

E-Cycles expansion



Joice Johnson, Statesman Journal 10:17 p.m. PST January 10, 2015



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It has been about two weeks since the Oregon Electronics Recycle Program began accepting computer peripherals like mice and keyboards, and it's too early to say how much of an impact the expansion has had.

"Frankly we've been collecting that stuff all along," said Julie Jackson, Municipal Relations Manager for waste collection service Republic Services.

Jackson said they might have a better idea of the program's impact come spring.

However, the company does typically see a surge of materials come in right after the holidays because people get new things to replace the old.

"What we see like crazy in January is TVs," Jackson said.

On Saturday, the Salem-Keizer Recycling and Transfer Station saw a lot of people dropping off their recycled material, including various electronics. Jessica Guzman came to the location in a moving truck to drop off several items.

"Three TVs (and a stereo)," Guzman said. "It's nice because those things are heavy."

Previously she went to the transfer station, at 3250 Deer Park Drive SE, with electronics, but had to pay a fee.

E-Cycles is a product stewardship program in which manufacturers contribute to their product's end of life.

Essentially, they pay a small amount to cover the cost of processing the material, Jackson said.

E-Cycles is also a network of 270 collection sites and recyclers across the state that accept electronic devices like computers, monitors, televisions and, as of Jan. 1, mice and keyboards. It is administered through the Department of Environmental Quality.

Through the program, hazardous material is managed properly due to safe dismantling — a factor whose importance is highlighted by the fact that it's illegal to put computers and TVs in household waste pickup because they contain lead, cadmium and mercury.

Bailey Payne, Waste Reduction Coordinator for Marion County Public Works Environmental Services, said in an email to the Statesman Journal that Marion County's electronics recycling program has seen significant growth since it started in 2000. It recycles 1 million pounds annually at its two stations.

"It is important that people know that these old gadgets often contain dangerous materials. Also, it's virtually always best to recycle things or buy used when possible. Even better, people should try to upgrade things like computers rather than buy new," Payne said.

Reporter Tracy Loew contributed to this report.

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