

THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Winter 2022

Now You Can Offset Your Electrical Energy Use

If you are among the more than the 600,000 Tennesseans living in Middle Tennessee Electric's service area, **you can join Green Switch 100 and offset your energy use with renewable resources.**

Tim Suddoth, MTE distributed energy resources coordinator, told his audience at Recycle Rutherford's fall meeting about the program offered in conjunction with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

He said the program, which started in October 2020, was a response to people who wanted to offset their consumption with renewable power—solar is the most accessible way to achieve sustainability, but for a variety of reasons, many cannot do that. Suddoth explained that obstacles include “lack of space, initial cost, renting.”

However, **“MTE customers can pay one cent more for each kilowatt hour of electricity used, and that will pay for renewable energy generated by TVA.”** He explained that customers can “look at their bills and see the number of kilowatt hours used and multiply by .01. If you used 2000 kilowatt hours, that would mean you would pay \$20 for the equivalent in renewable energy. Look in the circle on the front of your bill. Most members pay \$10 to \$20 additional.”

(Writer's Note: I looked at my most recent bill and found that I used 891 kilowatt hours, meaning that I would pay \$8.91 to offset my use. I do live alone in a small house.)

Suddoth says that currently TVA is generating 70% solar, 20% from wind, and 10% from biogas. He anticipates they will go to 100% solar because they have thousands of acres of panels. The economy of scale makes it much less expensive for TVA to generate solar energy than for an individual.

So far, the program has been a success in spite of launching it during COVID,

Suddoth says. “This is a program for householders; the rate for businesses depends on how much power is used, and the size of the business affects participation.”

The speaker, whose love and respect for nature began when he was in the serene setting of Appalachian State University in Boone, NC, says that even with the extra cent, MTE customers will still be paying much less than the average cost across the country. “People can offset their impact without the expense of installing solar. The program is affordable and flexible and gives people options. I especially like that we are offsetting our use with energy generated and used in Tennessee.”

MTE and Knoxville Utility Board are the only TVA systems that offer the Green Switch program. **“The easiest way to sign up for the program is to go to MTE's website at <https://mte.com/myMTEMC> On the homepage, click on Programs and click on Renewables in the drop-down menu,”** Suddoth says. If you need additional information, someone will be in touch to answer questions.

(Writer's Note: I went online and enrolled in the Green Switch 100 program. The process is straightforward, and you have the opportunity more than once to request additional information. Enrolling in the program is something I have considered doing since I moved away from my house with solar panels and geothermal heating and cooling. I do still drive an electric car.)

Suddoth pointed out during his remarks that “many electric vehicle owners enroll in the program so that they really are offsetting their carbon footprint.”

In a world which often feels out of our control, this is an affordable way for individuals to live sustainably and to make a difference to the Earth. Suddoth will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Get Rid of Unwanted Stuff Ethically

Stuff—most of us seem to have more than we want or need, and we're torn about what to do with it. **We know that the most sustainable solution is reuse**, but how do we get the stuff we're not using to those who will. Unfortunately, there's not an instant solution, but there are some relatively simple solutions.

First, once you have talked yourself out of keeping the item "just in case" you or somebody in the family might need it, take a hard look and decide whether to sell or donate the item. If you decide to sell, there are a variety of local consignment shops as well as outlets such as Facebook Marketplace. We have featured several consignment shops in this newsletter over the last couple of years. Back issues of *The Recycler* can be seen at www.recyclerutherford.org

Also, you can search online for local shops ("near me") according to the items you want to sell. Local radio station WGNS has a daily Swap and Shop program.

There are many online consignment operations, but in general, it's easier and more sustainable to stay local. Examples online include **ThredUp**, which sends sellers "cleanup kits," bags with prepaid labels that you fill with new or gently used items and send back for the company's secondhand experts to sort and evaluate. Sellers receive credit to spend on the site or cash via PayPal.

Another is **PoshMark**, which has a system in which sellers download an app, take pictures of the items they want to sell, which can be fashion, beauty, or home décor, and create a listing. PoshMark shares the listing on its network, but the platform works similarly to a social media site, and sellers who share other sellers' posts and build a following do better than those who set it and forget it. Items that are no longer available but in high demand will sell faster.

Other online consignment operations are **Mercari**, which offers opportunities to sell clothing, accessories, electronics, home décor, vintage, and luxury items. **Depop** sells streetwear, sneakers, designed clothing, jewelry, sports equipment, and art. Search for these various endeavors online and decide which best fits your needs.

If you don't have the time to invest in selling your unwanted things or especially need the money, donate the items. Many organizations pass the items on to others in need or sell them in thrift shops and use the proceeds providing help in the community.

Local outlets for materials include **Habitat for Humanity** and **Greenhouse Ministries**, both of which have been featured in this newsletter (See back issues at www.recyclerutherford.org)

Others include **Raiders Closet**, the local equivalent of Dress for Success, in MTSU's Department of Marketing; **Goodwill Industries**; **Amelia's Closet**; **Outreach Thrift Store**; **Salvation Army**; and **Steered Straight Thrift Store**. Some of them will pick up furniture and large items. To find which best fit your needs, go online and research several.

Reuse is the most sustainable way to downsize!

A great deal of the information in this piece came from an article in an online version of WIRED magazine. Julie Maturen, who is development director of the YWCA in Missoula, Montana, reminds that "Donations to a nonprofit are always a write-off, but donating brand-new items gives you a greater tax deduction." So, if you receive a gift that you don't think you will ever wear or use, donate it so that someone else can enjoy and make use of it.

Since it's likely that most of the items you donate have been used, take a hard look, especially at clothing. If the garment is stained or ripped so that it is unwearable, donating it is not useful unless it is to a place that also has access to textile recycling. The Earth 911 site, which says **the average U.S. citizen discards about 70 pounds of clothing annually**, has a textile recycling locator. Goodwill Industries is a collection point for textile recycling.

Underwear, an item generally unwelcome at donation sites and thrift shops, can now be recycled through **Parade**, a start-up company that turns old underwear into furniture and bedding. They have partnered with **TerraCycle** to ship the underwear (no bras or swimsuits presently) to them; donors get a credit to order new underwear. Read more and request mailers for old underwear at <https://yourparade.com/pages/take-back>

Mentioned earlier in this article, **Facebook Marketplace** is a destination on Facebook where members can buy and sell items. It's easy to browse, search for items in your area, and also find items available for shipping. That being said, it is important to use common sense and caution about divulging personal information, arranging for pickup and payment, and opening your house to strangers. Also, there is frustration with potential buyers saying they want an item but failing to pick it up. Many people get rid of unwanted items successfully, however. It's prudent to always have others present when items are to be picked up and to arrange for pick up in garage or patio/porch areas.

Good luck with getting rid of unwanted stuff as you help the earth and its inhabitants!

EPA Releases National Strategy to Transform Recycling in America

On November 15, 2021, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the 68-page 2021 National Recycling Strategy to tackle major recycling challenges facing the nation. The following is taken from a letter from Michael S. Regen, EPA administrator:

We have both an opportunity and an obligation to protect and preserve our natural resources for the next generation. We’ve all heard the phrase “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.” It’s been taught in schools; we’ve heard it on TV; and EPA, along with so many other organizations, have been saying it for years. But those three words can only take us so far—it’s time to transform the United States recycling system.

Our current recycling system is at a crossroads and desperately needs creative energy to better serve the needs of the American people. Some are confused about what materials can be recycled. In many areas of the country, our recycling infrastructure is antiquated. Markets for recyclables vary greatly, and we have no standardized way to measure system performance. Living near recycling facilities also takes a toll on already overburdened communities when materials are not properly managed. And, according to eminent scientists on the International Resource Panel, natural resource extraction and processing make up half of all global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that drive the climate crisis.

We need a transformative vision for our waste management system – one that is inclusive, more equitable, and reflects the urgency of the climate crisis. I am proud to introduce the 2021 National Recycling Strategy, a critical effort to build a circular economy for all. A circular economy is an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by design. It is a change to the linear model from which resources are mined, made into products, and then thrown away. A circular economy reduces materials use, redesigns materials and products to be less resource-intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. The strategy responds to our

recycling system’s challenges through actions outlined under five objectives:

- improve markets for recycled commodities,
- increase collection and improve materials management infrastructure,
- reduce contamination in the recycled materials stream,
- enhance policies and programs to support circularity, and
- standardize measurement and increase data collection.

The 2021 Strategy is designed to increase equitable access to recycling services, reduce environmental impacts on underserved communities, and stimulate economic development. However, we know recycling on its own isn’t enough. This is part one in a series of strategies to help us re-envision how we use materials.

Accomplishing President Biden’s ambitious climate change goals begins with designing products to be sustainable, reducing the creation of waste with local communities in mind, maximizing reduce, reuse, and recycle, and minimizing the impacts of waste management.

When we recycle, we reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills; reduce pollution and emissions that contribute to climate change; save natural resources, such as timber and water; and keep our environment healthy by reducing the need to create new materials. We also help our economy by using domestic materials, supporting American manufacturing, and creating jobs in the recycling and manufacturing industries. To go beyond “Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle” and to pave the way for sustainable management of our precious resources, it will take all of us working together. We call on all Americans to help meet this moment—businesses, state and local governments, Tribal Nations, and individuals. By making simple changes every day, we can create a more sustainable future for our country and the world. I am confident that with the significant stakeholder support and interest, we can accomplish these ambitious goals and achieve transformational change together. We invite you to join us at www.epa.gov/recyclingstrategy

Recycle Rutherford Membership Form

I enclose my annual dues to support Recycle Rutherford and receive the newsletter.

- \$25.00 supporter \$15.00 student \$100.00 patron
- I am contributing \$_____ in addition to dues.
- I prefer the newsletter to be emailed and am providing my email address.

PLEASE PRINT:

name _____ amount enclosed _____ -

address _____

city, state, zip _____

telephone: day _____; evening _____

email _____; volunteer interest _____

Please make check payable and mail to Recycle Rutherford, P.O. Box 1804, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804

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Kudos to . . .

~~**Washington County Schools** in 2021 for becoming the first school system in Tennessee to have an all-electric school bus. The bus runs a 30-mile route outside Jonesborough on hilly, country roads. Students like the quiet operation and the lack of fumes. Jarrod Adams, the system's chief operations officer, says they hope to lead the way for communities to take action to fight climate change.

~~**Blue Diamond Almond Breeze** company—and all the others which follow a similar practice—for including information on their cartons about recycling. Cartons, which are made by Tetra Paks are recyclable according to their website but are not accepted by the county or by Recyclops; however, as consumers, we can go to www.recyclecartons.com for information (search by zip code) and to sign a petition. Instructions are there for mailing the cartons to them to be recycled. Mail the cartons to one of the addresses found on the site.

~~**Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)** for hosting **Food Waste Awareness Week April 4-9**. For details and to learn about Saturday's "Bread to Tap" event in which local bakeries will partner with breweries to produce beer using bread that would have been discarded, go to <http://www.getfoodsmarttn.com>

Dates to Remember

Annual Meeting—Recycle Rutherford:

Monday, April 25, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker:

Go to www.recyclerutherford.org for link

Earth Day Celebration 2022:

Saturday, April 23, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Sponsored by Middle Tennessee Electric

In Person on the Historic Public Square
Downtown Murfreesboro

2020-22 Officers and Board

Recycle Rutherford holds elections each April at the annual meeting; in general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms.

The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the term of each ends. The board meets monthly on first Mondays at 6:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 210 N. Spring Street.

Rachel Cornett, president
Bonnie Black, vice president
Suma Clark, secretary
Rick Racker, treasurer
Glenn Himebaugh, past president

Board Members:

Linda Hardyman, 2022
Diane Parker 2022
Beth Spivey, 2022

**Reminder: To renew your membership,
please see the form on page 3.
Dues are only \$25 per year.
We don't want to lose you!**

**For more information, go to
www.recyclerutherford.org**

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