

RECYCLING FACTS FROM MISSOURI RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

- According to a 2005 Truman School of Journalism study, Missouri's recycling industry:
 - Employs 28,026 workers.
 - Produces annual sales of \$5,122,436,000.
 - Produces an annual payroll of \$707,307,000.

- A 2007 EPA study indicates that the recycling industry employs 1.1 million people in the United States.

- **Missourians generate 6.15 pounds of waste daily, which is 37 percent above the national average of 4.5 pounds.**

- As recycling business and recycled product manufacturers are established, a dynamic industry grows, money is invested in our communities and Missourians find jobs while protecting our natural resources. Over \$70 million dollars in Missouri landfill tipping fees have been distributed to Missouri's solid waste management districts to further recycling efforts and achieve waste reduction goals. Missouri's economy and blue collar workforce have benefited from this investment.

- According to the Missouri Department of Natural Resource's 2006-2007 Waste Composition Study, **nearly 45% of the municipal solid waste deposited in Missouri landfills could be recycled**, including metals, paper, plastics and glass. The study estimated that more than 1.9 million tons of recyclable materials were disposed of in Missouri landfills each year. If recycled, the potential economic value of the materials as commodities would have been approximately \$208 million dollars. This is equal to nearly 28 billion BTUs of energy that could have been saved, equivalent to the annual amount of energy used by 262,000 houses.

- **We encourage stores to carry more items with recycled content.** Historically, recycled products once cost more for some items but that is no longer true for many common products. Now most recycled content products are priced competitively with their non-recycled counterparts. In fact, some recycled products are less expensive. Buying recycled products for our home, work, schools is one way that we can help the environment. Each time we buy recycled, we create additional demand for products that require more of the secondary materials collected in our local recycling programs. "*Closing the Loop*" is a very important part of the recycling process – and one that is good for both our environment and our economy.

- In 2007, 54 billion cans were recycled in the U.S., **saving energy equivalent to 15 million barrels of crude oil.**

- **Landfills are the second largest contributors of methane**, a greenhouse gas 21 times as potent as carbon dioxide, to our atmosphere. Under the Clean Air Act, landfills with a million cubic yards of waste in place have to design and implement a gas collection scheme to capture and either flare or use the collected methane. EPA created the *Landfill Methane Outreach Program* (LMOP) to work with landfill owners and operators of all sizes to assess their potential for gas collection and utilization, to assist them to find firms that will assist with the development of the resource, and to recognize those facilities that follow through and collect their methane. In Missouri, LMOP has identified 18 candidate landfills and 7 that have gas collection systems including Fred Weber landfill in St. Louis.

(compiled by Gale Thackrey, Justice coordinator for the *Franciscan Sisters of Mary*)