

## **RECYCLING: LAKE COUNTY RESIDENTS HAVE IT IN THE BAG WITH NEW PROGRAM**

### **Illinois Task Force brings together retailers, legislators, plastics industry, recyclers and environmental groups to develop voluntary plastic bag recycling pilot program for residents of Lake County**

July 20, 2009 - The Lake County Plastic Bag Recycling Task Force, a group formed by the Illinois General Assembly to develop a plastic bag recycling program, announced the beginning of a six-month pilot program that will enable Lake County residents to recycle plastic bags and wraps at local stores.

The Task Force solicited the ideas of retailers, legislators, recyclers and environmental groups to institute a program that was acceptable to retailers in a tough economy and that also would give Lake County residents an opportunity to recycle their plastic bags with ease. The Task Force solicited the assistance of the American Chemistry Council's Plastic Division and received technical assistance, sponsorship funding for recycling bins and signage, educational materials, an intern to monitor the program and promotional tools to enhance recycling efforts.

State Representative Kathy Ryg (D-Vernon Hills) noted that, "Due to a growing concern over the amount of recyclable product being thrown into our landfills, the General Assembly began looking for ways to encourage residents to increase the amount of material they recycle. The data we collect from this program will allow us to explore the challenges and successes experienced by retailers that recycle plastic bags." Fellow Task Force member and Lake County Board member Ann Maine agrees, "Ideally, we'd like consumers to use alternatives to plastic bags as much as possible. A growing number of people are bringing reusable bags with them. However, when there isn't an alternative, I think that finding a convenient way to recycle plastic bags will encourage consumers to use them wisely. This is a great opportunity for Lake County."

Although plastic bags make up less than one percent of the U.S. municipal waste stream, they have received much attention in the recycling debate. Many cities and states have mandated plastic bag recycling, including Chicago, New York, California and Rhode Island. "We are pleased to be part of this important effort to expand recycling opportunities for the residents of Lake County," said Steve Russell, Managing Director of the American Chemistry Council's Plastic Division. "Plastic bags and wraps are too valuable to waste and should be recycled. These materials can be given a new life as durable outdoor decking, fencing and railing, shopping carts, and, of course, new bags."

Pete Adrian, Recycling Coordinator for the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County and a Task Force member added that "SWALCO advocates the 4 R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rebuy (buying products made with recycled content). We want Lake County residents to actively strive to reduce the number of plastic bags that they carry away from the store by reusing their old bags or using durable reusable bags. We also want them to consistently return their old plastic bags and plastic wraps to participating stores to be recycled into new bags or other products."

Residents will be able to drop off their clean plastic bags and plastic wraps at the following participating stores: Butera Market, CVS/pharmacy, JC Penney, Jewel-Osco, Lowe's, PetSmart, Piggly Wiggly, Sunset Foods, and Walgreens.

The following plastics can be recycled at participating retail locations throughout Lake County: Grocery, newspaper, dry cleaning, bread and produce bags, toilet paper, napkin and paper towel wraps, furniture wrap, electronic wrap, plastic retail bags (hard plastic and string handles removed), zip-lock bags (hard closers removed), other sandwich or storage bags, cereal box liners, Tyvek (no glue, labels, other material), diaper wrap (packaging), plastic shipping envelopes (no labels), case wrap (e.g., snacks, water bottles), and all empty, clean and dry bags labeled #2 or #4.

For more information on the Task Force and the pilot program, please contact the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County at (847) 336-9340. To learn more about plastic bag recycling, please visit [www.plasticbagrecycling.org](http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org) and [www.swalco.org](http://www.swalco.org).