



Recycling Options Increase in the City and Richland County

Recycling possibilities in the Columbia area are expanding, giving businesses and residents more options.

BY [NICK MCCORMAC](#)

Recycling possibilities in the Columbia area are expanding, giving businesses and residents more options to practice the third R — after reduce and reuse.

In the Vista, a state program provides businesses with free recycling bins and helped establish an office paper and cardboard recycling center at the corner of Washington and Wayne streets in 2008.

About \$28,000 to pay for the efforts came from grants issued to the Congaree Vista Guild in 2007 by the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

“We saw the city was offering a [state] grant for a recycling program and thought it would be beneficial to the Vista community since a lot of businesses didn’t recycle,” says Kay Hampton, who works at Capitol Places, a downtown residential developer. Hampton and Gretchen Lambert of Studio 2LR Architecture + Interiors wrote and won the grants. Hampton and Lambert will be honored for the success of the program at a ceremony scheduled for Thursday at 11 a.m. at the recycling center. During the event they plan to announce new opportunities to recycle glass, aluminum and newspaper at the site in addition to office paper and cardboard.

“The city picks up everything dropped off at the site and had to increase how often they performed pickups,” Lambert says. “We hope that will continue to increase now that we’re expanding what’s accepted.”

As for curbside recycling in the city, 3,200 tons of recyclables were collected from 35,000 residents last year, and recycling rates increased for nearly all items, according to Mary Pat Baldauf, the city’s sustainability facilitator.



Gretchen Lambert of Studio 2LR Architecture + Interiors (left) **and Kay Hampton of Capitol Places** wrote and won grants to establish a recycling program in the Vista. A drop-off center at Washington and Wayne streets is part of the program. *Photo by Graeme Foust*

“We want to impress upon people that if you can reuse something, you should,” Baldauf says.

The city’s curbside pickup includes aluminum, metal cans, Nos. 1 and 2 plastics, cardboard, newspaper and magazines. Baldauf says other types of plastics are not collected because the buy-back market for them is not large.

Richland County residents also have more places to recycle. The county’s public works department at 400 Powell Road opened a center in April and two new stations — one at Clemson’s Sandhill Research and Education Center at 900 Clemson Road, the other at Sunoco Recycling at 1132 Idlewilde Blvd. — opened May 1.

In addition to aluminum and the like, those sites also accept junk mail, which curbside service doesn’t cover.

The county’s curbside pickup includes the same recyclables as the city but also takes all numbered plastics.

“Richland has been slow getting into the recycling game, but we’re enhancing education and outreach to get more people involved,” says Paul Alcantar, the county’s solid waste director. Alcantar estimates that 20 percent of county residents use curbside services and even more use drop-off sites.

In an effort to expand its outreach, the county plans to hold a special recycling event on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bethel Hanberry Elementary School, 125 Boney Road in Blythewood. With proof of residency, Richland residents can drop off all manner of electronics, from clunker computers to microwave ovens, as well as tires and scrap metal. Alcantar encourages residents to pick up “Talkin’ Trash,” a brochure the county offers that outlines dos and don’ts of recycling and answers questions about the county’s services. Pamphlets can be obtained by calling the county ombudsman’s office at 803-929-6000.