



Marion Utilities

1540 N. Washington St.

Marion IN 46952

www.marionutilities.com

New Recycling Program to Kick-Off Soon

Next month Marion Utilities will open a new recycling drop-off center, which will replace our blue bag program. That being said, we want to take this opportunity to explain our reasoning behind the change.

The blue bag program is a “co-mingling” recycling program, where several kinds of recyclable materials are placed into one container - such as plastics, cardboard, and glass. Residents place all their recyclables in the blue bags and put them out with the rest of their trash. When the waste is dumped at the transfer station, our solid waste employees pull the blue bags out of the regular solid waste stream and take them to Republic Services, where we pay a high premium to have the recyclables processed. In the past, most of that material ended up being purchased by companies in China, where it was sorted and recycled. Being proper stewards of our environment is of utmost importance, and the benefit of having those materials recycled, rather than landfilled, outweighed the higher cost we were paying for processing.

However, in the last few years the recycling market has changed drastically. China has passed new laws and they are no longer buying co-mingled recyclables. Often times co-mingled recyclables are contaminated with food and other waste, which makes them difficult - if not impossible - to recycle. Here in the US, literally tons of co-mingled recyclables that were collected from residents are now being stored in warehouses or landfilled.

Unfortunately, we also discovered that many people were using the blue bags as trash bags, which makes the process even less effective.

Knowing that much of our recyclable material collections were contaminated and not being recycled properly, we were faced with a decision of what to do going forward. We want to offer a program where residents can be confident that the materials they are saving for recycling are not just going into a landfill. It also must be cost effective for ratepayers.

Our new recycling program accomplishes these goals. The Recycling Center here at MU will be open from 11 am to 6 pm on Mondays and Fridays, located at 1300 N. Washington Street. We have coordinated with the county's operation on Garth Waite Road and will be open on the days they are closed, in an effort to give residents more options. Additional hours may be added in the future if there is enough demand. Also, there will be an attendant on duty to see that the items collected are clean and sorted properly.

We are also working with area neighborhood associations and churches to make sure that the elderly and disabled members of our community have the opportunity to participate if they choose to.

Here at Marion Utilities, we want to continue to be good stewards of our planet and offer cost-effective programs that meet the needs of our customers. If you have any questions about our recycling program, feel free to contact us at 765-664-2391.

LINKS WITH MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.wastedive.com/news/what-chinese-import-policies-mean-for-all-50-states/510751/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2019/03/china-has-stopped-accepting-our-trash/584131/>

