

Recycling Can Help

BY BILL FAVER

I read an article recently about how impossible it will ever be for the people of India and China to ever reach the standard of living of those of us in America and Europe. There just are not enough of the world's resources left to sustain our kind of living worldwide. A few years back we were using over half the world's resources to keep our lifestyle going. Maybe recycling can help lower our percentages and give others a chance.

Some of the shocking "trivia" about our mammoth waste problems were a part of the City of Wilmington's recycling promotion. Consider some of these items: The waste generated by Americans is enough to cover 1,000 football fields with buildings 30 stories high. Or it is enough to fill a convoy of 10 ton trucks that would reach more than halfway to the moon. Or producing one ton of paper from discarded waste paper uses half the energy, half the water, results in 74% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution, saves 17 pulp trees and creates twice as many jobs compared to producing a ton of paper from virgin pulp wood. Or think about every Sunday, more than 500,000 trees are used to produce the 88% of newspapers that are never recycled. We throw away enough glass bottles and jars to fill the 1,350 ft. twin towers of the New York World Trade Center every two weeks.

American consumers and industry throw away enough aluminum to rebuild our entire commercial air fleet every three months. Then we are told we throw away enough office paper annually to build a wall 12 feet high from New York to Los Angeles. We Americans go through 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour and only a small percentage is now recycled. Each year we dispose of 24 million tons of leaves and grass clippings which could be recycled into compost to help improve the soil. And the list goes on and on and on!

No wonder we run out of space in our landfills and waste disposal becomes one of our major problems. What can we do? Buy items in only those containers we can return or recycle and be sure they are reused and not sent to the landfill. We can put the pressure on our leaders to engage us in recycling efforts. We'll save our trees and other resources. We'll cut down on roadside litter. We'll save landfill space. And, we'll make it possible for some of the emerging countries to share in the world's resources.



FAVER

Florence Nightingales To The Rescue

Picture the county complex. A county employee goes into cardiac arrest. A witness at the courthouse becomes hysterical. A man waiting to take his driver's license exam suffers a stroke. An inmate attempts to hang himself at the county jail.

Who do you call for help? Chances are, you call the Brunswick County Health Department.

The complex is approximately 10 or more miles from the nearest emergency rescue unit (Town Creek) or hospital (Brunswick). Public health nurses in the department have, for many years, served as "first responders" to medical emergencies at the complex.

But, as Nancy Leggett, R.N., explained to members of the Brunswick County Board of Health recently, the experience is becoming increasingly frustrating.

The nurses are willing, but feel ill equipped and unprepared or trained to respond to such emergencies. However, they feel an ethical obligation to do so, and they respond faithfully, even though it means leaving the health clinic temporarily understaffed. And even though the state's Public Health Nursing office has advised that while they are partially protected by the "Good Samaritan" Act, that they may not be totally covered. Why? Because the argument could be made that the department knows its staff is regularly called on to respond to such emergencies and therefore should be prepared for them. But they're

Susan Usher



not.

For most of the nursing staff, it's been years since they've worked in a hospital emergency room or other acute care setting. Mrs. Leggett noted, and they feel less than confident of their skills in handling a true medical emergency. Their work primarily consists of counseling, health education and screening. Their "emergency trays" are equipped for clinic-type problems such as reactions to allergy shots. Instead of wound bandages, they stock Band-aids. There's no portable oxygen, no suction apparatus. Some of this equipment is expensive, some of it isn't. In any case, they don't have it and their budget this year is very tight, mainly because is less income this year from applications for septic tank permits.

Health board members were sympathetic with the problem, but the best advice they could offer was twofold: 1) Advise other county departments that the health department isn't a bandage dispensary; 2) Keep on responding to emergencies, but let the folks who call know the

skill limitations of those responding.

There was no talk of buying equipment what with this year's tight health department budget; perhaps that will be taken up in the next few weeks when the department talks about its 1990-91 budget request.

And the health board never seriously considered bringing to the county commissioners' attention what the nurses suggested as a solution to the first responder problem: establishing an employee health service that could function as a first responder on campus as well as offering preventive health care for the approximately 450 employees.

Health board members saw an immediate problem with the idea, one that might be easily surmountable or might not be. Unlike industrial plants that routinely have a health service on site, the Brunswick County Government Center is "wide open." Would the employee health service respond to all the situations that might arise involving

public visitors to the complex? Would the county's liability be greater than it is now? And what about county employees who work somewhere other than the center near Bolivia?

Good questions, but I think the health nurses' proposal deserves a closer look. While they're the logical group to respond for now, they have plenty of work to do right there at the clinic. Work for which they are well qualified and trained.

If not an employee health service, the county could, perhaps should be the better word, investigate holding first responder training—first aid, CPR, etc., for county employees (including some of the health department staff) on work time, and then allow those selected individuals to interrupt their own work to respond to emergencies at the government center. This would at least spread around the responsibility for response, instead of it falling entirely on one small segment of one department's staff.

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Space Available In 'Excellence'

Several spaces are still available in the *Investment in Excellence* seminar to be presented March 6, 7 and 8 at Brunswick Community College.

There is no charge for the self-improvement/motivational training program, which is financed by an N.C. Department of Community Colleges community service grant. Presenters will be Gloria Yount, staff development director for the Brunswick County Schools, and Susan Gibble, a physician assistant in Dr. Timothy Gibble's office.

The seminar will be held in the multipurpose room of the ALS building. Hours are 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. March 6, not the extended hours announced earlier, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 7 and 8, said Dr. Lee Langston, coordinator for the local Prescription for Excellence program.

Interested persons can register by contacting Langston at 754-8731.

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