

# E-raise Your E-waste

Electronic Recycling Event

July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006

# Kalispell



## Final Report

Prepared by:  
Sandra Boggs  
Recycling and Marketing Development Specialist  
Business and Community Assistance Program  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901  
406-841-5217 phone

## **I. Background**

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) was requested by Senator Dan Weinberg of Whitefish to organize a community electronic waste collection event as a pilot project in the Columbia Falls and Whitefish area of Flathead Valley. DEQ responded with plans to offer three community electronic waste collection events as pilot projects in the Flathead, Missoula, and Helena. The Whitefish CollEctronics event, held on May 26 – 27, 2006 was the first event to be held; this Kalispell event was the second event to be held in Montana, and the first event to utilize Sydney, Montana's E-rase Your E-waste logo and graphics.

Upon contact from other interested communities and organizations, the three pilot projects grew into the Montana Rural Electronic Waste Recycling Program and events in Sydney, Bozeman and Butte were added. In addition, the Department wishes to hold pilot projects in the more rural areas of Eastern Montana and has approached several communities about potential events. Future events in Montana will utilize the E-rase Your E-waste logo and graphics to identify events that are part of this ongoing pilot project.

The DEQ has joined the EPA Plug-In to eCycling program to maximize partnerships available to Montana as a sustainable e-waste recycling program is developed for the State. Plug-In To eCycling is a consumer electronics campaign working to increase the number of electronic devices collected and safely recycled in the United States. Plug-In To eCycling focuses on three major areas:

- Providing the public with information about electronics recycling and increasing opportunities to safely recycle old electronics.
  - Facilitating partnerships with communities, electronics manufacturers, and retailers to promote shared responsibility for safe electronics recycling.
  - Establishing pilot projects to test innovative approaches to safe electronics recycling.
- Partnership with the EPA Plug-In program has facilitated discussions with national retailers and electronics manufacturers regarding their involvement in Montana's pilot projects. Montana is the first Rocky Mountain State to work with them and is setting an example in doing so. This first pilot project in Whitefish did not involve Plug-In partnerships due to the still-developing relationships and Senator Weinberg's request to have the event by the end of May.

## II. Summary

### *Event Partners*

The following individuals, businesses and organizations partnered with DEQ to conduct this pilot project as a public-private partnership.

- Inland ReTech Recycling, Spokane, WA
- Valley Recycling, Kalispell
- Flathead County Solid Waste District
- Citizens for A Better Flathead

### *Event Supporters*

- Albertson's
- Super 1 Foods
- Pizza Hut
- Quizno's

### *Collection Event Focus Area*

The event was advertised and available to anyone in Flathead County, or beyond. There was no limit placed on participation.

### *Hauler/Recycler*

Inland ReTech is an electronics recycling firm located in Spokane, Washington. Inland ReTech is planning to open a warehouse in Missoula this year, and/or partnering with a local nonprofit or business that will serve as a collection point for them. This was the second e-waste event for Inland ReTech in Montana.

Inland ReTech agreed to a public-private partnership that enabled the costs for recycling electronics to be paid directly to Inland ReTech by participants. Having a public-private partnership negated any need by the state to take possession of the computers at any point. It also avoided the need for a Request for Bids on supplying services, as the state did not receive any services.

DEQ staff visited the Inland ReTech facility July 5, 2005, and a completed Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC) audit confirms that Inland is a reputable electronics recycler that recycles 95% of the materials received.

### *Advertising and Outreach*

Outreach regarding this event began in May when the Whitefish/Columbia Falls CollElectronics event was held and the Kalispell date was included in information provided to reporters and participants. The following venues for advertising and outreach were used:

- a. Press releases sent to all area local newspapers.
- b. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) sent to all television and radio stations.
- c. Approximately 75 posters with take home flyers attached were distributed by

Citizens for A Better Flathead around the valley at public places and businesses.

d. Business mailing in May to over 800 local businesses in the Flathead

e. Citizens for A Better Flathead newsletter and two e-mail notices to 1500 subscribers.

f. DEQ website included a poster, prices and details. Copies are included as part of the Appendix.

### *Volunteer Recruitment and In-kind Donations/Contributions*

Mayre Flowers arranged for volunteers, and Solid Waste staff along with DEQ staff assisted Valley Recycling staff throughout the event.

Mayre Flowers, Executive Director of Citizens for A Better Flathead, was primarily responsible for coordinating the public outreach and volunteers for this event. The group is well-known in the Kalispell area and provided valuable outreach opportunities. Partnering with local groups is essential for the success of these pilot projects.

Valley Recycling was a key partner and greatly contributed to the streamlined logistics of handling materials as they arrived. Valley Recycling provided the location, as well as the pallets, forklift and forklift operator. The Flathead County Solid Waste Department created and hung banners advertising the event, assisted with set up on the day of the event, and provided labor throughout the day.

The Department of Environmental Quality paid for newspaper advertisements in The Daily Interlake and provided press releases and public service announcements to media outlets. In addition to the information provided 3 weeks prior to the event, Lisa Peterson, DEQ Public Relations Specialist, sent out media alerts and contact information the day before the event to encourage media coverage of the event. Unfortunately, no media came to the event. However, Sandra Boggs was contacted by a columnist of The Daily Interlake after the event and they printed a follow-up article on the Whitefish and Kalispell events.

### Saturday Event (9 am to 4 pm)

Over the nine-hour period on Saturday, a total of 6 volunteers put in 30.5 hours of work beside staff from Inland ReTech (1), Valley Recycling (3), Flathead County Solid Waste District (4), and DEQ (4). Some volunteers were there for the whole day, and some were able to assist for several hours at a time. Three paid Valley Recycling staff provided 21.5 hours of work. Four paid Solid Waste staff provided 29 hours of work. Three paid DEQ staff provided 25.5 hours of work. A total of 18 people worked 106.5 hours to make the event a success.

DEQ arranged for Valley Recycling to sponsor the location for the event. The Solid Waste District prepared two banners to hang at the entrance to Valley Recycling and advertise the event. DEQ also prepared signs to direct traffic flow on the day of the event. The signs were made to be re-used at future E-rase Your E-waste events.

Terrie Kenney, Administrative Professional, DEQ, solicited donations of food or beverages from Safeway, Super 1 Foods, Pizza Hut and Quizno's to keep the volunteers well fed and hydrated. A poster at the event thanked all partners and sponsors for their part in making the event possible.

DEQ printed Thank You cards which were handed to each participant as they left the event. The cards thanked participants for keeping hazardous waste out of the landfill and for making the effort to recycle. It also directs participants to DEQ recycling websites and encourages them to see the film *An Inconvenient Truth* to learn more about individual efforts to affect global change. A copy is included as part of the Appendix.

### **III. Event Evaluation and Results**

Participation in the event was disappointing. Several factors no doubt contributed to the lack of participation:

- Location was only 25 miles from Whitefish event location
- Saturday timeframe
- Summer timeframe
- Fees for recycling (although prices were lower)
- Request for pre registration

About 20 participants recycled 90 pieces of electronic equipment. Discussion amongst the sponsors regarding reasons for the lack of participation described the short time frame between the Whitefish/Columbia Falls event and the Kalispell event, as well as the short distance between the two events. The Kalispell event was advertised more than the Whitefish event according to Citizens for A Better Flathead. During the planning of the event, there were short discussions regarding the potential for a smaller Kalispell event, but sponsors agreed to move forward with the second event because of the perceived need to hold an event in Kalispell that served the entire county.

#### *Evaluation*

Weekends are coveted outdoor time for most Montanans and sponsors also believe that an event during the school year will be more successful than an event held on the weekend during the summer. Per unit recycling fees likely affected participation; some residents did arrive at the event unaware of the fees. DEQ did negotiate with Inland ReTech to lower fees by \$.50 to \$1.00 than the Whitefish event, but it is unlikely that the slightly lower prices greatly encouraged participation by the public.

This event charged participants a per unit recycling fee that ranged from \$.15 to \$15.00. The range of fees were posted to the Internet and provided to the event sponsors. In addition, all advertisements and publicity directed the public to call for prices or visit the website. A more effective way of communicating fees still needs to be found, because there were still participants surprised to learn of the fees.

Publicity for the event stated that pre-registration was required. No pre registrations were received

by Valley Recycling. It was not clear in the pre-event advertisement if participants could drop off equipment without pre-registration. Given these factors it is not known if some participants failed to make a last minute effort to attend this Saturday event because they had not pre-registered. A decision should be made regarding advertising for pre-registration and whether drop-offs are then discouraged among consumers failing to pre-register prior to the event.

Another factor that may have had some impact were announcements released the week before the event by e-mail by two major computer manufactures that they would soon be launching community based pick ups of computers for a minimal fee, or for free, in all communities.

Participants were asked to complete a survey and those results are tabulated in Appendix A. The survey revealed that a majority of participants learned of the event through newspaper advertisements and word-of-mouth. Most participants lived less than 5 miles away from the event, and the vast majority were residences. The majority of participants felt that consumers/users of electronic merchandise should pay up to \$10 to recycle electronics equipment. Most would like to see municipal recycling centers accept electronics for recycling.

All participants were happy to recycle old electronics, and encouraged sponsors to hold additional events. A total of 3 businesses and 16 individuals participated. The total units dropped off for recycling was 90. A break down of units received by equipment type and also by manufacturer follow in the tables below.

**Table 1. Volume of Equipment Received**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Actual Units</b>
Cell Phones/PDAs and Accessories	9
Computer Monitors	18
Desktop Computers	14
Combo Systems (e.g. MacIntosh)	2
Laptops	1
Printers/MFDs/Fax/Desktop Copiers/Scanners	8
Small Peripherals	34
TVs	1
Other: Telephones, Answering Machines, Adding Machines	3
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 3. Equipment Received by Manufacturer.**

<b>% Rec'd</b>	<b>Units*</b>	<b>Manufacturer</b>
28%	11	Apple/Macintosh
13%	5	Gateway
13%	5	HP
10%	4	Linksys

10%	4	Packard Bell
5%	2	Panasonic
5%	2	Aopen
5%	2	Audiovox
5%	2	AT&T
5%	2	Compaq
1%	1	Brands with 1 unit recycled (total of 25): Alps, Canon, Daewoo, DEXXA, Duophone, Epson, Kyocera, Lexmark, Magnavox, Memorex, Merit, Nokia, Optiquess, Samsung, Seiko, Smith Corona, Sony, Star, Supermatch, Tiger, Trigem, Triplite III

#### IV. Budget and Expenses

Due to the public-private partnership strategy used in this event, a budget for this event was never developed. Sponsors were asked to track expenses so that a total cost could be calculated for the event. Sponsors provided in-kind donations of equipment and labor. The Department of Environmental Quality provided cash to cover some of the advertising and necessary signs. DEQ signs were made to be large enough to be seen by traffic, and were created with adjustable arrows that could be set to direct traffic. The signs were created with the intent to be re-used at future events. Flathead Valley Solid Waste District purchased large banners that advertised the event and were put up at Valley Recycling prior to the event. Total cost for the event, including cash spent on posters, advertisements, signs, banners and labor was \$4,195. These costs do not reflect recycling fees paid by participants.

Participants bore all costs for recycling the equipment. Inland ReTech arranged for a truck to be at Valley Recycling and transport the equipment to Spokane for processing. The small amount of equipment collected meant that transportation costs would not be covered by proceeds from the event. Bob Morrow, of Valley Recycling, stepped in and offered to split the transportation costs by sending baled plastic to Spokane Recycling along with the collected electronics. This shipping arrangement was an example of partnership that grew out of the event, and greatly assisted Inland ReTech in covering costs. The partnership among the sponsors is one of the goals of this pilot project as DEQ works to show communities that electronic recycling events can be offered without requiring a special line-item budget in already stretched municipal budgets. Inland ReTech proposed an ongoing collection arrangement with Valley Recycling that would result in Flathead residents being able to drop off electronics for recycling throughout the year. DEQ hopes to encourage the development of continuous programs throughout this series of electronic recycling events.

#### V. Conclusion

The event was not well attended, most likely for the reasons stated above in Part III. (It should be noted that sponsors are already receiving calls on when the next event will be from businesses and individuals who missed the event.) Another event planned during the school year would likely be better attended and result in more electronics diverted from the landfill. Participants were enthusiastic about the recycling opportunity and were excited to learn of the work being done to enable more

events or continuous collection. The partnerships with Valley Recycling, Citizens for A Better Flathead, and the Flathead Solid Waste District were quite successful and generated interest in working together on future projects. Local leadership was invaluable in pulling off the event.

The per unit costs for recycling electronic equipment was bore completely by participants (consumers), and according to the survey, those that participated felt this was appropriate. Additional surveys will be done throughout this series of events, including one that will occur at the Bozeman ‘free’ event. More study needs to be done regarding the costs consumers are willing to bear and whether a share of the costs should be covered by retailers, manufacturers, and state or municipal governments. Work needs to continue to reduce consumer costs and increase participation. Sandra Boggs, Recycling and Marketing Development Specialist, DEQ, continues to develop partnerships with national retailers and manufacturers to lower consumer costs and create sustainable electronics waste recycling programs in Montana.

## VI. Appendix

# Appendix A

## Montana E-raise Your E-waste Project Participant Survey Summary

**Location:** Kalispell, MT

**Date:** July 15, 2006

**Total number of surveys taken:** 19

1. How did you hear about this event?

Web page	1
TV ad	0
Newspaper ad	7
Flyer	2
Radio	1
Word of mouth	5
Other responses:	
CyberPort	1
E-mail	1
Sign on road	1
At land fill	1

Sen. Dan Weinberg	1
-------------------	---

2. How far did you travel today to recycle your electronics?

< 5 miles	11
5 – 10 miles	3
11 – 20 miles	3
> 20 miles	2

3. Are your electronics from a:

Residence	16
Business	3
Other	0

4. Who do you think should pay for the safe recycling of electronic products?

Consumer/user	12
Retail store	1
Electronics manufacturer	5
Government	1
Other responses:	
Company that extracts value	1
Hazard material be charged for	1
Tax – sales	1

5. What is the most you would be willing to pay per item to recycle your electronics?

\$2	5
\$0035	4
\$10	10
Other responses:	
More: \$20	1

6. What is the most convenient way for you to recycle your electronics?

Take them to a municipal recycling center	17
Take them to a retail store	1
Mail them back to a manufacturer	0

Take them to a local charity	3
Other responses:	
Pick up	1

7. How many computer monitors and TVs do you have at home right now?

0 – 2	7
3 – 4	9
5 or more	3

8. How many households does your vehicle represent?

1	12
2	7
3	0
More than three	0