

The Patriot Ledger

Local recycling success inspires state campaign: Program with South Shore roots begins today

By Karen Goulart, The Patriot Ledger
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HINGHAM - A recycling project that got its start on the South Shore is now going statewide.

Today, the 10th annual America Recycles Day, will see the launch of the Mass Recycles Paper! campaign at an event in Springfield.

The campaign, headed by South Shore Recycling Cooperative executive director Claire Sullivan, will challenge Massachusetts residents and businesses to recycle a million tons of paper a year more than the 1.2 million tons already being recycled.

In reaching the goal, Massachusetts towns collectively could save about \$150 million a year.

As of last week, 128 municipalities - including Braintree, Duxbury, Halifax, Hingham, Norwell, Randolph, Scituate, Weymouth and Whitman - have passed resolutions, committing to the campaign goals.

In spring 2006, the South Shore Recycling Cooperative instituted a pilot project to encourage its 14 member towns to recycle paper.

It drew attention by highlighting the fact that separating paper saves cash - not just trees.

"That was the thrust of the campaign, trying to get people to pay attention to what they throw in the trash because it costs them money," Sullivan said. "We targeted paper because it's the single largest (recyclable item), easiest to collect and has the most value."

A study paid for with a state Department of Environmental Protection grant showed towns in the cooperative spent more than \$2.6 million to dispose of paper and cardboard in 2005.

Had the paper been recycled, the towns could have avoided disposal costs and generated revenue.

Paper processors pay municipalities between \$7.50 per ton and \$35 per ton for waste paper, Sullivan said.

The amount of trash tossed by residents in the member towns dropped about 5 percent between 2005 and 2006 while overall recycling went up 7 percent, with Hingham, Scituate and Whitman showing the most improvement.

"There's still a long way to go," Sullivan said, referring to the success of the paper campaign on the South Shore. "There is still a lot of paper going in the trash, but we're moving in the right direction."
