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Waste Management of Alameda County Launches Recycle-By-Mail Program for Cell Phones, Inkjet Cartridges

Residential Customers Enjoy New Pilot Program That Combines Convenience And Recycling

August 29, 2007 – Albany, CA – Residential customers of Waste Management of Alameda County (WMAC) in the City of Albany can now recycle old cell phones and used inkjet printer cartridges using postage-paid mail-back bags from the WMAC's "Recycle By Mail" program.

Beginning this week, residents in Albany will be able to take part in a new pilot program that seeks to curtail the improper disposal of household universal waste like cell phone and printer ink cartridges. As part of the program, WMAC will mail Recycle-By-Mail bags will be residential customers. After those bags are used, additional bags may be picked up at City Hall. Residents with old cell phones or empty inkjet cartridges can simply put them in the bag, seal it and drop it into any U.S. Postal Service mailbox or give it to their mail carrier.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for our customers to recycle items that have become a major part of our waste stream," said David Tucker, Municipal Affairs Manager for Waste Management of Alameda County. "Waste Management is implementing the Recycle-By-Mail program company-wide to help recycle the 100 million old cell phones and 300 million used inkjet cartridges that industry experts estimate go into our waste stream each year. We hope the convenience of this free program will encourage customers to do their part in keeping cell phones and inkjet cartridges out of the trash."

Statistics show there is great demand for this type of program. There are more than 219 million cell phone users in the United States, according to the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association. Additionally, research by INFORM concluded that as of 2005, 500 million cell phones in the U.S. were estimated to be stockpiled by consumers waiting for recycling. INFORM also found that in a single year, consumers replaces 100 million cell phones which equates to some 50,000 tons.

Inkjet cartridges are also frequently replaced. Studies show that over the life of an inkjet printer, the average user may replace 50 or more inkjet cartridges. Many of the components that go into making an inkjet cartridge can be recycled, such as the plastic casing. Remanufactured cartridges save resources by reusing components instead of disposing of them after a single use.

"As technology of all kinds rapidly develops, we are glad that the same is true for recycling technology and techniques," said Tucker. "Waste Management is North America's largest recycler, so we are proud to be a leader in another recycling program that helps us maintain our commitment."

Waste Management is the leading provider of comprehensive waste management services in North America. Our subsidiaries provide collection, transfer, recycling and resource recovery, and disposal services. We are also a leading developer, operator and owner of waste-to-energy and landfill gas-to-energy facilities in the United States. Our customers include residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers throughout North America.

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