

**PASCO COUNTY
RECYCLING AND
EDUCATION**

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Zero Waste – This is a movement that encourages a lifestyle in which no trash is thrown away. Things are reused and repaired, single-use containers are put aside in favor of bulk packaging, and waste of any kind is minimized to the extreme. But, there is no need for perfection to join the zero-waste party. Do what you can when you can in your own life. Lots of information, tips, and how-to's can be found online. Dip a toe into Zero Waste and see if it agrees with you!



Recycling Update

JULY 2017

Our Material Recovery Facility

When your recycling is put at the curb, it comes to our transfer facility. Then, it is taken to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to be separated, baled, and sold to remanufacturers to be used in new goods.

Since paper and cardboard were added to our recycling mix, the composition of our recycling has changed. We were able to visit the facility and reevaluate the ins and outs of Pasco's recycling. Your aluminum cans and plastic water bottles take a pretty amazing journey....

First, recycling is fed into a huge metering machine. This spreads the recycling into an even, steady flow down the conveyer belt. Watchful employee pickers stand by and remove any stray plastic bags or large contaminants from the stream.

The recycling then moves through a series of machines designed to separate paper and cardboard from everything else. Twirling rubber stars pull paper products up while letting cans and bottles

fall onto a lower conveyer belt. Recyclables are put through a rotating drum with varying sized holes, breaking glass bottles into tiny pieces called fines and removing bottle caps and other items too small to recycle.

Next, the recycling travels to an optical sorter. Sensors detect different kinds of plastic and jets of air blow bottles one way or another; the process reminded us of popcorn jumping out of a hot skillet. More observant employees pluck plastics that the sensor may have missed, before the remaining recyclables pass beneath a strong magnet. The clunk-clunk of steel cans hitting the magnet is nearly constant.

Lastly, aluminum cans are taken off the conveyer belt by an induction magnet (or anti-magnet).

Once all recyclable materials are separated into large piles, they are loaded into a baler that creates large, compact cubes of recycling fit for transport. From curb to cube, your cans and bottles go through an incredible process.



Metering Machine

Recycling Survey Results

The recycling survey launched in February of this year produced 7,460 responses with over 2,700 comments. Thank you to those of you who participated.

Ninety-nine percent of the respondents live in Pasco with ninety percent owning their homes. Of those that own, sixty-seven percent are already recycling at the curb once-a-week, twice-a-month or once-a-month. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents

indicated that they are already recycling. That means twenty-two percent of the respondents do not recycle.

Beyond curbside, several ways that people recycle are 'at the grocery/retail store' and 'at work'; followed by 'at school' and 'at Pasco County libraries'. Seventeen percent are using the County recycling drop offs. This seems to indicate that people will use any (and all) methods available to them

to recycle.

Eighty-four percent of the respondents said they would recycle once-a-week at the curb if the service were offered.

However, only fifty-one percent would give up a day of trash to keep costs the same and only fifty-two percent would pay more to keep trash the same and get the additional once-a-week recycling service.

Earth Day

This year, Earth Day had an environmental educational focus with 35 vendors including the Water Ventures Learning Lab, Florida Native Plants, and Pasco Master Gardeners. The event was a great success with approximately 2,800 in attendance, a 37% increase from 2016.

“It was so energizing to be around so many people that care about the environment, said Lottie Kelley, Earth Day Event Chair. Pasco County’s Earth Day Celebration is an annual event, and is a partnership among Covanta Pasco Inc.; Keep Pasco Beautiful; Pasco County Utilities; Pasco County Recycling; Pasco County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources; Pasco County UFIFAS Extension and the Pasco County School Board.

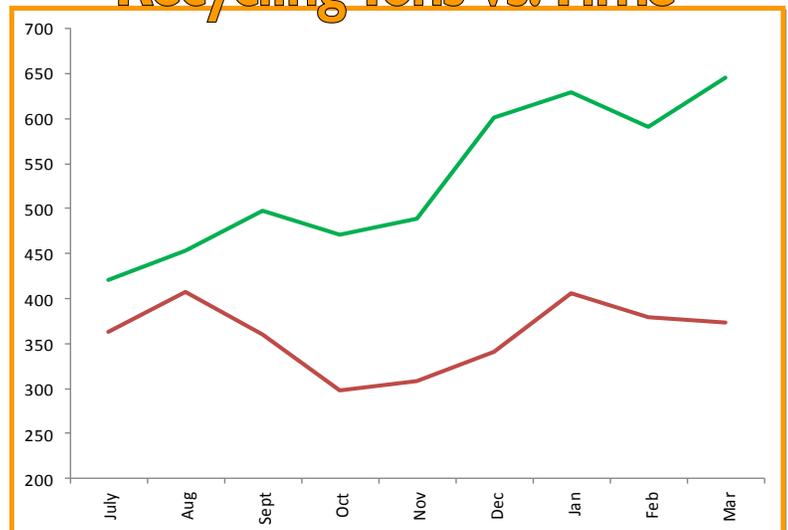


Paper by the Numbers

Paper and cardboard were added to our recycling stream in July of 2016. It’s been a little over 9 months since the change went into effect, and the impact on our numbers is pretty amazing:

Initially, the change brought us a 16% increase in our recycling tonnage. But, little by little, that number has climbed to a 73% change in tonnage! In March alone, Pasco residents recycled over 273 more tons than they did last year. Average increase? Almost 174 tons. The graph to the right shows 9 months of recycling tonnage before (red) and after (green) the addition of paper and cardboard.

Recycling Tons vs. Time



Coastal Cleanup

Show your Pasco pride and participate in the annual International Coastal Cleanup! Every year, volunteers in Pasco pick up trash from beaches, lakes, rivers, and inland areas. Information gathered during the cleanup is used by the Ocean Conservancy to create an annual index of the problem of marine debris.

Last year, over 1,300 people cleaned over 50,000 pounds of

trash. That’s as much as seven elephants or twelve cars! The Coastal Cleanup is organized locally by Pasco County and Keep Pasco Beautiful, but the cleanup extends globally.

“There are so many people in our community that are concerned about the environment,” said Kristen King, Keep Pasco Beautiful Coordinator. “They realize that the plastic bag thrown on the side of the road will eventually make it out to

the Gulf, which can be deadly for marine life such as turtles and fish. Our hope is that the cleanup will not only get debris off our streets and waterways, but also educate the public on the dangers of litter and the problems it causes.”

For information about how to volunteer, call Kristen King at 727-856-7252 or email kking@pascocountyfl.net