


Portland area slipping in its waste prevention efforts

Created on Wednesday, 16 December 2015 18:06 | Written by [Steve Law](#) | 

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The Portland area put more of its trash into the landfill last year, the first time that went up in nearly a decade.

A new report by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality found that nearly 60 percent of the Portland area's trash was recycled, composted or converted into energy in 2014. While that was tops in Oregon, it was lower than the tri-county area's 63 percent waste recovery rate in 2013.

It was the same story statewide.

Per person, Oregonians generated 1,298 pounds of trash that went into landfills in 2014, up 4.4 percent from the prior year, according to DEQ.

The leading culprits, according to Metro, are lower waste-recovery rates for paper, wood and scrap metal.

Metro figures reduced paper recycling may be due to lower amounts of junk mail and magazine subscriptions, and the shrinking size and circulation of The Oregonian newspaper. The newspaper shifted from a daily print schedule in late 2013 to four days a week, and then switched to a smaller tabloid format in April 2014.

The reduction in reuse of wood and metals is harder to explain, says Matt Korot, Metro's resource conservation and recovery program manager.

"Scrap metal and wood waste are associated primarily with the construction and industrial sectors," Korot says. And construction, if anything, was on the rise last year. "We'll be working closely with DEQ to figure out why these rates went down," Korot says.

The amount of wood waste going into landfills likely will be up again in 2015 once DEQ compiles that data. That's because the WestRock paper mill in Newberg closed earlier this year. It converted about 85 percent of the region's wood waste into electricity, and no other facility has emerged to process that wood waste.

Oregon's efforts to recycle and reuse waste, and use it to produce green energy, saved the equivalent of 2.7 percent of all the energy expended in the state in 2014.

That cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2.9 million metric tons of carbon dioxide or its equivalent — 4.5 percent of all the state's emissions. That's equivalent to taking 660,000 passenger cars off the road.

Statewide, Oregonians recovered 2.3 million tons of waste in 2014. Another 2.6 million were disposed of in landfills.

Across the state, plastics recycling increased by 10 percent last year. Recycling companies found new markets for used plastics after China's 2013 crackdown on accepting "dirty" plastic from overseas.

To read DEQ's full report, entitled 2014 Oregon Material Recovery

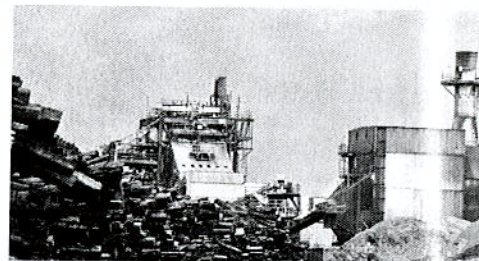
and Waste Generation Rates: www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/docs/sw/2014MRWGrateReport.pdf

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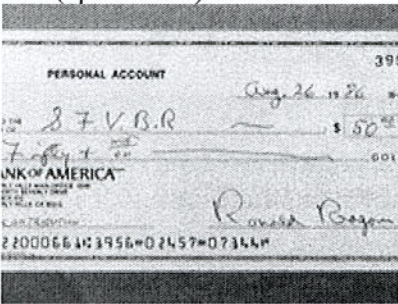


PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP: GARY ALLEN - WestRock Co. announced plans to shutter the former SP Fiber mill in Newberg. As a result, scrap wood will no longer be accepted at the mill for reuse.

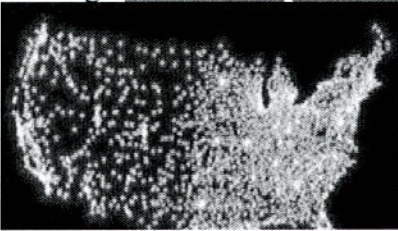
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From the Portland Business Journal:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/portland/blog/sbo/2015/11/mill-closure-means-60-000-tons-of-portland-wood.html>

Mill closure means 60,000 tons of Portland wood waste is headed for the landfill

Nov 17, 2015, 9:18am PST

At least 60,000 tons of wood waste collected at Metro facilities that was formerly burned as biomass is expected to be sent to area landfills.

With news of the closure of a Newberg paper mill that received more than a hundred thousand tons of Portland's salvaged timber last year, the Metro Council scrambled for alternatives.

That came in the form of suspending part of its wood product recovery requirements, allowing the waste wood to be disposed of in landfills. The code section in question allowed no more than 15 percent of



PAUULETHOHN

With a Newberg paper mill closing, Metro officials will need to find a new place to send greater Portland's scrap wood reclaimed from garbage facilities.

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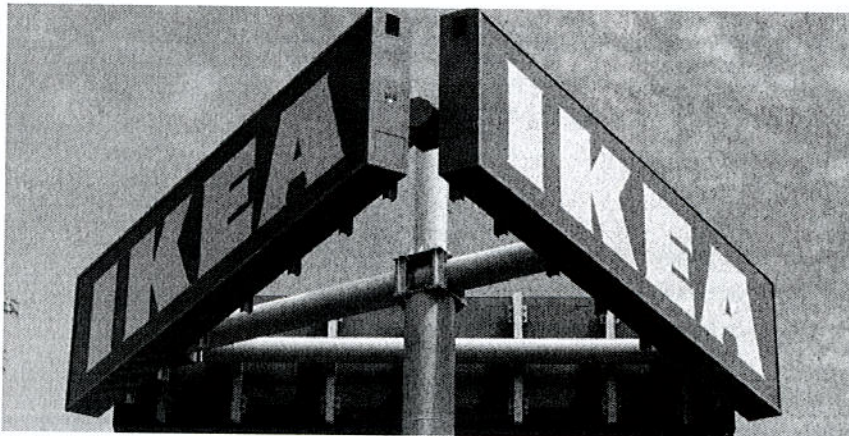


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Ikea's Minimum Wage Hike Was So Successful, It's Raising Wages Again

06/24/2015 12:01 am ET | Updated Jun 24, 2015

Dave Jamieson
Labor Reporter, The Huffington Post

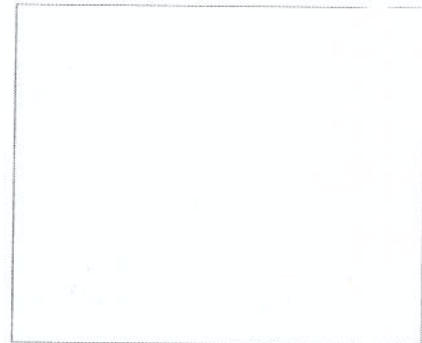


ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON -- A year after it first announced a major minimum wage hike in its U.S. stores, Ikea said Wednesday that it plans to implement another nationwide raise to its wage floor next year, bringing the average store's starting pay to nearly \$12 per hour.

Under the system that the ready-to-assemble furniture maker first established in January, the starting wage for any given store in the U.S. reflects the cost of living in that particular area as determined by the MIT Living Wage Calculator, which takes into account the local cost of rent, food, transportation and the like. After the second round of raises, which is slated for this coming January, all of the company's U.S. stores will be paying at least \$10 per hour, and the average minimum wage across all locations will be \$11.87 -- a 10.3 percent increase over the previous year, according to the company.

Rob Olson, chief financial officer for Ikea U.S., told The Huffington Post that the company is already reaping dividends from its decision to hike the wage floor and to factor in the local cost of living in doing so.



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