increased by 45% since 1960. Back then, the average American generated 2.7 lbs. of waste per day. Today, it's a hefty 4.9 lbs.

That's no surprise. Convenience culture has led to a reliance on disposable items, fast fashion, and pre-packaged meals. Normalized hyper-consumerism encourages buying new products even when old ones are still functional, and the increasing practice of planned obsolescence in manufacturing leads us to purchase new products because repair isn't available or practical.

Waste reduction, i.e., curbing consumption, is a powerful way to reduce environmental impacts and decrease strain on our wallets. While recycling and composting are important in reducing waste, the most effective way to reduce our environmental footprint is to consume less and reuse more.

### The Benefits

**Curbing Emissions:** The myriad processes of extracting, manufacturing, packaging, transporting, and managing the end-of-life of our stuff require a tremendous amount of energy. Reducing consumption is a super-charged action to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Conserving Finite Natural Resources:** Petroleum, aluminum, trees, precious metals, the list goes on. Reducing demand will help these resources last longer.

**Human and Environmental Health:** Varying levels of toxicity and air, water, and soil pollution are by-products of the entire product chain and current end-of-life management processes. Waste reduction helps to reduce the impacts.

### Taking Action

Household waste prevention involves making seemingly small choices that add up. Build these simple but powerful habits to reduce your waste:

1. **Think Reusable:** Carry a refillable water bottle and coffee mug. Use real dishes instead of disposable ones.
2. **Ditch Single-Use:** Skip condiment packets, straws, coffee pods, and plastic wrap. Bring your own containers for leftovers.
3. **Choose Recycled Content:** Buy products with recycled packaging and encourage stores to do the same.
4. **Cut Plastic:** Avoid gel pods and pre-packed produce. Use reusable produce bags and shop in bulk.
5. **Reduce Food Waste:** Plan meals, buy only what you need, and donate extras to food banks.
6. **Borrow or Rent:** Use libraries, car shares, and rent tools instead of buying.
7. **Fix What You Can:** Learn basic repairs. Attend Boulder U-Fix-It Clinic events for help.
8. **Repurpose Items:** Reuse jars, boxes, towels, and worn clothes for household or creative projects.
9. **Buy Second-Hand:** Shop thrift stores, garage sales, and consignment shops.
10. **Donate Goods:** Give gently used items to Home Ahead <https://www.homeahead.org>, Goodwill, or the Salvation Army.

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## Fall Yard Waste & Holiday Tree Recycling

### Leaves & Pumpkins

Place leaves and pumpkins in your curbside compost cart or in compostable bags next to it. Collection will be on your regular compost day.

**No curbside compost?** Drop off leaves at Western's Materials Management Drop-off Center (2051 63rd St., Boulder) for a fee. City and County residents receive a 40% discount.



### Holiday Tree Recycling

If you have curbside compost service, place your undecorated tree next to your compost cart on collection day. Trees over 6 feet must be cut in half.

**No curbside compost?** Drop off your tree at Western's Materials Management Drop-off Center (2051 63rd St., Boulder) from December 26 through January 31.

## Customer Spotlight: St. Vrain Valley School District

(continued from page 1)

Currently, Green Star Schools are dispersed throughout the district at varying educational levels; some students get their start in elementary or middle school, and others in high school. The long-term goal is to integrate waste reduction principles and hands-on practices District-wide, beginning in elementary school, building life-long habits.

### The Future

Looking ahead, the Sustainability team is not only focused on expanding the Green Star Schools program but also exploring collaboration with other departments to identify new ways to reduce waste across the district. These efforts could include evaluating procurement practices to prioritize sustainable purchasing, integrating waste-reduction strategies into new school construction projects, and working closely with nutrition services to reduce single-use packaging.

Schools are tightly woven into the fabric of the community, making community support critical to program success. With the support of staff, students, and families, these initiatives have the power to create lasting change.



### PaintCare in Colorado

#### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

January 1 – December 31, 2024

212  
YEAR-ROUND  
DROP-OFF SITES



841,412  
GALLONS COLLECTED

88% latex  
12% oil-based

86%

Of total  
latex paint  
collected  
was recycled  
back into  
paint



of residents  
live within  
15 miles  
of a  
drop-off  
site

97.5%

260  
Large Volume Pickups  
in Colorado

PaintCare makes it easy and convenient to recycle leftover paint in states with paint stewardship laws. A nonprofit organization created by paint companies, PaintCare sets up drop-off locations for unused paint, arranges for recycling and proper disposal, and conducts public education. To learn more or find a year-round PaintCare drop-off site near you, visit [paintcare.org](https://paintcare.org) or call (855) PAINT09.

Source: PaintCare's 2024 Colorado Annual Report for January 1 – December 31, 2024.

## Checking In with the Colorado Paint Stewardship Program

The Colorado Paint Stewardship Program, established under the state's Architectural Paint Stewardship Act and one of Colorado's first producer responsibility programs, was launched on July 1, 2015. Administered by the non-profit organization PaintCare, its purpose is to reduce paint waste and promote responsible recycling. The program requires paint manufacturers to implement and manage the finances of a statewide system for collecting, reusing, and properly disposing of leftover architectural paint. Its goals include minimizing postconsumer paint generation, encouraging reuse, and supporting environmentally sound disposal practices.

The program is funded by fees on new paint sales, ranging from \$0.35 to \$1.60 per container. It generated \$6.4 million in revenue in 2024, at a cost of \$9.32 per gallon collected, with a recovery rate of 6.2%.

By the end of 2024, the program operated 212 permanent drop-off sites, including 180 paint retailers and various other facilities such as recycling centers, reuse stores, and household hazardous waste locations. These locations ensured that 97.5% of Colorado residents lived within 15 miles of a drop-off site. Additional paint is collected through special events and temporary sites.

Since its inception a decade ago, the program has collected over seven million gallons of paint.

### Sources:

**Colorado Department of Health & Environment:** <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/hm/paint-stewardship-recycling>

**PaintCare:** <https://www.paintcare.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/co-annual-report-2024.pdf>







## Recycling Right: Caps and Lids

What to do with caps and lids is the #1 recycling question we're asked. The answer is... it depends.

Here's the low-down:

- 1. Plastic container + plastic screw-top cap: ATTACH AND RECYCLE**  
Attach plastic screw-top caps to plastic bottles, jugs, and jars (think soft drink and prescription bottles, laundry detergent jugs, and peanut butter jars).
- 2. Plastic cap by itself: TRASH**  
Plastic objects need to be at least 2" to be captured by sorting equipment. Generally speaking, plastic caps by themselves do not meet this requirement and should be disposed of in the trash.
- 3. Plastic Tub Lids: RECYCLE**  
Flat plastic tub lids greater than 2" in diameter, such as those used on yogurt, cottage cheese, and take-out containers, can go right into the recycling bin.
- 4. Metal Caps and Lids: RECYCLE SEPARATE FROM CONTAINER**  
(unless the container is also metal)  
Metal caps and lids are commonly used on glass bottles and jars; separate them from each other and place both in your recycling cart.
- 5. Carton Caps: ATTACH AND RECYCLE**  
The recycling 'rule' about only attaching like-materials to each other does not apply to refrigerated cartons (e.g., juice, milk) or shelf-stable cartons (e.g., broth, plant milk). This is because the Carton Council has invested in developing recycling partnerships, technologies, and markets that allow recycling centers to accept cartons in single-stream curbside programs. For more information visit: <https://recyclecartons.com/>

Download printable recycling guidelines at: <http://bit.ly/3H0ypgF>

## Materials Management Drop-off Center

2051 63rd Street

### Hours of Operation:

Monday – Saturday 7 am – 5 pm

Phone: 303-444-5794

### Saturday Winter Hours:

Beginning November 29: 7 am – 2 pm

## Win One Month Free Trash Service

### Congratulations!

If your name is listed below, you are the **lucky winner** of one **FREE month of trash service!**

Call our Customer Service Department at 303-444-2037 to receive credit on your account.

- Dean Ehn
- Jay Wallingford
- Janice Garbarini

## Paperless Billing

Sign up for paperless billing and receive your newsletter electronically! Visit [westerndisposal.com](http://westerndisposal.com) and sign in or sign up under "Pay My Bill".

## Safe, Secure Shredding from Western Disposal

- Available Monday–Saturday
- No appointment necessary
- Shredded while you wait
- \$12.50 per copy-size box or 32-gallon bag

**2051 63<sup>rd</sup> St., Boulder**  
**303-444-2037**



## Locally Owned and Operated Since 1970

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