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Expanding recycling



Photo by Emily Ostertag- News Staff Writer

Solid waste is unloaded and leveled at the Buncombe County Waste Management Facility.

Visionary reduces contamination risks in Henderson County

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Regional Recycling Solutions, a pioneering project new to the U.S. recycling industry, may drastically shift the waste handling process in Western North Carolina and eventually across the country, environmentalists say.

"It's so harmful to take our waste and put it in the ground at the landfills. It can contaminate our water and cause big problems there," said **Ken Allison**, managing

partner of **Regional Recycling Solutions** and owner of **Hillside Nursery**.

According to the 2011 waste composition estimate for Buncombe County, only 18 percent of the residential waste stream is being recycled. These paper products, plastics, and glass totaled 145,182 tons — exactly 50 percent of overall waste.

Currently, Buncombe County has only two single-strain recycling centers that handle pre-separated materials, placed in

blue bags by residents and businesses, Allison said. This system commonly leads to the unchecked disposal of non-separated recycling in landfills.

"Our facility is a multi-stream recycling facility. We can take material from the haulers, and process it through our facility," Allison said. "We can get the recyclables out of it. It's a new twist and a new technique that in Europe is very, very common."

A business proposal three years ago, Allison said, got him

thinking about the American recycling industry in comparison to Europe's. A zero waste policy mandated in most of Europe banned the use of landfills, forcing many countries to invent alternative solutions in order to recycle 100 percent of their waste, he explained.

"We're bringing in German technology and German recycling solutions to Buncombe County," Allison said.

Along with this sorting facility, Allison said the 53-acre lot in

south Asheville will also encompass a visitor education center. Hoping to serve the community as a helpful information outlet, he said he wants the center to target school groups, young adults and residents of all ages. A change in mindset and attitude creates an understanding of the importance of recycling, and this should start at a young age, Allison explained.

Rick Burt, a volunteer for Mountain True and chair of the organization's south office recycling com-

mittee, said Regional Recycling Solutions will accept garbage from waste haulers around Western North Carolina, separate out the recycling and, hopefully, sell it for profit.

"In Henderson County we're recycling only about 10 percent of our waste — not very much — because a lot of people just don't want to bother or don't know about the system," Burt said. "You know, it's an educational

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Residents ousted in lieu of newcomers

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The Asheville Housing Authority plans to redevelop the Lee Walker Heights neighborhood. **Olufemi Lewis**, an activist and Lee Walker Heights resident, said neighbors in her community are being forced out, and this is creating problems. "What the problem is, is that you have individuals who have been over there, for multiple generations. Since the existence of

public housing," Lewis said, "they want to stay on the side of town they know."

Gentrification is both the favorable and unfavorable aspects of change, according to an article by the Department of Interior Architecture at UNC Greensboro. In public use it is often referred to as unwanted neighborhood change.

There are 18,102 renter-occupied housing units in Asheville, according to the U.S. Census Bureau website. As of 2013, the median rent is \$839. This is 8

percent higher than the state median of \$776.

Forty-seven percent of renters within the city are cost burdened, according to the City Government website. This means more than 30 percent of their income is spent on housing cost and utilities.

Rental rates have risen in recent years, and this is due to the city's attractiveness, said **Jeff Konz**, UNC Asheville dean of social sciences.

"Asheville is a very desirable place to live," Konz said, "and we're seeing that in second homes and

retirement, and that does drive up housing prices as a whole."

Ryan Wargen, an A-B Tech student, said he moved here for the culture in Asheville, although it was difficult to find housing.

Wargen said he did not have a lot of options, but would rather pay less for housing at the expense of quality.

Kristi DeCarlo, a seven-year Asheville resident, said she had similar difficulties. Originally DeCarlo lived in

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Music conference to feature insight into record industry

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A small-town musician runs away from home, hitches it to the big city, and becomes "discovered" for their talents. It's a cliché topic Hollywood never fails to capitalize on, but just how real are the chances that this could actually happen to someone?

This Saturday, a brand-new event is taking

place in UNC Asheville's Highsmith Union that will dissect the intricacies of what it takes to make it in the recording industry. The conference will feature panelists from different sections of the entertainment business, including producers, artists and marketing experts.

"Three of us believed in Asheville and the untapped music scene that we had there, so we

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