



Do Not Push Snow Onto Public Roadways

A timely reminder from the Highway Department for all residents and snow removal operators: It is unlawful to deposit snow onto public roadways (per Minnesota Statute 160.2715).

Piles of snow deposited onto public roadways may refreeze and create a significant hazard to the traveling public and future snow removal operations. Other hazards created by improper placement of snow on or near a public roadway include drainage problems, drifting, sight obstruction and impaired safe accessibility.

Violations are considered a misdemeanor. Civil penalties also may apply if the placement of snow creates a hazard that contributes to a motor vehicle crash or pedestrian injury. The civil liability can extend to both the property owner and the person who places the snow.

www.co.rice.mn.us

Dundas • Faribault
Lonsdale • Morristown
Nerstrand • Northfield
Warsaw • Webster

Project to Update 911 Rural Signage Addresses Life and Death Issues

First responders know all too well that minutes can mean the difference between life and death, between saving a building or losing it to a fire. One of the county's newest projects is designed to buy them those minutes, by updating the signs they use to find rural residents in need. The effort, which will involve the installation of more than 8,350 signs, will greatly improve the visibility of rural addresses.

Many of the current signs, installed beginning in the early 1980s, are faded and cracked, making them difficult to read. Others are out of sequential order or located where they are hard to see.

"It's become a public safety issue," Sheriff Troy Dunn told KARE 11's Dave Berggren, who reported on the project in October. "The majority of signs are parallel with the road, meaning you have to drive next to one in order to see it."

The new signs will be larger (18" x 6" instead of the current 12" x 5"), have improved nighttime visibility, and will be placed perpendicular to the road where emergency response personnel can more easily spot them. Typical sign placement is on the right side of the driveway approximately 15 feet from the shoulder of the road.

Location, Location, Location

The project is the result of a rural address signage task force convened several years ago in response to concerns raised by law enforcement and emergency responders. While smoke and flames can help identify where a fire is, the majority of rural emergencies are medical ones, and responders cited a multitude of examples where finding the proper location for a call was problematic and delayed their response time.

After examining ordinances, policies and practices from nearby counties, the task force ultimately recommended that the old signs be replaced. The Rice County Board of Commissioners acted upon this recommendation in mid-October after reviewing a feasibility report and set a date for a public hearing in December.

The project schedule calls for the county to hire a contractor to install the new 911 address signs in the spring or summer of 2012,

[See Rural Signage, page 2](#)



County Attorney's Office Offers Important Tips on Fraud Prevention to Seniors and Other Consumers

Do you:

- Pay bills with checks and place them in your mailbox or in a corner postal box?
- Have new boxes of checks mailed to your home?
- Carry a purse or wear a wallet in your back pocket?
- Have at least one item in your wallet that contains your Social Security Number?
- Throw away your annual Social Security Earnings Statement without reviewing it?
- Use e-commerce, but without using a secure browser or a high-speed Internet service with firewall protection?

These are only six of 18 commonplace but risky habits that the county's CASE (Communities Against Senior Exploitation) program cautions against. "If you regularly do just three or more of the above things, you are at above average risk of identity theft," warns Rice County Victim Services Coordinator Vanessa Eng. "If you do all of them, you are at high risk."

The advice offered by CASE is pertinent for consumers of all ages, notes County Attorney Paul Beaumaster, but it is aimed at older residents. Why? Because of their more extensive life experience, "seasoned residents

[See Fraud Prevention, page 3](#)

On the Web

Pardon Our (Cyber) Dust

Coming this winter to a web site near you: Even MORE useful and interesting online information about county services!

In recent years more and more area residents have turned to the Internet when they need information about Rice County resources – whether they are looking for:

- agendas of the Board of Commissioners' meetings
- birth and death certificates
- marriage licenses and passports and
- how to register to vote

or they are seeking detailed information about:

- criminal justice matters
- economic development
- health, housing and social services or
- transportation, land use and environmental matters.

That is all about to change – for the better – thanks to the hard work and creativity of county web developers, who are reworking the look and the navigation of the county web site and adding exciting new features like:

- the ability to make online reservations in county parks
- the capacity to do word searches of all documents stored online
- mailing lists – receive as much or as little information as you want on various subjects by signing up to our news lists.

Things will look very different when the redesigned site goes live later this winter. One thing won't change, however, the main address for the site: www.co.rice.mn.us/

It's your best source – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year – for information about Rice County. Bookmark it today!

Produced by Graffics Design and Ashmore Ink.

Rural Signage Project Affects Property Owners

Continued from page 1

adhering to standards approved by the Rice County Board of Commissioners, and will remove old address signs and posts for recycling. All rural addresses in the unincorporated areas of Rice County will receive new signs. In the process, all addresses will be reviewed to see if they follow the Rice County Uniform Naming and Numbering System. If they do not, they will be changed as required by the system.

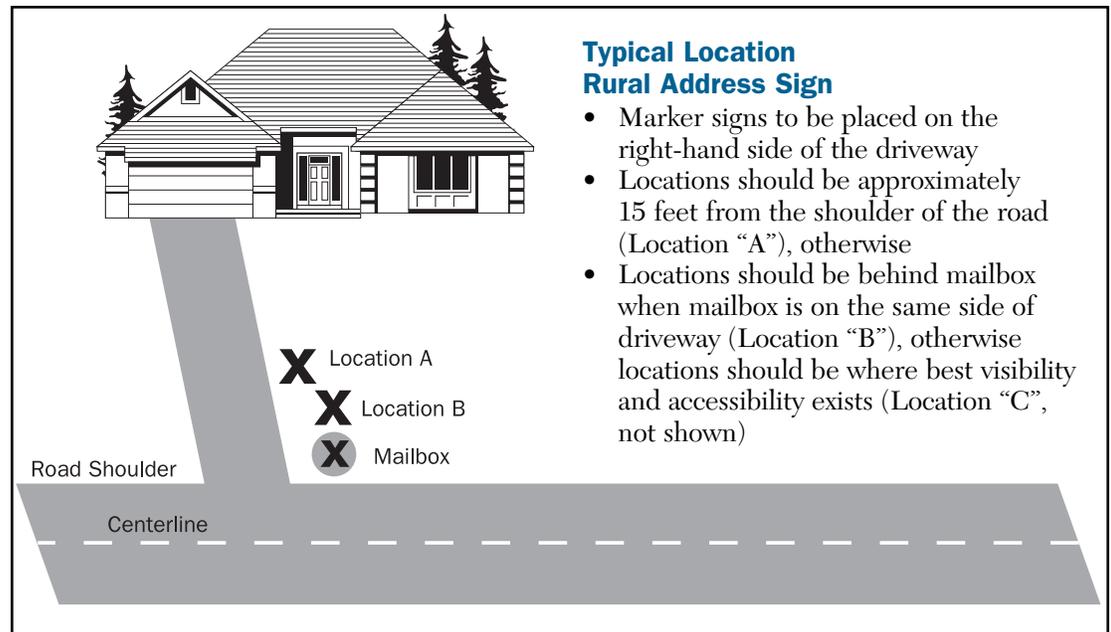
Addresses are assigned to buildings on each parcel based on driveway access to the road. If a parcel has more than one driveway access to more than one building, or more than one house, it will need to have more than one address and sign. Addresses are also assigned to some parcels without buildings, such as parks, cemeteries and gravel pits.

While actual costs won't be known until bids are opened in late January and the

contract is awarded, the cost of each sign and post is currently estimated at less than \$75. This will be paid by property owners, who will receive a letter from Rice County in November or December 2012 that indicates the final cost of the new signage. The cost will be assessed on their 2013 taxes. There will also be an option to pre-pay.

Property owners will be responsible for maintenance of their signs. Replacement signs and signs for new addresses will be available for purchase through the Environmental Services Department once the contractor has completed installation of signs throughout the county.

Residents who have concerns or questions about the 911 rural address project can find more information at www.co.rice.mn.us/highway/rasproject.php or by calling the Environmental Services Department at 507-333-3891.



Typical Location Rural Address Sign

- Marker signs to be placed on the right-hand side of the driveway
- Locations should be approximately 15 feet from the shoulder of the road (Location "A"), otherwise
- Locations should be behind mailbox when mailbox is on the same side of driveway (Location "B"), otherwise locations should be where best visibility and accessibility exists (Location "C", not shown)

Conservation Tree Seedlings and Shrubs for Sale

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District, 1810 NW 30th Street in Faribault, is currently taking orders for its annual tree sale. The district sells a wide variety of tree seedlings and shrubs (in quantities of 25, 50, etc.) to be used for conservation purposes only, such as windbreaks and wildlife plantings.

Orders will only be taken until February 28 this year, with trees arriving in April.

To receive an order form or get free help with a tree plan, call the district office at 507-332-5408 or visit www.riceswcd.org.



Fraud Prevention Tips for Consumers

Continued from page 1

are less likely to be scammed,” he says, “but when they are, they tend to lose the most.”

CASE originated in Denver, Colorado, where prosecutors and law enforcement partnered with faith communities to improve elder fraud prevention, crime detection and reporting, and victim support. That is where Eng learned about it, through a grant from the Denver District Attorney’s Office. She brought it back to Rice County in 2005 and has coordinated it ever since, working with a variety of organizations and people to educate area residents about ways to prevent fraud.

The magnitude of the problems in Rice County don’t approach those of a major metropolis like Denver, Eng says, but identity theft is a growing problem here, due in part to the economic recession. As the victim services coordinator of the County Attorney’s Office, she assists people who’ve been victimized, helping them sort out who needs to be informed and how, as well as providing support when fraud cases are prosecuted.

Eng would much rather prevent the problem in the first place, however, by educating area residents on how to avoid it. To that end, she makes presentations to area groups and appearances at the county fair, and e-mails and sends monthly fraud alerts to people who sign up for them at those appearances.

To invite Vanessa Eng and/or County Attorney Paul Beaumaster to speak to your group about fraud prevention or to ask her to send you monthly fraud alerts, e-mail her at ven@co.rice.mn.us or call 507-332-5934.

What are warning signs to watch for?

- If your purse or wallet is stolen.
- If your bank account is overdrawn or there is unusual activity on your credit card.
- If mail you are expecting doesn’t arrive, especially related to financial matters; bills you paid are still showing due.
- If you apply for a credit card or loan and are denied.

What should you do if you discover your identity has been stolen?

Resolving the consequences of identity theft is left largely to victims, but Eng is available to provide guidance if you need it. You need to act quickly and assertively and keep records/copies of all contacts and reports. You are not responsible for losses from ID theft. Your credit should not be permanently affected. No legal action should be taken. Cooperate, but don’t be coerced into paying a fraudulent debt.

Among the things Eng recommends that you should do are:

- File a report with your police/sheriff and get a copy of the report for the credit agencies, banks and credit card companies. Or request and complete the ID Theft Affidavit from the Federal Trade Commission.
- Cancel each credit card. If you report the loss before the cards are used, you are not responsible for any unauthorized charges. Carefully monitor your credit card statements for evidence of fraudulent activity.
- Contact your financial institution and cancel all accounts and PIN numbers. Stop payments on outstanding checks and complete affidavits of forgery on unauthorized checks.
- Report the theft to one of the fraud units of the credit reporting agencies. That agency will notify the other two of the possible fraud. Request the credit reporting agencies flag your credit file for fraud. Add a victim’s statement to your report, such as, “My identification has been used to apply for fraudulent credit. Contact me at (your telephone number or address) to verify ALL applications.”

Ways to Minimize Your ID Theft Risk

[From the *Power Against Identity Theft Handbook* of the Rice County Attorney’s Office and Communities Against Senior Exploitation]

Start the new year right – by resolving to reduce your risk of identity theft.

- Mail bills to be paid at the Post Office, not in your mailbox or in street corner postal boxes. Consider using automated payment plans.
- Have paychecks, benefit and pension checks direct deposited to your account. Ask the IRS, insurance companies and others to send refund checks electronically.
- Ask your bank or credit union to receive your box of new checks, rather than have them mailed to your home.
- Do not give any part of your credit card, Social Security or bank account numbers over the phone, e-mail or Internet, **unless** you have initiated the contact to a verifiable company or financial institution.
- Request a free copy of your credit report once a year from all three CRAs (you will need your SSN and other verifying information) at www.annualcreditreport.com or by phoning 877-322-8228. (*Do not use www.freecreditreport.com.*)
- Notify the credit reporting agencies of the death of a relative or friend to block the misuse of the deceased person’s credit.

County Profile



Michele Evans

Financial Assistant Supervisor, Social Services

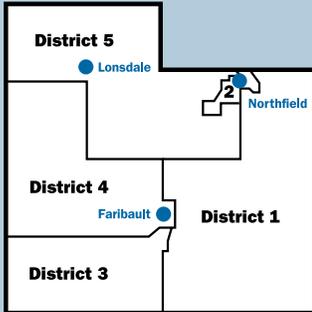
Michele Evans has worked for the county for 33 years, all told. She began in 1978 as a financial worker, was later promoted to social worker, left to work for three years as Steele County’s financial supervisor, and then returned in 1988 to serve as Rice County’s financial supervisor.

She manages the county’s financial workers, the people who administer the eligibility programs (food support, medical assistance, cash and child care programs). She also supervises two social workers who work with Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) participants who are not yet work ready.

What does she like best about her work? The fact that it is always changing, she says. “One day I can be in meetings with other agencies and the next day meeting with clients. There’s always something new to learn, like the changes that come after each legislative session is done, and new ways to improve how we serve the people of Rice County.”

Originally from Faribault, Evans attended Bethlehem Academy, then Viterbo College in LaCrosse, Wis. She later earned a Bachelor of Social Work degree at Mankato State University. She hopes to do more traveling with her husband now that their two children are out on their own. Her interests include camping (she likes to explore national and state parks) and making cards.

Contacts



Rice County Board of Commissioners (as of January 1, 2009)

District 1

Jake Gillen
507-334-5746
jgillen@co.rice.mn.us

District 2

Galen Malecha
507-645-6041
gmalecha@co.rice.mn.us

District 3

Milt Plaisance
507-334-7612
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District 4

Steve Bauer
507-334-9700
sbauer@co.rice.mn.us

District 5

Jeff Docken
952-652-2876
jdocken@co.rice.mn.us

Phone Numbers

General Information 507-332-6100
Toll-Free Numbers (do not dial "1" or area code)
 From Northfield 645-9576
 From Lonsdale 744-5185

Rice County Standing Meetings

Board of Commissioners

Meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month as a Committee of the Whole/Work Session, 8:30 a.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month as a Regular Board, 8:30 a.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Planning Commission

Meets the first Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Board of Adjustment

Meets the second Monday of the month; 7:00 p.m., Commissioners' Room, Rice County Government Services Building.

Community Corrections Advisory Board

Meets the third Thursday of even-numbered months (February, April, June, August, October, December), 3:30 p.m., Rice County Government Services Building.

Community Health Services Citizens' Advisory Committee

Meets the fourth Wednesday every other month (January, March, May, July, September, November), 6:30–8:00 p.m.; call 507-332-6111 for location.

Emergency Medical Services Provider Council

Meets quarterly, 7:00–9:00 p.m.; call 507-332-6119 for meeting date and location.

Mental Health Advisory Council

Meets the fourth Wednesday of the month, 12:00 p.m. (noon), Friendship House, located at 212-B Central Avenue, Faribault.

Rice County Departments

Administrator	Gary Weiers 507-332-6101 gweiers@co.rice.mn.us
Assessor	Paul Knutson 507-332-6102 pknutson@co.rice.mn.us
Attorney	Paul Beaumaster 507-332-6103 pbeaumaster@co.rice.mn.us
Auditor/Treasurer	Fran Windschitl 507-332-6104 fwindschitl@co.rice.mn.us
Community Corrections Director	Christine Curtis 507-332-6106 ccurtis@co.rice.mn.us
Court Administrator	Hans Holland 507-332-6107 hans.holland@courts.state.mn.us
Economic Development Director	Deanna Kuennen 507-332-6126 dkuennen@co.rice.mn.us
Environmental Services Director	Julie Runkel 507-332-6113 jrunkel@co.rice.mn.us
Extension Educator	Michael Donnelly 507-332-6109 mdonnelly2@umn.edu
Highway Engineer	Dennis Luebbe 507-332-6110 dluebbe@co.rice.mn.us
Human Resource Manager	Kerie Anderka 507-332-6123 kanderka@co.rice.mn.us
Information Technology Director	Melissa Reeder 507-333-3777 mreeder@co.rice.mn.us
Parks/Facilities Director	Jake Rysavy 507-332-6105 jrysav@co.rice.mn.us
Public Health & CHS Director	507-332-6111
Recorder	Marsha DeGroot 507-332-6114 mdegroot@co.rice.mn.us
Sheriff	Troy Dunn 507-332-6010 tdunn@co.rice.mn.us
Social Services Director	Mark Shaw 507-332-6115 mshaw@co.rice.mn.us
Veterans' Service Officer	Tracy McBroom 507-332-6176 trmcbbroom@co.rice.mn.us

Rice County Landfill, Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste Facilities

3800 145th Street E. • Dundas, MN 55019
 507-332-6833 • www.co.rice.mn.us/waste • rcsolidwaste@co.rice.mn.us

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday–Friday: 7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Saturday: **April–October:** 7:30–11:30 a.m. (2nd and 4th Saturdays only)
November–March: 7:30–11:30 a.m. (2nd Saturday only)

2012 Recycling Calendar/Schedule

Your single sort recycling will be picked up on a schedule set by your garbage hauler (bi-weekly or weekly). Call your garbage hauler if you are not sure of your week (blue or white, indicated below).

 = Rice County Landfill, Recycling, Household Hazardous Waste Facilities are Closed

January							February							March							April						
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May							June							July							August						
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September							October							November							December							
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30														30							30	31						

7:30–11:30 a.m. only

In The News



Residents Shed Nearly 213,000 Pounds of Old Electronics in Fall Collection Events

County residents disposed of more than 106 tons of computer and other electronic equipment when Rice County Environmental Services offered two days of free electronics recycling this fall. Residents brought in 212,919 pounds of electronic waste, to be exact – 132,395 pounds at the Rice County Fairgrounds and 80,524 pounds at the County Highway Shop in Lonsdale. By reducing the volume of this waste stream entering the landfill, participants aided in conserving natural resources and protecting the environment.

“Our thanks to those who endured some long waits to responsibly dispose of this material,” said Environmental Services Director Julie Runkel. “It’s clear that Rice County residents care about our environment. There is a good chance we will do another type of special waste collection event in the coming year, but we do not know yet if it will be electronics, appliances, tires or something else. In the meantime, we are trying to encourage and increase use of other venues for free recycling of electronics. Read the article to the right and check out our web site, www.co.rice.mn.us/waste/ElectronicWaste.php, to find links to free electronic disposal/recycling options.”

The Growing Problem of Electronic Waste

If you are like many Americans, you have outdated electronic technology in your home. In fact, the average household now has 25 electronic devices, including TVs, computers, printers, radios and all manner of “eStuff.” Americans own three billion electronic products, with a turnover rate of about 400 million units each year. Yet less than 14% of those gadgets are recycled!

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), the lifespan of a personal computer has decreased by half, from 4–5 years down to just two years. Sweeping changes in technology, such as the conversion to digital broadcast television, have shortened the useful lives of electronic devices. The NSC anticipates that three-quarters of all computers ever bought in the U.S. remain stockpiled in storerooms, attics, garages and basements. All this promises to increase the amount of electronics in our waste.

Recycling Your Electronic Waste

When electronics are put into the landfill, harmful chemicals and heavy metals can get into our water supply and air. Minnesota State Law even bans certain electronics (such as TVs and computers) from being put into the landfill.



To properly dispose of electronics that don’t work anymore, bring them to the Rice County Recycling Center (there may be a small fee). To find somewhere else to recycle your unusable electronics, visit www.co.rice.mn.us/waste/ElectronicWaste.php, or check these helpful sites:

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a large list of sources at www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserves/materials/ecycling/donate.htm
- Many manufacturers and retailers now have take-back, mail-in and trade-in programs. Check with Target, Best Buy, Apple, Dell, and other major retailers, to learn about their recycling programs.
- Earth911.com has taken environmental hotlines, web sites and other information sources nationwide, and consolidated them into one network. Once you visit the Earth 911 network, you will find community-specific information on eCycling and much more.
- PCs for People, www.pcsforpeople.com, creates new opportunities by providing personal computers and education to people who have limited experience with technology due to social, physical and/or economic circumstances.

Reusing and Donating Electronics

Buying “green” and preventing waste in the first place are preferable options to consider before recycling. Donating used (but still operating) electronics for reuse extends the lives of valuable products and will keep them out of the waste stream for a longer period of time. In addition to being an environmentally preferable alternative, reuse also benefits society. By donating your used electronics, you allow schools, nonprofit organizations and lower-income families to obtain equipment that they otherwise could not afford.

Before donating your computer or other electronics, make sure the equipment is reusable. Many donation organizations have limited or no resources and no employees to diagnose and repair hardware. A functional, working system (especially one that includes a monitor, wiring and software licenses) is a lot more useful and requires less upgrading than a nonworking, incomplete computer. You will want to check to see what the donation organization’s minimum computer requirements are, since some organizations might not accept older, less useful equipment.

Rice County Household Hazardous Waste Facility

3800 145th Street E., Dundas, MN 55019
507-332-6833
www.co.rice.mn.us/waste
resolidwaste@co.rice.mn.us

Hours of Operation

Monday–Friday:

7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Saturday:

April–October: 7:30–11:30 a.m.

(2nd and 4th Saturdays only)

November–March: 7:30–11:30 a.m.

(2nd Saturday only)

Household Hazardous Waste

The first rules about hazardous products are to avoid them, if possible, or use them for their intended purposes. Improper use or disposal can be harmful to human health and the environment.

The following signal words on a container label usually mean it contains hazardous chemicals: **danger, caution, warning, poison, combustible, contains petroleum distillates, flammable, toxic, corrosive, contains acid, contains lye, causes burns to the skin, protect skin and eyes**, etc. Common examples include paint, thinners, stains, varnish, paint removers, cleaners,



pesticides, adhesives, old gasoline, etc.

Bring your household hazardous waste to our facility, located halfway between Northfield and Faribault, 1 mile to the east off State Highway 3 on 145th Street East. Free paint and other useable items are also available at the facility.

The Reuse Shelves at the HHWF

When items in good condition are dropped off, facility staff will inspect and

put them out for free. Products received include approximately 3,000 gallons of paint, 1,500 aerosol cans, and nearly 4 tons of assorted cleaners, solvents and automotive products. By not needing to pay for disposal of these perfectly good products, the estimated savings to the county was nearly \$17,300. The savings to the “reuse” customer exceeds that amount in paint alone, considering the average retail cost of around \$15 per gallon.

Business Waste Disposal for Those Who Qualify as Very Small Quantity Generators

Rice County HHWF can accept business waste from qualified businesses who are very small quantity generators and have a state license. There is a fee for this service. Please call ahead to see if your business qualifies and for further information.

Environmental Information

The HHWF also serves as a clearinghouse for environmental information you may need or for disposal questions you may have. If staff can't answer your questions, they will connect you with someone who can. Just call 507-332-6833 or e-mail resolidwaste@co.rice.mn.us

Yard Waste and Community Compost Sites

Minnesota law forbids the landfilling of yard waste such as leaves, grass clippings and brush. Minnesotans are encouraged to compost yard waste at home or bring yard waste to a community compost site.

Composting is a process that uses water, air and naturally occurring microbes to convert organic matter into a valuable resource. Added to gardens or placed at the base of trees and shrubs, compost contains essential nutrients for healthy plant growth, acts as a soil conditioner, helps the soil to hold moisture better and prevents erosion.

A backyard compost pile can be easily constructed and maintained. For information on backyard composting and options for building compost structures, visit the following web sites:

- www.rethinkrecycling.com/residents/compost
- www.reduce.org
- www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG3296.html
- www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/rrr/composting/by_compost.htm
- www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG3899.html

Rice County Solid Waste Facility Compost Site

Hours for the compost site are the same as the Solid Waste Facility (see above). For other locations, please call:

- Faribault: 507-334-2222
- Lonsdale: 507-744-2327
- Morristown: 507-685-2302
- Northfield: 507-645-8833



Rice County is serious about preventing medication misuse or abuse and environmentally unsafe medication disposal practices. “Take It To The Box” promotes the safe use, storage and disposal of medication.

- Take old or unneeded medications or drugs to the medication disposal box at the Faribault or Northfield Police Department.
- Leave the medicine in its original package or bottle.
- Cross off your name or other personal information. Do not cross off the name of the medicine.
- Do NOT flush medications down the toilet.

New Plastic Items Accepted for Recycling Beginning January 1, 2012

Rice County residents will now be able to recycle many additional plastic items beginning in 2012. The facility to which we sell our recycling commodities has added the collection of household/consumer goods that are plastic products and packaging (plastic items coded #3 through #7). Here are examples and descriptions for each of the plastic codes. (Please be sure to rinse clean all your plastic recyclables.)



PETE

- All soft drink/water bottles (**leave the bottle caps ON the bottles**)
- Beverage and mouthwash bottles
- Plastic food jars/containers (**rinsed clean**)



HDPE

- Plastic bottles
- Plastic milk and water jugs
- Detergents, cleaners, shampoo bottles



- Household cleaning products (**must be empty**)
- Cooking oil bottles, salad dressing bottles and some shampoo bottles
- **NO PVC piping allowed at all!**



LDPE

- Plastic bags (**all of the bags must be put inside one of the bags**)
- Small buckets (**maximum of 8" diameter**)
- Soap dispenser bottles
- Food storage containers, squeezable bottles (**NO food residue allowed**)



PP

- Yogurt containers
- Margarine tubs
- Some food containers, ketchup bottles (**rinsed clean**)



PS

- Small plastic flower pots (**maximum size of 8" and MUST be clean**)
- Plastic cups
- Some medicine bottles and some small plastic toys



Other

NOTE: We cannot accept any over-size plastic items. Everything must fit inside the single sort recycling cart.



Thank you for recycling!