



[Visit Our Website](http://willcountygreen.com)

Make everyday Earth Day - Green your Choices - Save Resources - Be Happy

## Green Gift Suggestions & More

'Tis the season to be giving gifts and the best time to keep the environmental impact of those gifts in mind. In addition, with the lighting and festivities, there are plenty of opportunities to make your own home or office party greener. If that isn't enough, we are also reminding you of some ongoing recycling and waste reduction options available, with a few tips on what can and cannot be recycled when it comes to everyday seasonal items from greeting cards to gift wrap! We wish you the best throughout this holiday season and the new year!

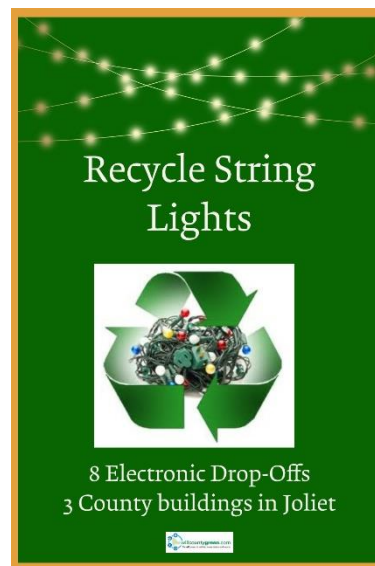
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## String Light Recycling

Putting up holiday decorations and discovering burned-out string lights is frustrating. Rather than dispose of them with the garbage, bring them to a collection site for recycling. String lights have become a decorative option throughout the year, and Will County's eight electronics collection sites accept them year-round. At this time of year, when many more residents are decorating, the County offers three additional locations in Joliet to increase convenience. Collection carts have been set up inside the entrances at:

- County Office Building
- Land Use
- Sunny Hill Nursing Home

The County sites are available during each facility's business hours until Jan. 31.



December 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023  
County Office Building, 302 N. Chicago St  
8:30am - 4:30pm  
Land Use, 58 E. Clinton St.  
8:30am - 4:30pm

Address and hours of the eight year-round electronics collection sites offered by partnering communities can be found by clicking this link to our [website](#).

Sunny Hill Nursing Home, 421 Doris Ave.  
6:30am - 8:00pm

## Holiday Recycling is Complex

Please avoid purchasing business or personal greeting cards with foil lined envelopes. The foil lining is a contaminant to the paper and increases the cost of recycling, sometimes ruining a full batch of product. The same is true of metallic gift wrap and bows of all kinds. These must be reused or landfilled. Avoid all glitter products, they are harmful in many ways, besides contaminating recycling. Gifts wrapped in reusable bags are a double gift. Using a tag made from used wrapping paper or cut from a greeting card, even reused from previous holidays, works well and saves resources while being creative and fun.



NO metallic paper items can be recycled  
(No foil lined envelopes, no glittery wrap, no bows or ribbons)

## Energy Sources in Illinois

Illinois is the nation's fifth-largest electricity producer, and typically sends about one-fifth of the power it generates to other states over interstate transmission lines. We have a unique electricity generation mix, currently:

- 52.6% of the electricity generated comes from 6 nuclear plants
- 31.7% from coal-fired power plants
- 9.3% from natural gas plants
- 6% from renewable sources

Many of our coal powered plants have or are in the process of converting to natural gas. More renewable sources of energy generation are being added each day. This is great news for the environment as we are switching from highly polluting sources of energy reliant on fossil fuels to cleaner



Homes and Businesses that are adding Solar are supporting the switch to renewable supply and decentralizing the grid, increasing the power grid's strength and resiliency.

sources and with enough to power a switch to electric vehicles.

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## Green Gifts mean Less Waste

Last month we mentioned gifts of services, tickets to events, and gift cards to favorite restaurants or retailers as ways to avoid items that may be unwanted or unappreciated. This month, we are sharing some alternatives that friends and family might try using, love and switch to using, reducing their environmental impact.

Toothpaste Tablets - [Best of 2022](#)  
Shampoo Bar - [Curly to Gray Options](#)  
Silicone Food Storage - [Bags or Containers](#)  
Beeswax Food Wrap - [Best of Beeswax](#)  
Set of Reusable Shopping Bags  
Set of Dishtowels and/or Cloth Napkins  
Refillable, Washable Beverage Bottle  
Compost Bin ([instructions on our website](#))  
Reusable, Washable Straws



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## Continuing Commercial Improvement

Keep an eye out for news on energy efficiency financing projects completed through Will County's C-PACE program since its establishment in 2020. A third project for new multifamily housing construction in Tinley Park is slated to receive financing for the building envelope, HVAC, lighting, and other energy- and water-saving measures. Previous C-PACE financing transactions for solar PV installations in Mokena and energy and water efficiency improvements in New Lenox have reduced initial project cost barriers for property owners and contributed to economic development in the County. Read more about [Will County's C-PACE program by clicking this link!](#)



C-PACE loans fund new and retrofit efficiency innovations

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## A Coffee Mug Clears the Driveway

With ice and snow on the horizon, it is time to remind your friends and family that salt damages our cars, our plants and can harm our waterways when it washes down the storm systems. The Conservation Foundation wants to help get the message out that a single coffee cup (12 ounces) is enough to melt ice on 500 sq ft. Be sure to shovel first and when it drops below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, salt becomes ineffective so more only hurts the environment.



[SaltSmart.org](http://SaltSmart.org)

## Improving Highway Interchanges

Confusing at first glance, studies have found the divergent diamond design for highway entrances are actually easy to use, reduce accidents, use less right-of-way than traditional designs and shorter cross walks for pedestrians. Basically, forcing drivers to switch sides, is better for the environment and safer for all concerned. Will County just had a divergent diamond completed at I-55 and Weber, with another two under construction at I-55 and Rt. 59; and at I-80 and Houbolt. All of these include enhancements for alternative transportation in the form of bicycles.



Photo from Divergent Diamond at Rt 59 & I-88

## Party Hearty in Green Ways

Last month we offered information on meal planning to reduce food waste. This month, we are offering tips on decorating for reuse and recycling. String lights are festive and can be recycled if they fail to work. Paper and paperboard hats, centerpieces may be recyclable if they cannot be saved for reuse. No glitter or foil or feathers are acceptable. If you can decorate with natural items, such as pine cones and branches, these can be composted in the back yard afterwards. Some people place leftover grease and bird seed on them to feed the birds. The same can be done with a natural Christmas Tree. If your hauler takes it for chipping, be sure to



Thrift stores often offer inexpensive decorations, spare plates, utensils and even some gift items

take all decorations off the tree before placing it at the curb. If you must purchase disposable plates, please opt for paper that can be composted or breaks down when taken with garbage to the landfill.

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## Shower Wisely - Prevent Dry Skin

WaterSense labeled showerheads make it easy to reduce water use while enhancing your shower experience. By using less water while showering, less energy is needed to pump, treat, and heat water, which saves you money on your utility bills. Cutting the length of your shower time also saves water and energy and taking fewer showers per week also reduces dry skin. Winter is prime time for dry skin due to our heating systems and natural outside conditions. Setting your shower to warm, instead of hot and cutting out one or two each week may increase your personal comfort and help the environment.



Get the power you enjoy, in the manner you prefer, with a water saving showerhead

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## Lower the Thermostat for Sleep

Studies prove that people sleep better when the thermostat is set between 60 to 67 degrees Fahrenheit. A programmable thermostat makes it easy to wake up to a warm room in the morning but have a cooler one at bedtime, automatically. Never open a window to cool a room. If you must, use a fan to cool your skin and consider a few bed coverings to offer different levels of comfort from sheets to light weight blankets and quilts. Increase your comfort while saving energy and cutting utility costs.



Darker and Cooler improves sleep

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## Solar for All

The Illinois Solar for All program is driven by the goal to increase participation in solar energy projects serving income-eligible and environmental justice communities. They take applications for incentives that are made available for residential properties, properties that house non-profits and public facilities, and community solar projects. The program just opened a residential offering and are accepting applications. Please [learn more](#) about their variety of programs and vetted vendors.



## EV Corridors Coming Together

Over the past several years the State of Illinois and the federal government have enacted legislation to move Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure forward to address the greenhouse gases generated by vehicular and truck traffic. Illinois is considered a leader with a recently approved system of EV charging corridors that are currently being built to provide Level 2 and Level 3 charging stations at rest stops and just off the highway at private and public areas with easy access to drivers. This network not only serves Illinois residents and businesses but connects with national highway systems, ensuring commerce and travel will be competitive with gasoline and diesel fueling access across the United States.



[Illinois Website on EV Infrastructure](#)

## School Air Quality & Energy

The USGBC's Green Schools Program has a [recording of a webinar](#) on the benefits of energy efficiency and indoor air quality assessments featuring a school district and SEDAC expert discussing their experiences providing and receiving building assessments. Discover how an energy and/or indoor air quality assessment can help your school plan to make use of available

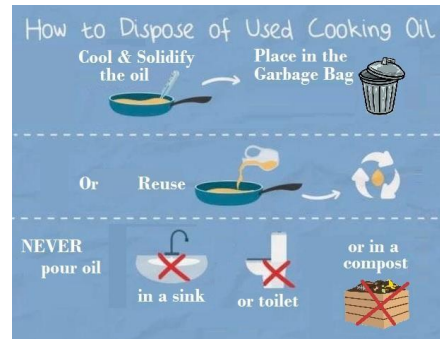


funding, connect you with new technologies and best practices, and help you plot a path forward to a more sustainable future! Contact SEDAC for more information if you are interested in scheduling an assessment for your school district.

U.S. Green Building Council's  
Center for Green Schools  
and  
SEDAC School Facility Assessment webinar

## Facebook: Used Cooking Oil?

Many of us generate used cooking oil in our homes. Some deep fry, some just pan fry, but whenever we use oil, we need to know to NEVER pour the leftovers into a sink, toilet or compost pile. Used cooking oil can be saved and used again a few times. Some say bacon grease is the tastiest used oil. It can be stored in a glass jar on the counter or in the fridge, but regardless if you are storing it or discarding it, please solidify it. If solidifying it for outdoor bird use, consider adding flour or birdseed to vegetable oil leftovers. If sending to the landfill, you may choose to solidify with sawdust or kitty litter. Pure used oil can also be taken to the regional Household Hazardous Waste site in Naperville or to one of the County's one-day collection events for recycling.



After generating used cooking oil:  
Pour the liquid in something it won't melt  
Let it cool and decide if you want to reuse it  
If discarding, know it can be placed in the garbage  
or recycled at a  
Household Hazardous Waste Collection

## Upcoming Events

December 1-January 31: String Light Collection  
December 2: World Pollution Prevention Day  
December 4: Wildlife Conservation Day  
December 5: World Soil Day  
December 21: Winter Solstice  
December 26: Offices closed for Christmas  
January 2: Offices closed for New Year's Day  
January 5: National Bird Day  
February 2: World Wetlands Day  
February 18: Great Backyard Bird Count



Water Conservation



Search for recycling and disposal options on [willcountygreen.com](http://willcountygreen.com)



Geothermal Energy



Green Business Star



School Earth Flag



Take a Virtual Tour



Solar Energy



Info on Electric Vehicles



Wind Energy



Sustainable Infrastructure



Donate Items



Composting





Electronics Drop-Off



Household Hazardous  
Waste Drop-Offs



Medication Take-Back

**WillCountyGreen.com**

A website of Will County  
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**Newsletter**

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