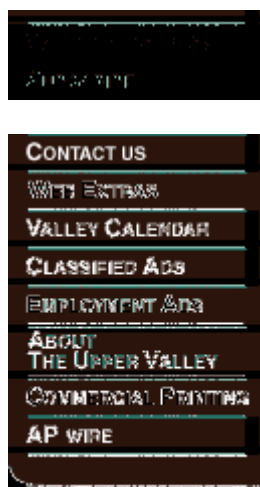


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More than 100 Upper Valley households contributed televisions, computers, printers, stereos and sewing machines yesterday at the Hartford Recycling Center. Yadjji Moussa of Gardner, Mass., an employee of ElectroniCycle, helps load a truck with the unwanted items. The event was sponsored by the Hanover Recycling Committee and the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District.

(Valley News -- Laura DeCapua)

Second Life for Computers, Etc.

By Erin Gooch

Valley News Correspondent

Hartford -- Yesterday's gusty winds and intermittent drizzle were no match for the energies of the Upper Valley's recycling community. Braving the elements, local organizers completed another successful television and computer recycling day at the Hartford Recycling Center.

Members of more than 115 households from Vermont and New Hampshire showed up between 9 a.m. and noon to pay to recycle old computers, monitors, keyboards, laptops and televisions. Toting everything from a Commodore PET -- a 1976 personal computer -- to monitors and keyboards that looked almost new, locals shelled out between \$5 and \$20 to make sure their goods did not end up as landfill fodder.

The event was a collaboration among Upper Valley interests and ElectroniCycle, a Massachusetts-based recycling company. Robin Ingenthron, ElectroniCycle's vice president, worked with John Fay, program director for the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District, to bring the project to the area.

"John Fay is one of our favorite business people, and response here is always terrific," Ingenthron said yesterday.

For Ingenthron, ensuring that electronic hardware doesn't end up in landfills is only the beginning of the process.

"Recycling creates 100 times more jobs per ton than putting items in a landfill, and repair creates 100 times more jobs than recycling," he said. Massachusetts recently funded a job-training grant for ElectroniCycle employees, who begin by moving computers and progress through parts sorting and into job training with master technicians.

ElectroniCycle collects electronic goods, transports them to its Gardner, Mass., facility, and sorts them. Company technicians service the repairable goods; unfixable items are stripped down to their basic components. Repaired equipment is sold to charitable organizations such as Goodwill Industries, which resell them in their thrift stores.

Components from nonrepairable goods travel the world. Leaded glass from computer monitors is recycled in the United States and sold to Panasonic, which uses 10 percent post-consumer glass in its products. Most plastics go to Canada, and such processed materials as copper and aluminum head to Asia.

ElectroniCycle's commitment to waste management is multi-tiered, Ingenthron said: The process reduces the amount of waste that goes into landfills, creates more job opportunities than disposal and recycles raw materials, reducing the demand for new metal and plastic. The environmental toll of large-scale mining for metals is of great concern, he said.

Loading computers into a large truck yesterday, Ingenthron said Americans are benefiting from federal mining subsidies that "make these things so cheap you can throw them away." According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the hard-rock mining techniques used to extract copper and lead -- both common elements in computer and television manufacturing -- produced 3.4 billion pounds of toxic pollutants in 2000.

Upper Valley residents are familiar with the potential dangers of hard-rock metals mining, with Strafford's Elizabeth Mine and the Ely Copper Mine both qualifying as EPA Superfund sites. Judging from yesterday's turnout, local residents take those dangers seriously.

In a telephone interview on Friday, Fay credited the community's environmental consciousness with the success of previous computer recycling

efforts. “Throw it in a landfill? That doesn’t seem right,” he said.

Building on the success of past efforts, Fay said he wanted “to involve both sides of the (Connecticut) River.” Working with the Hanover Recycling Committee, which donated \$150 to cover advertising costs, Fay and local volunteers publicized the event in fliers and in the newspaper.

Yesterday, committee members Carol Edwards, Augusta Prince and Larry Litten collected fees and directed traffic as residents came from as far away as Croydon, Vershire and Tunbridge.

Jim Heidenreich and his daughter, Lara, traveled from Topsham to recycle five televisions, a computer and a VCR. Heidenreich learned of the collection through a flier posted in Hanover’s P&C supermarket. His impressive collection of nonfunctioning televisions was the product of his son’s desire to save the family some money, but he didn’t mind paying \$60 to unload his goods.

Neither did Don Singer of Hartland, who said he was “looking for a place to recycle, not dump” his unneeded gear.

Singer he had been “hoping to find a place to get rid of (a computer and monitor) for a while, and this seemed like a good place to do it.”

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