

## FOCUS ON

### Solid Waste and Recycling Division: Keeping Gwinnett clean and green

- November 1, 2014

Imagine a future where everyday materials have become scarce. Because of this shortage, the simplest things like plastic water bottles, books, and clothing will be too expensive. Thankfully, our **Solid Waste and Recovered Materials Division** is here to help us conserve these resources for future generations and keep our environment clean.

The Solid Waste and Recovered Materials group manages contracts with five residential service providers and non-exclusive franchise agreements with 18 authorized commercial, construction, and demolition waste-service providers. The mission is to ensure the delivery of an integrated, cost-effective, and environmentally sound solid waste management system, and to provide sustainable community programs and policies throughout Gwinnett County.



*Events such as America Recycles Day allow residents to recycle items that would otherwise end up in landfills*

The division accomplishes the first part of this mission by ensuring that haulers provide consistent pickup and disposal services. A staff of seven agents responds to homeowner inquiries and administers billing to residents on tax bills. Even with a staff this lean, the division fielded an impressive 23,008 customer calls in 2013. They also consistently maintain a 100 percent customer satisfaction rating. These team members provide excellent customer service while being knowledgeable about the solid waste plan and the discounts offered to seniors. A dedicated line to a bilingual agent is also available for Spanish-speaking customers.



*Residents have recycled more than 100,000 tons of material since July 2010*

The second part of the division's mission is accomplished by the numerous programs and outreach efforts that take place each year. The division hosts two major recycling events annually. In spring, there is an Earth Day celebration and every November, the division hosts an *America Recycles Day* event. Both events are held at Coolray Field, home of the Gwinnett Braves, and feature kids' activities, paint, electronics, tire, and toner cartridge recycling. These events provide a great service for environmentally conscious residents who need to clear their homes of clutter during spring cleaning and preparation for the holiday season. This year's *America Recycles Day* event will be held Saturday, November 22 from 9:00am to noon.

Other outreach efforts include publications such as *One Person's Trash* and monthly articles in *Kidsville News*. Solid waste staff also visit summer camps to teach children about the importance of recycling and ways to repurpose old objects so that they stay out of landfills. Thanks to the hard work of the solid waste staff and the great participation by Gwinnett residents, more than 100,000 tons of paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum, steel, and plastic have been recycled since July 2010.

The division won two national awards in 2013 from the National Association of Counties. One recognized efforts to encourage recycling by Hispanic residents, while the other honored the call center, where operators access property data while exchanging information with residents and the five private haulers.

For more information about the Solid Waste and Recovered Materials Division, visit [www.sustainablegwinnett.com](http://www.sustainablegwinnett.com).