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## Yolo County introduces new opportunity to recycle music

Save the environment one cassette tape, CD and battery at a time

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The days of the Walkman may be long gone, but don't throw it in the trash just yet - and keep those dead batteries, too.

Yolo County, with the help of California Electronic Asset Recovery, is introducing a new program to recycle "techno trash." Techno trash, short for technology trash, can be anything from CDs and cassette tapes to the batteries in light-up shoes and singing greeting cards.

Residents can bring their techno trash to the Yolo County Central Landfill in Woodland, Monday through Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., or on Sundays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CEAR business development manager Kristin DiLallo Sherrill said she was excited about the techno trash program's prospects.

"Yolo County was a trial run, but the e-waste recycling and the techno-trash program have really taken off," Sherrill said. "We're hoping to do similar programs in Sacramento and Nevada counties."

Last year CEAR recycled 11.5 million pounds of technology waste and in 2008 they recycled 15 million pounds. CEAR also provides recycling services for the Davis Bargain Barn, the Medical Center and the UC Davis campus.

Marissa Juhler has been the waste reduction and sustainability manager for Yolo County for two years and helped organize the techno trash program.

"It is only a matter of time before technology catches up with us on the next 'latest and greatest' way to listen to music, watch a movie or store data," Juhler said. "Making this recycling opportunity available is critical to keeping up with the waste stream."

The recycled technology is separated into its composite materials - for example, metals and plastics - and those materials are then processed to make new products.

California produces over 39 million tons of waste per year, according to a California Integrated Waste Management Board study. About 1 percent of the overall waste stream consists of technology-related waste.

The California Product Stewardship Council estimates that local governments spend over \$100 million just collecting and disposing of hazardous waste.

Juhler said while 1 percent may seem like a small percentage it can add up to an average of over 2,000 tons of

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electronic waste annually for Yolo County.

"Thankfully, we have had an active electronic waste recycling program available free to residents for years," Juhler said, "We now have included 'techno trash' which keeps a good portion of that 2,000 tons out of the landfill."

Yolo County Planning and Public Works Director John Bencomo also said there is an impact of technology-induced waste.

"As we move farther into the information age, the volume of obsolete computer equipment and supplies is becoming greater, and what to do with it is an even bigger problem," Bencomo said in a press release.

According to the California Integrated Waste Management study, the commercial sector produces about 50 percent of California's waste while the residential sector accounts for about 30 percent.

Executive director of the California Product Stewardship Council and UC Davis alumna Heidi Sanborn said she recommends avoiding the purchase of things like household cleaners and pesticides, which often contain toxic chemicals.

"The problem is that people buy and use toxic products all the time because they think they're cheap," Sanborn said. "This is first of all an exposure risk to the consumer and the products end up being a lot more expensive in terms of cleanup and taxes."

Commonly used toxic products include fluorescent mercury lamps, mercury thermostats and pool chemicals. The CPSC also discourages the use of oil-based paint.

The CPSC strives to make manufacturers recycle their own products so cleanup becomes a manufacturing cost rather than a government cost.

"The manufacturers know better than the government what ingredients are in their products and how they can be recycled," Sanborn said. "If they have to pay for the cleanup they're more likely to rethink their design and make it safer."

Juhler said consumers should think how to dispose of the products they purchase in advance.

"Knowing how and where to dispose of items before you purchase products can help you cut down on your waste," Juhler said.

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