

## **News Release**

### **For Immediate Release**

For more information contact:

George Hayducsko  
Dunn County Solid Waste Director  
390 Red Cedar St., Suite C  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
(715) 232-4017

## **Recycling symbols don't always mean recyclable**

Seeing recycling symbols on products these days is very common. However, a recycling symbol does not always mean that the material is recyclable. Recycling symbols were actually developed for manufacturers rather than the general public; they were established for manufacturers to identify the types of materials and resins used in a product which helps in the recycling/sorting process.

Because of this, identifying recyclable materials can be confusing, especially in regard to #1 (PET) and #2 (HDPE) plastics. Dunn County accepts these materials, but only certain types of #1 or #2 plastics. Depending on the item, the manufacturing process of #1 and #2 plastics can differ, possibly requiring additives which change the composition of the plastic's resin, rendering it a hybrid. Since hybrid plastic melts at a different temperature than pure resin, it becomes a contaminant. Also, some of these ingredients can affect drying times, processing equipment and available markets. Not every plastic can be recycled.

### **Identifying recyclable #1 and #2 plastics**

The easiest way to know which #1 or #2 plastics Dunn County accepts is to "check the neck"; a container's neck needs to be smaller than its body to be recyclable. Small neck #1 or #2 plastics, typically in the shape of a bottle (such as pop bottles or milk jugs) are made through a blow mold process and can be recycled. Wide mouth #1 or #2 containers are made by injection molding requiring a hybrid resin, making them non-recyclable. Typically non-recyclable #1 and #2 plastics include berry containers, lids, ice cream buckets, plastic cups, and more.

### **Other plastics**

As for other plastics, simply banning a material from the waste stream or collecting material at curbside does not mean it will be recycled. In order for items to be collected for recycling, a market must exist that will accept the materials and actually use them to create a saleable product. The collected materials must be in demand and a sufficient, steady supply of good quality material must be provided to meet the manufacturer's production needs. Currently #1 and #2 bottles and jugs are the only plastics (other than plastic film and bags) that meet these criteria for Dunn County. Dunn County will continue to search for stable, long term markets for other plastic containers and will collect these items when it can be done in an environmentally and economically responsible manner.

# # #

Caption: Small neck #1 or #2 plastics in the shape of a bottle are recyclable in Dunn County.