



HOMES & GARDEN 2016

Spring cleaning? Check out Solid Waste Facility
p. 4

Ensuring a successful basement remodel
p. 5

Master Gardeners trained for their community
p. 9

Advertising INDEX

Arnold's.....	11
Babe's Blossoms.....	11
Basement Technologies of MN	6
Bergmann Interiors	11
Bussler Lawn Service	10
Custom Installations	8
First MN Bank	2
Fred & Cathy Werth.....	8
Fullerton Lumber - TBC	5
Glencoe Fleet Supply	8
Gutter Helmet	7
Holasek FLOWER POWER Garden Center	11
Kaczmarek Landscaping	8
Kahnke Brothers Tree Farm.....	2
McLeod County Household Hazardous Waste	2
McLeod Publishing, Inc.	4, 10
Midwest Machinery Co.	5
Mumford Sanitation.....	10
Neubarth Lawn Care & Landscaping	12
RDV Construction	10
Schauer & Sons Construction.....	8
Security Bank & Trust Co.	8
Statewide Gas Services	11
Sunesta Awnings & Outdoor Comfort.....	6

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The McLeod County Chronicle

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Spring cleaning? Check out Solid Waste Facility

McLeod County facility recycles goods, offers re-use items

By Lori Copley
Editor

Spring cleaning? Be sure to check out the McLeod County Solid Waste Facility to see if you can recycle some of your unwanted items.

And you might even be able to take some cleaning supplies or a little paint for touch-ups home.

The facility actually has three sections — the materials recovery facility (MRF) for collecting recyclable material; the Household Hazardous Waste Facility, which collects in such items as antifreeze, motor oil, pesticides and household cleaners; and the re-use, free-use center, which offers some items, such as left-over paint and household cleansers, to be re-used by others.

Sarah Young, solid waste coordinator, said there isn't much the facility doesn't take. It even collects old mattresses and infant and child car seats.

Items that are not accepted include explosives, unidentified material, compressed gases, pharmaceuticals, veterinary supplies and radioactive material.

Young said those who have questions regarding whether material will be accepted at the facility are welcome to call it at 1-800-335-0575.

"We have a resource list, so if we don't take it, we probably know someone who does," said Young.

As spring arrives and more people are cleaning out their homes and garages, the solid waste facility has expanded its hours to include Mondays. It is now open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Solid Waste Facility is located at 1065 Fifth Ave. S, Hutchinson.

Recycling

Although most communities in McLeod County have curbside recycling collection, and townships have collection sheds or bins, residents are welcome to bring their recyclable materials to the MRF.

Recyclable materials include glass, metal cans, plastic, mixed paper, and boxes.

Aluminum cans can be taken to the redemption center, where customers will be paid for their cans based on weight. The price paid is based on end markets for the products. As another option, those bringing their cans to the redemption center can designate their can dollars to a non-profit program participating in the nonprofit donation director.

HHW facility

All kinds of items are accepted at the household hazardous waste (HHW) facility, including latex and oil-based paints, insect repellents, adhesives, glues, mercury, patching cement, pool chemicals, batteries, automotive fluids, household solvents, varnish strippers, driveway sealers, tile adhesive, gasoline and kerosene, rust removers, cement sealers, waxes, pol-



Photo by Lori Copley

Workers sort recyclable material coming off a conveyor belt at the McLeod County Solid Waste Facility in Hutchinson. The facility collects recycling, household hazardous waste and problem materials, such as mattresses, tires, appliances, etc.

ishes, wood preservatives, weed killers, oven cleaners, stains and varnishes, ammonia, insecticides, and more.

Young said many of the items can be dropped off for free, but there are fees for some, such as cylinders, helium tanks, oil filters, LED bulbs, ballasts and fluorescent bulbs. Young said fees are collected on some of these items because the county has to pay to properly dispose of them.

"We do collect a fee to offset some of those costs," said Young.

Free use center

Some of the items brought to the hazardous waste facility get transferred to the Free Use Center.

Customers can get, for free, items such as paint, household cleansers, anti-freeze, stain, sealants and others.

The items are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. New this year is the number of items that can be taken on each trip. Each customer will be limited to three items.

"We just think this is more fair, because it gives more people a chance to use the center," said Young.

But she said staff will be somewhat flexible.

"For example, if someone needs four gallons of paint to paint their garage, we're going to allow them to take that fourth gallon," said Young.

Some products collected in the household hazardous waste facility are not taken the free use center, she added.

"Anything you would put on your skin, we won't put out in the free use center, because we can't verify that nothing was added to them," said

Young.

Examples of those products are skin-care products, shampoos and spray-on or lotion pesticides.

Special events

The Solid Waste Facility also schedules some special events throughout the year, including:

- Monday, April 22 — Earth Day open house from noon to 6 p.m. at the solid waste facility. There will be tours and refreshments.

- Saturday, May 21 — Household hazardous (HHW) waste and problem materials (appliances, tires, electronics, mattresses, box springs, etc.) collection at the solid waste facility.

- Monday, June 6 — HHW collection in Lester Prairie.

- Monday, June 20 — HHW collection in Silver Lake.

- Monday, July 11 — HHW collection in Glencoe.

- Wednesday, July 13 — Curbside HHW collection in the city of Glencoe and Glencoe Township (RSVPs needed).

- Wednesday, July 20 — Curbside HHW collection in the city of Plato and Helen Township (RSVPs needed).

- Monday, July 25 — HHW collection in Winsted.

- Wednesday, July 27 — Curbside problem materials collection in the city of Winsted and Winsted Township.

- Monday, Aug. 1 — Empty pesticide container collection at the solid waste facility.

- Wednesday, Aug. 3 — Curbside problem materials collection in the city of Stewart and Collins and Round Grove townships (RSVPs needed).

- Monday, Aug. 8 — Empty pesticide container collection at the solid waste facility.

- Wednesday, Aug. 10 — Curbside problem materials collection in Lynn and Hassen Valley townships.

- Monday, Aug. 15 — Pesticide container collection at the solid waste facility.

- Wednesday, Aug. 17 — Curbside HHW collection in Acoma and Hutchinson townships.

- Monday, Aug. 22 — Empty pesticide container collection at the solid waste facility.

- Wednesday, Aug. 24 — Curbside problem materials collection in the city of Brownton and Sumner and Penn townships (RSVPs needed).

- Monday, Aug. 29 — Empty pesticide container collection at the solid waste facility.

- Wednesday, Aug. 31 — Curbside problem materials collection in the city of Silver Lake and Hale Township.

- Monday, Sept. 12 — HHW collection in Brownton.

- Wednesday, Sept. 14 — Curbside problem materials collection in the city of Lester Prairie and Bergen Township.

- Monday, Sept. 26 — HHW collection in Stewart.

For more information, call the solid waste facility at 320-484-4319 or 1-800-335-0575, email mcleodsolidwaste@co.mcleod.mn.us, or visit www.co.mcleod.mn.us/solid-waste.

Ensuring a successful basement remodel

(MS) Americans continue to fuel remodeling spending across the country, driven by upward growth in real estate prices and the rising cost to trade up to a larger home. Basement renovations are expected to be a hot trend in 2016, as buyers look to maximize available living space rather than move, and as young buyers look to offset the cost of homeownership with potential income suites.

While finishing a basement can be a great alternative to moving -- especially if you love your neighborhood -- there are some challenges homeowners must be aware of when tackling below-grade living spaces. Choosing the right products is vital to the comfort, safety and function of your new living area. Look for products that help to maximize energy efficiency and protect against moisture, fire and noise.

Here are the top points to consider to ensure a successful basement renovation.

Waterproof it. Check the interior foundation and floors to make sure there are no existing moisture issues, water damage or mold problems. Address any primary moisture issues before finishing the space. Examine grading to ensure water runs away from your foundation.

Insulation is key. Insulation plays a critical role in making your basement feel comfortable, while keeping it safe and dry. For the best results, install a rigid board insulation, like Roxul Comfort-

Board IS, against the concrete foundation before you stud the wall. The board is mechanically fastened or adhered to the concrete foundation wall, which prevents thermal bridging through the studs, providing better thermal performance. Finish with a moisture-resistant and dimensionally stable insulation between the studs to protect against common basement issues such as mold, mildew and rot.

Choose a functional design. Draw out plans, carefully taking into consideration any low ceilings or small windows. Try to incorporate structural features, such as attractive wood beams, into your design. Keep the

space as open as possible. Select lighting that provides a bright, airy feel.

Don't forget to soundproof it. Soundproofing is the ultimate solution to maximize your basement's quiet and privacy. Whether your newfound space will function as a home theatre, music room, home office or playroom, it will benefit from quality acoustic insulation. Not only is it highly effective, but it's also easy to install.

Consider fire safety. Since many basements are now being renovated as income suites, fire protection is also a vital consideration. Whenever possible, select building materials with a

high fire-resistance rating and look for products that will not off-gas or contribute to toxic smoke in the event of a fire. Include additional exits in your renovation plan and educate yourself on your local fire code.

Before you start your renovation, be sure to check with your municipality to secure the right permits and to ensure that you're complying with local by-laws and building codes. Finishing a basement can be a smart renovation, if done properly, adding to a home's value, increasing its function and providing greater enjoyment or income potential.



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Master Gardeners trained for their community

Extension program looks to expand further in McLeod County

By Rebecca Mariscal
Staff Writer

An interest in horticulture and a desire to give back to the community are all that's required to become involved in the Master Gardener program with the University of Minnesota Extension Office.

The Minnesota version of the nationwide Master Gardener program began in 1977. Today the state has more than 2,000 Master Gardeners who serve in 77 counties.

About 20 of those gardeners are here in McLeod County, with another three on their way to master status. Extension Educator Nathan Winter said the program is smaller than what is found in the Cities and even closer counties like Scott and Carver. The program is looking to expand those numbers, especially in the areas of Glencoe, Silver Lake and Brownton, as the majority of McLeod Master Gardeners are located in Hutchinson.

"We're looking to strengthen the volunteer base in this part of McLeod County," he said. "We're trying to spread out."

Winter said the program is looking at an educational event based out of Glencoe to assist in this expansion.

The goal of the program is to be an extension to the University of Minnesota Extension Office. The program provides trained volunteers that can further educate the public.

"From fruits to vegetables, annuals, perennials, soils, the whole gambit," Winter said.

To get involved in the program and become a Master Gardener, Winter said some background knowledge in horticulture is beneficial.

"Being an expert is not a requirement," Winter said.

The first step to becoming a Master Gardener is to apply with your local program, for example the McLeod County Extension office. Winter said these applications are due sooner than people might think, on Oct. 1.

"As soon as people are getting done gardening for the year, call us," he said.

After an interview and background check, applicants will be admitted to the Master Gardener core course. The course can be taken on campus at various locations throughout Minnesota, or online as well. The fee for the course is \$305.

"If you look at 48 hours of education, you're about \$5 or \$6 per hour for education, which is a lot cheaper," Winter said.

The course is a total of 48 hours. It includes lessons on soils, entomology, botany, diagnostics, trees and shrubs, herbaceous plants, lawn care, plant pathology, weeds, wildlife, integrated pest management, vegetables, fruits and more.

After the course is completed, Master Gardener trainees must complete 50 hours of volunteer work on projects



Submitted photo

The Master Gardener program prepares volunteers to serve the community and answer gardening questions. McLeod County has 20 trained Master Gardeners and is looking to expand.

and events that deliver horticulture knowledge to their communities.

To maintain Master Gardener status, Winter said gardeners must volunteer at least 25 hours a year. They must also stay up to date on educational skills with five hours of classwork each year.

Though the McLeod County Master Gardener numbers have not risen in the last few months, the effort from the gardeners themselves has. Winter said the McLeod program sees Master Gardeners volunteer anywhere from the required 25 hours a year to over 300 hours a year.

"The educational effort has been stronger," Winter said. "The value back to the people of McLeod County has been strengthened."

The Master Gardeners can volunteer, and get their required hours, in many different ways. They answer horticulture questions posed to the extension office. They work through the arboretum.

They can also get involved in several events that the University of Minnesota Extension hosts. Opportunities for education efforts, staffing booths and more are always available. An annual Gardening Education Day is held in March with several speakers

and over 100 people attending. Gardening Knowledge for Free events are also held in the spring and fall and draw 30 to 40 people. The Education Garden at the McLeod County Fairground is often staffed by Master Gardeners. The Junior Master Gardener program takes place in July at the McLeod County Fairgrounds. Master Gardeners can volunteer to teach youth all about horticulture.

Master Gardeners also are encouraged to find their own ways to give back to the community. They can give small talks to churches, school or other community institutions. They can provide advice to local neighbors and help out with their gardens. They also can participate in local town efforts such as tree inventory projects and more.

These gardeners also give back in different aspects of their community, from schools to churches and more.

"They are also great volunteers in other parts of McLeod County," he said.

Being a Master Gardener requires time and effort, but Winter said it is extremely beneficial to both the gardener and the community.

The participant in the program is able to continue their education and

get involved with a program full of people with similar interests.

"They get to learn about something they are passionate about," Winter said. "They get surrounded themselves with like-minded interests."

The best way to take full advantage of the program, Winter said, is for participants to find something specific within horticulture or gardening that they're passionate about.

"First get the education need and then meet your interest," he said.

With all the different ways to be involved in the community, Winter said it is important that what someone does volunteer for meets their interest and engages their passion.

"People looking with energy, those are the people we're looking to join us," Winter said.

The benefit to the community is even greater. Winter said the extension office and the public has a lot to gain.

"We have people out there providing education in the community," Winter said.

To get involved with the Master Gardener program, contact the University of Minnesota extension office at 320-484-4334 or mnext-mcleod@umn.com.

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