

# OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE COUNTY OF WILL

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## **Will County Environmental Programs On The Move**

### **October 2008 Column - By Will County Executive Larry Walsh**

There are many things to be proud of in Will County – even as we face some very difficult times. One of the areas where we've seen great success is through our environmental programs. The county's Land Use Department's Waste Services Division has worked hard to insure our environmental priorities are carried out and recycling programs established.

Last year, we formed a number of partnerships throughout Will County that helped to create permanent sites for residential electronics recycling. With the assistance of our recycling specialist, Marta Keane, the Village of Bolingbrook, Channahon and Troy Townships and the Village of Beecher and Washington Township now offer locations for residents to drop off electronic items. These recycling drop-off centers will accept anything with a computer chip and will help curb the estimated 20-50 million tons of electronic waste that is generated on an annual basis. Because of this great collaborative effort in Will County, electronics that are known to contain hazardous materials such as mercury and lead will be recycled instead of polluting our landfills.

This year Keane took our recycling efforts one-step further by working to establish partnerships for the Will County Medication Take-Back Program. Each year it is estimated that over 4,600 tons of pharmaceuticals and personal care products enter the waste stream. Studies have found that many pharmaceuticals are surviving water treatment facilities and making their way into drinking water. With this potential hazard, the EPA has asked that we not flush unwanted medications down the drain – but to utilize pharmacies where take back programs are in effect.

Again, Will County is fortunate to have established good partnerships in the interest of our environment. Now we can get rid of medical items such as expired or unwanted prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, medicated ointments, medicated shampoos, liquids containing medications, prescription

inhalers, over-the-counter inhalers, glass thermometers (containing mercury), and medical devices containing mercury such as blood pressure units, barometers, etc. However, DEA controlled substances, narcotic medications, illegal drugs, bio-hazardous materials, sharps / needles, radioactive materials and other household wastes are not accepted.

The newest site for our Medication Take Back Program is the Bolingbrook Pharmacy on Boughton Road. Other locations throughout the County include all Basinger's Pharmacies in Joliet and Doc's Drugs in Beecher, Braidwood, Monee, Peotone, and Wilmington.

Also, if you are in the neighborhood of the IKEA store in Bolingbrook on Nov. 15, stop by as they celebrate America Recycles Day 2008. Our very own Ms. Keane will be on-hand for a presentation and to answer questions about recycling. This is the third year in a row that IKEA has agreed to feature products available in their stores that are made from recycled material. Stop by to learn more about your "green options" that help to save energy, reduce greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide.

And finally, stop by our Waste Services Division website for more information on the recycling and the environment to [www.willcountylanduse.com/WasteServ/news](http://www.willcountylanduse.com/WasteServ/news). There is a wealth of information for residents and businesses and a calendar of recycling events throughout the year including collections for household hazardous waste, books, tires, shoes and more.

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