

Halton is leading province in its recycling program

By MIKE BOYLE

Many Canadian Champion newspapers haven't completed their lives until they become Chicago Tribunes.

So do Toronto Star, Hamilton Spectator, Oakville Beaver and Georgetown Independent newspapers.

That's because all newspapers collected for recycling are being sent to a plant in Thorold, Ont., owned by The Chicago Tribune. Once there, the newspapers are de-inked, changed back to pulp and then mixed with new fibres to become newsprint once again.

In all, 1,140 tonnes of old newspapers were sent to the Thorold plant by Halton's Recycled Resources in November. That's nearly double the amount sent last year.

Halton's landfill problem and its accompanying weekly newspaper articles have been credited as helping the region-wide recycling project become a leader in North America.

Gwen Discepolo, who along with her husband George own and operate the recycling company, says Halton residents should be proud of their commitment to recycling.

Halton residents have remained steadfast in their contributions to the Blue Boxes, those recycling containers put out weekly with the trash. Everything intended for the boxes lives again, saving it from a landfill site.

Milton was the first community in Halton to be fitted with the boxes. Oakville and Burlington followed this year and in January Halton Hills will join its southern neighbours.

To accommodate the massive volume increases, the company recently moved to a building in Oakville, five times the size its previous location. And the results are encouraging.

In November 1987, 60 tonnes of glass and 20 tons of tin was collected. Those numbers have grown to 175 tonnes of glass and 90 tonnes of tin. Mrs. Discepolo estimates the recyclers get about half of those materials disposed of in Halton.

It appears the novelty of the Blue Boxes isn't wearing off.

"It's a very handy system for all of us to use," she says. "Halton's doing very well. It's comparable if not ahead of other municipalities. Some areas experienced a drop-off after the first month. We haven't and if anything, it's increasing."

Halton residents are determined to recycle almost anything, she said, including some materials which can't be recycled. Each day, a couple of dozen coathangers find their way to the facility in Oakville. They clog up the machines and create "havoc. They can't be recycled."

"Coathangers are a real problem. They jam the machine. But, we've also got fuse boxes and a little while ago we got two toilet seats in one week."

"The little baby food jars are getting jammed in the tins as well. If people could separate them, it would be a big help."

She says the rule of thumb for



Photo by JOHN WARREN

Gwen Discepolo shows some of the recycled goods at her company's plant in Oakville. The new facility, now 50,000 square feet, handles the recycling programs of all area municipalities.

recyclable containers is beverage and food containers made of glass, tin or aluminum, which are round and 48 ounces or less. Larger containers can be taken to regional transfer stations.

The Chicago Tribune owns Quebec-Ontario Paper in Thorold. The company recently purchased a multi-million-dollar de-inking machine. She says the company set up operations in Ontario because the province is a leader in North America. Hence, a ready supply of recyclable newspapers is always available.

About 10 years ago, newspapers made with recycled material used only 5 per cent recycled fibres. Now, better-quality inks and machines

have permitted the ratio to be increased to almost half and half, lowering the need for new pulp.

Tin cans are separated in Oakville into aluminum and steel. The tin is sent to Hamilton where the tin is removed by Metal Recovery Industries and sent in small cubes to Doasco. The aluminum is made into cubes at Oakville and sent to a variety of aluminium companies.

All glass is sorted in Oakville and sent to several glass companies, including Consumers Glass in Milton.

The Oakville company, which is moderately subsidized by Halton region, is becoming a major company. A total of 16 trucks are needed, each with a driver and picker. The pickers will be eliminated when one-

man trucks arrive later this year.

As well, about 16 employees work in the plant itself on shifts from 8 a.m. to midnight. Eight more employees are needed for administrative work.

So far, 60,000 Blue Boxes have been purchased to serve Oakville, Milton and Burlington. The local municipalities are responsible for purchasing them.

With 10 years in the business, Halton's Recycled Resources is a leader on the continent. It was the first such company to set up shop in

Ontario and as a result fields inquiries from other municipalities setting up their programs.

"We get a lot of calls," she admits. "We've had calls from the U.S., France, Bulgaria, and Taiwan. The Minister of the Environment for British Columbia came for a visit."

She said she doesn't view energy-from-waste plants as competition. In fact, she says "all these things work together."

"We have to look at the cradle to death of products. How many more lives is it going to have."



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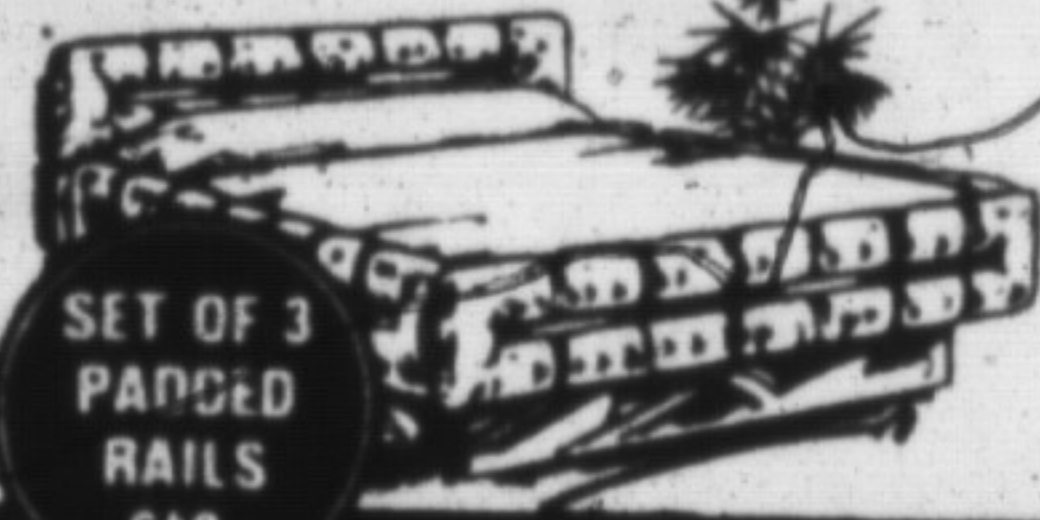
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