

THE RECYCLER

Newsletter of Recycle Rutherford, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

Spring 2025

Meet the Committee That Deals with Solid Waste Issues

Monday, April 28, 2025, 7:00 pm
Heritage Center, 225 W. College St.

With the ongoing discussion about how our county will deal with the ever-increasing amount of solid waste generated by our growing community, citizens look to county leaders for action and solutions.

Specifically, the county commission committee that deals with this challenge is public works. Recycle Rutherford invited members of the Rutherford County Public Works and Planning Committee to participate in a Q&A panel discussion with pre-submitted questions at our spring meeting on Monday, April 28, 2025, 7 p.m., at the Heritage Center.

Committee members planning to attend include Phil Dodd, vice chair (District 16); Joshua James (District 9), and Robert Peay (District 4). **This will be an opportunity for citizens to ask questions and gain a better understanding of the decision process in the commission.** Chair Anthony Johnson (District 11) cannot join us for our public meeting but would like to attend a board meeting to keep in touch.

The duties of this committee include solid waste, recycling, planning, highways and the workhouse. Coordination between this committee and the Planning Commission pertains to future growth patterns, shifts in population, etc. Departments reporting monthly to this committee are the Highway, Landfill, Planning Commission, and recycling efforts and convenience centers.

The committee is composed of seven commissioners. Additional members to those listed above are Carl Boyd (District 12), Mike Kusch (District 7), and Steve Percy (District 2). The committee meets monthly on Tuesday after the first Monday at 5:30 p.m. in the Historic County Courthouse, Commission Chamber on the second floor.

The public is invited to attend the April forum. In addition to parking in front of the Heritage Center, additional parking is available across the street in the bank parking lot after hours. The Heritage Center is located just off the Square.

President Rachel Cornett's Statement

Dear Members of the Rutherford County Public Works Committee-

For over three decades, the non-profit, non-partisan group Recycle Rutherford has been a voice of environmental responsibility in our community. Today, we stand at a critical crossroad. As you deliberate on solid waste plans, we implore you to seize this moment and embrace a future that prioritizes recycling and sustainability. We can't continue to just throw out mounds of trash without making any efforts toward reducing, reusing, recycling, etc. We also should not in good conscience dump our trash on someone else without any incentive toward environmentally friendly practices.

For too long, our county has lagged behind in making environmentally conscious choices. We all know the time for change is now! Rutherford County can no longer afford to ignore the pressing need for responsible waste management with our abundantly growing population. Change is hard, but it can happen and simply must happen regarding how we handle our waste locally.

With cutting-edge technology in today's solid waste world, we have the power to significantly reduce our waste streams. We can implement smart recycling programs, explore composting initiatives, and invest in innovative waste-to-energy solutions. These aren't just eco-friendly options; they're economically savvy choices that can create jobs and save taxpayer money in the long run.

Moreover, we must prioritize public education. By fostering a culture of sustainability, we can empower our residents to make informed choices that benefit our environment and the health of our community.

Committee members, I'm sure it is not lost on you that the decisions you make will echo for generations. Future generations will either thank us for our foresight or question our inaction. Let's choose responsibility. Let's choose a sustainable future for Rutherford County.

The time is now. Our community is ready. Will you lead us forward?"

(Presented to Public Works at their March 2025 meeting)

Earn Tax Credits and Rebates by Making Your Home Energy Efficient

“The more energy efficient we make our homes, the better it is for the environment,” Carynton Howard told the attendees at the Fall 2024 meeting of Recycle Rutherford. Howard is the climate advocacy coordinator for the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy; she shared ways the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) can help us transform our homes and communities.

She explained that TVA, the source of our electricity, burns fossil fuels like coal and gas to make a large portion of the power that we use; since burning fossil fuels causes air and water pollution and is the biggest driver of climate change and global warming, the less electricity we need in our homes the less we damage the environment.

Howard listed a variety of ways to improve energy efficiency in our homes, including adding adequate insulation, installing an electric heat pump, sealing around windows and doors and anywhere air can get in, and installing rooftop solar panels. She said that energy efficient homes in good repair may be ready for rooftop solar, which helps lower costs and reduces pollution. Solar can provide a source for electric vehicle charging and for energy storage as well as adding energy back to the grid.

She explained federal investment into clean energy through the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act resulted in billions of dollars spent to improve homes and communities. A slide showing that 3.4 million American families saved \$8.4 billion on clean energy and energy investments through IRA tax credits illustrated this. In Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee, 559,820 households received more than \$1.3 billion in residential clean energy and energy efficiency tax credits in tax year 2023.

Home Energy Tax Credits

Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit (25C) Example

EXAMPLE	
Heat Pump Water Heater	\$2,250
Labor/Installation	\$750
Total Cost	\$3,000
Tax Credit (30% of cost)	\$900
Cost Less Credit	\$2,100

Residential Clean Energy Credit (25D) Example

EXAMPLE	
Residential Solar System	\$14,000
Labor/Installation	\$4,000
Total Cost	\$18,000
Tax Credit	\$5,400
Total Cost Less Credit	\$12,600



Speaker Carynton Howard, left, was welcomed by President Rachel Cornett.

Items eligible for energy efficient home improvement credit include exterior doors, windows, skylights, insulation materials, central air conditioners, water heaters, furnaces, boilers, and heat pumps. There are annual limits for each type of improvement; the maximum is 30 percent of the cost. See example at left.

The more energy efficient we make our homes, the better for the environment.

Credit for residential clean energy is available for solar panels, wind turbines, geothermal heat pumps, solar water heaters, and battery storage technology. Maximum credit is 30 percent, and there is no annual or lifetime limit. See example at left.

Still another benefit can come through rebates for items such as HVAC and duct systems, water heating, insulation, and windows. homeowners need to choose a TVA-vetted contractor to do the work.

Middle Tennessee Electric (MTE) offers a free home energy checkup evaluating such things as insulation, duct work condition and air flow, general air leaking and weatherization recommendations, air conditioning and heating, and energy habit recommendations.

MTE offers a home uplift program to low-income households that provides an average of \$10,000 free home energy upgrades, resulting in an average annual savings of \$500 and 25 percent less energy use.

Howard suggested taking a step-by-step approach, starting with making a list of what is needed and considering getting an energy audit. Next, find out if you need rewiring or a new electric panel; improve the insulation and air sealing. Over the next several years, replace windows and exterior doors. When it breaks, replace your furnace with a heat pump; replace your water heater with a heat pump water heater; replace a gas stove with an efficient electric one. Explore getting a renewable energy system for your home; choose an electric vehicle for your next car and install a charger.

Audience questions included how to deal with historic house issues such as keeping old windows but making them energy efficient. Questions about tankless water heaters were raised. Howard recommended contacting an MTE energy consultant. She also suggested looking at TVA educational programs.

Celebrate Earth Day All Year!

Every person can make a difference in this world; doing the right thing for the earth is good for the planet and for the individual. Probably you are already doing some of these things or others not listed. Celebrate Earth Day by adding something new or being more intentional. If you aren't doing any of these, there's no time like the present. Make a difference!

1. **Avoid single-use plastic.** Substitute reusable items for single use plastic: cloth or string bags for shopping; Bees Wrap (wax infused cotton) instead of plastic wrap; mesh or cloth bags produce bags; reusable containers instead of plastic sandwich, storage, or lunch bags; shampoo and conditioner bars instead of plastic bottles; refillable water bottle instead of bottled water; take your own to-go mug or cup to the shop; keep clean reusable containers in your car instead of getting a to-go box for leftovers.
2. **Clean kindly.** Use plant-based, biodegradable soaps and detergents and all-purpose surface cleaners. Avoid ammonia in glass cleaners and chlorine in general.
3. **Be wise with laundry.** Wash full loads to get the most out of water and energy use. Rinse in cold water and consider for washing most loads. Use detergent strips to cut plastic use. Use plant-based biodegradable detergents without fragrances or dyes. Use oxygen bleach rather than chlorine. Line dry clothes when you can.
4. **Buy local.** Buying locally grown food and other products means less use of fossil fuels for transportation. Not only is energy saved, but the food is fresher and tastes better.
5. **Use energy-efficient light bulbs.** Compact fluorescent light bulbs and light-emitting diodes save energy, money, and emissions.
6. **Go organic.** Buying, eating, and producing organically grown food is one of the single most powerful green choices.
7. **Kick off your shoes.** Take off your shoes at the door and avoid tracking in dust loaded with

things like pesticides, herbicides, toxic cleaners and wood preservatives. Get a welcome mat to help stop toxins at the door.

8. **Get a low-flow toilet.** Old-style toilets use 3.5 to 7 gallons per flush; new low-flow toilets use as little as 1.6 gallons per flush. Retrofit any toilet by installing a toilet dam or simply submerge a full plastic water bottle or two in the tank to replace the water volume.
9. **Choose natural personal care products and cosmetics.** Opt for pure products made with pronounceable, plant-based ingredients. Avoid petroleum-based chemicals, synthetic ingredients such as paraben preservatives, and synthetic fragrances and colors. Avoid deodorants that contain aluminum. Select organic, non-chlorine bleached feminine products.
10. **Go for recycled, naturally bleached toilet paper, paper towels, and tissues.** Buy postconsumer recycled paper goods that are whitened with oxygen bleach.
11. **Bring in houseplants.** Plants improve the air in your home by producing clean, fresh oxygen and by absorbing carbon dioxide and chemicals such as formaldehyde and benzene.
12. **Go veggie one day a week.** A plant-based diet requires much less energy and water than a meat-based diet—and it's healthier for you. Meat is the least-energy-efficient food on the planet, requiring quantities of water and causing major pollution. Eating two to four pounds less meat a year will save as much water as not showering every day for a year!
13. **Install a water filter.** Enjoy safe water without the waste of plastic bottles. It is estimated that 40 million bottles are discarded *every day!*
14. **Change your thermostat.** During the cold months, lower your thermostat to at least 68 degrees during the day and 60 at night. Turning the heat down 5 to 10 degrees at night will save 5 to 10 percent on your heating bill. During the summer, set the thermostat at 78.

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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Dates to Remember



Earth Day 2025, Rutherford County:

Saturday, April 26, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Historic Downtown Square. Organizing sponsor: Middle Tennessee Electric. This year's celebration aims to educate and inspire the community to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and promote clean energy. The theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," highlights the importance of building a sustainable future and emphasizes the collective "power" of individuals and communities to make a positive impact. Recycle Rutherford is one of this year's sponsors.

Spring Meeting—Recycle Rutherford:

Monday, April 28, 7:00 p.m., Heritage Center, 225 W. College St. Program: Members of public works will participate in a forum responding to questions about solid waste. See page 1 for details.

Bring Your Coffee Bags to Earth Day

Deal with one of life's frustrations by bringing your clean and empty coffee bags to **Recycle Rutherford's booth, and we will be happy to take them for recycling.** These are the typical coffee bags made of multiple layers of paper, plastic, and foil that cannot be easily separated for recycling. There is no local opportunity to recycle them.



P.O. Box 1804
Murfreesboro, TN 37133-1804

2024-26 Officers and Board

The officers and board listed below were voted on at our annual meeting on April 22, 2024.

In general, officers and part of the board are elected in even years for two-year terms, and approximately half of the board is elected in uneven years, providing for staggered terms. Because of COVID interruptions, this schedule is somewhat off.

The officers are listed below with the board members, who are elected each April and serve staggered terms. The date indicates when the terms end. The board meets monthly via Zoom.

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

Board Members:

Cynthia Allen, 2026
Diane Parker 2026
Beth Spivey, 2026
Johnny Stewart, 2026

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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