

A Quarterly Newsletter Of



706-291-5266

rfrecycl@roman.net

www.romefloydrecycles.org

Spring 2003



4th Annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day set for April 26, 2003

On Saturday, April 26, Rome/Floyd residents will be able to drop off household hazardous waste, tires, and electronics at the Coosa Valley Fairgrounds between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m.

During this one-day event, we will be accepting all of these items:

- Oil-based and latex paint
- Stains, thinners, and strippers
- Solvents, varnishes, and glues
- Wood preservatives
- Aerosol cans
- Hobby and art supplies
- Photo and pool chemicals
- Cleaners and spot removers
- Fluorescent bulbs and ballasts
- Antifreeze
- Motor oil
- Degreasers
- Brake fluid
- Car and household batteries
- Kerosene and gasoline
- Transmission fluid
- Poisons and insecticides
- Pesticides and weed killers
- Tires (Maximum of 10—No exceptions)
- Computers and televisions

Follow these guidelines in loading and delivering your hazardous waste:

- Bring all materials in original containers. Be sure that all containers are closed securely.
- Pack containers in sturdy upright boxes and pad with newspaper. For extra protection, line your trunk with plastic.
- Place leaking or broken containers inside a waterproof container (a 5-gallon bucket works well).
- Never smoke or eat while handling or transporting materials.
- Leave pets at home!

- Once your car has been loaded, drive directly to the Coosa Valley Fairgrounds for unloading.
- **Never mix liquids together.**

Sorry, but we cannot accept unknown compressed gas cylinders, ammunition, fireworks, medical waste, or radioactive waste.

Remember—this drop-off event is only for residents to deliver household wastes! No commercial, business, industrial, or institutional waste materials will be accepted!

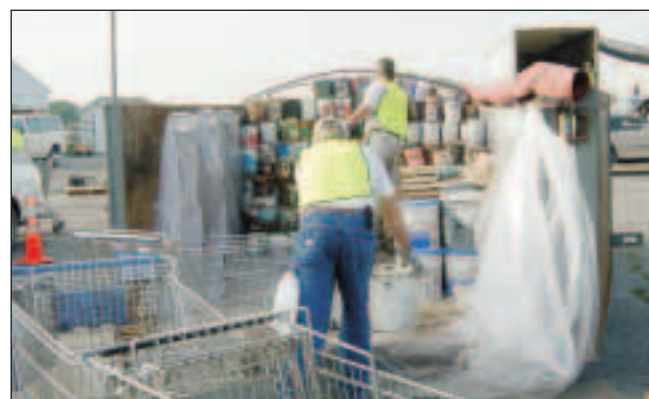
For more information, visit our website, www.romefloydrecycles.org. Or, contact us at 291-5266 or rfrecycl@roman.net.

Cars lined up to enter last year's Household Hazardous Waste drop-off. About 525 vehicles delivered materials to the day-long event.



Here, tires and oil are being loaded. Last year, we collected more than 50,000 pounds of tires and 800 gallons of used motor oil.

Here, paint is being loaded into roll-off containers. Last year, we collected 45,000 pounds of paint and paint-related products, such as paint thinner and stain.



At the Toxic Station, trained professionals handle the extremely toxic materials. They pack and load these toxics for safe shipment. Then, the material is transported to specially designed facilities to be properly disposed with other hazardous materials.



Volunteers unload materials from vehicles.

Hazardous wastes in your home

Do you really know what you are dealing with?

Many common household products contain chemicals that are poisonous, corrosive, flammable, and/or chemically reactive. Typical hazardous products include disinfectants; ammonia, bleach, and drain openers; pesticides; paint and related products; pool chemicals; automotive fluids; oven, tub, tile, and toilet cleaners; batteries; and fluorescent bulbs.

The average household contains between 3 and 10 gallons of materials whose use or improper disposal poses a threat to human health or to the natural environment. You are probably storing many such products right now in your

garage, basement, bathroom, or kitchen—and you might not ordinarily think of them as hazardous.

Federal law requires that labels on hazardous products list signal words that warn you of potential dangers. Here are the signal words that you should know. **Flammable/combustible** products can be easily set on fire. **Explosive/reactive** products can detonate or explode through exposure to heat, sudden shock, pressure, or incompatible substances. **Corrosive** products can burn and destroy living tissues or other material when brought in contact. **Danger/Poison** indicates that the



product is highly toxic. Drinking from a few drops to a single teaspoon of the product will kill the average person. **Warning** indicates that drinking between one teaspoon and one ounce of the product will kill the average person. **Caution** indicates that drinking over one ounce of the product will kill the average person. Some hazardous wastes can also cause cancer, birth defects, or other serious medical problems.

The improper disposal of these wastes can cause problems for the entire community. Sewers have exploded, garbage trucks have caught on fire, and garbage collectors have been burned because people have

carelessly discarded flammable or reactive wastes down the drain or in their regular garbage. Landfill workers compacting material have been injured and their equipment damaged by chemical reactions and explosions. Modern landfills, like Walker Mountain

Landfill, have liners to protect ground water, but they also collect leachate, rainwater that filters through the refuse and collects toxic chemicals along the way. The more hazardous waste in the landfill, the more dangerous leachate there is to treat. Hazardous household products that are poured down the drain tax our wastewater treatment plant and damage septic tanks.



Are hazards lurking in your computer?

During the years that you own and use your computer, it poses no great hazard to you and your family. Unless, of course, you drop your laptop on your foot or pinch your finger under the CPU tower during a spring housecleaning.

No, the hazards lurking in your computer have little to do with its use and everything to do with its disposal. If computers are disposed in the wrong ways or the wrong places, they can introduce pollutants and toxins into the environment.

At the end of their useful lives, computers become e-scrap. E-scrap includes about 1,000 distinct substances. Some of these, such as gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium, steel, and aluminum,

A standard monitor, referred to as a CRT for its major component, the cathode ray tube, contains lead. During use, this lead, along with barium, shields users from harmful radiation. Monitors also contain phosphor, a substance that the U.S. Navy warns is "extremely toxic." At least two states, California and Massachusetts, have banned CRTs from landfill disposal.

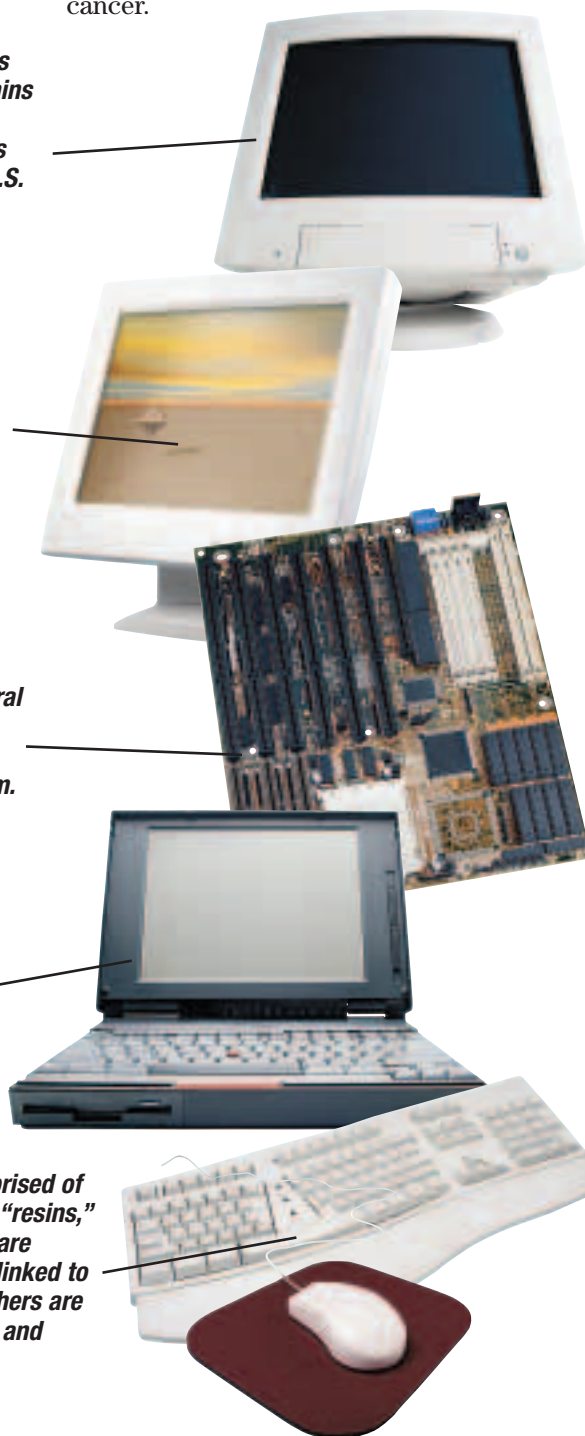
Flat-screen monitors don't include CRTs or lead. However, they do have hazards of their own, most notably mercury switches, mercury-containing fluorescent bulbs, and caustic chemicals.

Inside the central processing unit (CPU), several potentially hazardous materials are present, including tin-lead solder, mercury switches, cadmium, beryllium, and hexavalent chromium.

Batteries may contain nickel, cadmium, and mercury. Like central processing units, the circuit boards and drives may also contain tin-lead solder and cadmium. The screens have a small mercury-containing fluorescent lamp.

By weight, about one-third of e-scrap is comprised of plastic. This plastic includes several different "resins," or types of plastic. Some plastic components are treated with flame retardants that have been linked to reproductive and developmental disorders. Others are contaminated with paint, connectors, or foam and cannot be recycled as a result.

pose no particular risk and give non-reusable equipment some value. But e-scrap also contains potential pollutants, such as lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic, selenium, beryllium, barium, and brominated flame retardants. These heavy metals and toxins have been linked to a variety of maladies, including asthma, organ dysfunction, reproductive disorders, brain damage, and cancer.



What's next for e-scrap?

Once computers are collected, the recycling process is far from complete. Like old appliances and cars, some can be reused as is. Others provide usable parts. And some are dismantled or shredded so that the materials can be separated and recycled. Certain materials, such as CRTs, are handled at separate plants.

Here's a glimpse of how e-scrap moves through the process:

Reuse

Incoming computer systems are tested and evaluated. If they are in working order, they are donated or resold.

Disassembly

At the next stage, the non-working systems are opened up and usable parts and components are "harvested." For instance, working CD and disk drives can be resold to the repair market. Integrated circuits, motherboards, chips, and memory can be taken out and sold as spare parts or used to upgrade older systems.

Recycling

After all usable components are removed, precious metals, such as gold, silver, palladium, and platinum, are extracted. In addition, aluminum, steel, and lead are separated for resale. Plastic parts are identified and sorted. All materials with potential value are shipped to manufacturers where they become raw materials in making new products.

The systems used to separate the recyclable materials vary. At some plants, most recyclable materials are removed and sorted by hand. At others, mechanical shredders break the computers into tiny pieces and machines use air, magnets, and other means to segregate different materials.

Disposal

Parts that cannot be recycled are disposed appropriately. For some portions of the residual waste, this means disposal at special hazardous waste facilities.

Fast facts

- In 2001, only 11 percent of personal computers retired in the U.S. were recycled. Most of these came from businesses. (*U.S. EPA*)
- About 75 to 80 percent of retired home computers are stored in basements, garages, attics, and closets. (*Institute for Local Self-Reliance and Northwest Product Stewardship Council*)
- In 2001, about 520 million people at 147 million different computers used the Internet, almost double the numbers in 1999. (*Worldwatch Institute, Vital Signs 2002*)
- In 1998, more than 112 million pounds of materials were recovered from electronics, including steel, glass, plastic, and precious metals. (*U.S. EPA*)

The NEPSI generation

No, it isn't a new soft drink. NEPSI, which stands for "National Electronics Product Stewardship Initiative," is a group of electronics manufacturers, recyclers, and government officials that mobilized to address the growing volume of e-scrap.

At the core of their discussions has been the question of what parties are responsible for the recycling and proper disposal of this potentially hazardous material. Another major concern? How to handle the vast amount of material that will enter the waste stream when it finally comes out of storage—particularly older items that were not designed with disassembly or recycling in mind. In the two years since NEPSI representatives first met, the group has explored how best to collect materials and fund electronics recycling.

A final report that will include a series of recommendations on how local, state, and federal governments, as well as consumers, retailers, and manufacturers, might best tackle these issues is due out later this year.



Just a mouse click away

- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Resource Conservation Challenge—Plug Into Recycling**
www.plugintorecycling.org
- **Earth's 911**
www.earth911.org
Click on "Electronics Recycling"
- **Electronic Industries Alliance's Consumer Education Initiative**
www.eiae.org

- **Electronics Recycling**
www.electronicrecycling.org
- **National Cristina Foundation**
www.cristina.org
- **National Electronics Product Stewardship Initiative**
www.nepsi.org
- **Northwest Product Stewardship Council's "A Guide to Environmentally Preferable Computer Purchasing"**
www.productstewardship.net/productsElectronicsEPPGuide.html

Odd shoe out

Maybe you've come home from a shoe store, opened a box of fabulous pumps, and discovered one size 6 and one size 8. Was it then that the "all sales final" sign came to mind? Perhaps, because your feet are more than one size apart, you routinely buy two pairs of shoes to end up with a pair that fits.

Whatever the reason, if you have an "odd shoe" or an "odd pair," don't throw them out. Instead, donate them to someone who can use them.

The National Odd Shoe Exchange, which was founded in 1943 by a polio survivor, helps provide shoes to children and adults in need of a single shoe or a pair composed of different sizes. This includes amputees, stroke victims, people with congenital conditions such as cerebral palsy, and



cancer patients, among others.

The National Odd Shoe Exchange is a non-profit organization that serves people nationwide. The Exchange accepts donations from individuals, retailers, and manufacturers. The only requirement is that the shoes must be new, unworn, and undamaged.

The Exchange will accept any style or size, as well as other footwear items, such as socks, laces, and inserts.

The shoes are made available to people who need them at no charge. However, recipients are asked to make a donation, if possible, to cover the cost of shipping.

For more information about the National Odd Shoe Exchange, visit the website, www.oddshoe.org, or call 480-892-3484.

Water for life

This year and next, the Earth Day Network will be asking people around the world to get involved in the "Water for Life" campaign. This project is designed to raise awareness about water access, quality, and use. However, as with all Earth Day efforts, the objective is action—in this case, providing better access to adequate supplies of clean water for all the world's people.

The campaign will encourage students to learn what's in their own water by discovering how to measure the health of local water resources. Corporations, which use about 20 percent of the world's water and by some estimates waste about half of that through inefficient processes, will be challenged to adopt conservation practices. People across the country and around the globe will be inspired to make clean water a priority.

If you're thinking that water doesn't have much to do with waste and recycling, think again. Here are a few ways that you can practice the three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and promote clean water:

- Follow label instructions carefully whenever using potentially hazardous products.
- Use a drip pan when pouring gasoline or oil to avoid spills onto the ground.
- Grasscycle by letting your clippings drop back onto the lawn when you mow. This will provide moisture to your lawn—and reduce your need to water.
- Use native plant materials in your landscape. After native plants are established, they often require less water and generate less waste than either non-native plants or a grass lawn.
- Recycle. For most materials, processing recyclables and remanufacturing them to make new products uses less fresh water and creates less wastewater than making the same products from virgin materials.

If goods are good, are more goods better?

That is the question raised by *Confronting Consumption*. This book joins others, such as *Affluenza*, *How Much Is Enough?*, and *Culture Jam*, in asking Americans to give some thought to how, why, and what we consume.

Written from different perspectives, each of these books shines a light on some aspect of consumerism and its results. For instance, *Culture Jam* looks primarily at the role of the media in shaping our consumer choices. *Confronting Consumption* makes the point that we see most economic problems in terms of "production"—without questioning the consumption patterns that are in the driver's seat. *Affluenza* explores the effects that consumerism is having on our lives and families, and *How Much Is Enough?* probes the outcomes in our environment.

Other than their theme, these works do have one thing in common. After investigating consumption, each asks readers to become more conscious and more cautious consumers.

You probably won't agree with everything written in these four books—and in fact, they don't always agree with one another. However, each of these books will encourage you to think about your own attitudes toward consumption and your own consumer behaviors, as well as the outlooks and habits of those around you.

Two great videos devoted to consumerism and the alternative—simpler living—are also available. Look for *Affluenza* and *Escape from Affluenza* (Bullfrog Films, 1997 and 1998).

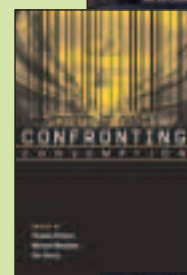
Read more about it

Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic, by John De Graaf, David Wann, and Thomas H. Naylor, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2001

Confronting Consumption, edited by Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca, MIT Press, 2002

Culture Jam: How to Reverse America's Suicidal Consumer Binge—and Why We Must, by Kalle Lasn, Quill, 2000

How Much Is Enough?: The Consumer Society and the Future of the Earth, by Alan Durning, W.W. Norton & Company, 1992



Consuming Choices

According to a recent "Green Gauge Report" by RoperASW, Americans do think about the environment as they shop. Whether you're a consumer, a retailer, a product manufacturer, a policy maker, or a student, consider:

- More than three-quarters of Americans believe that at least some people in this country are at increased risk of disease because of pollution.
- Half of Americans believe they could be doing more to help the environment.
- More than half of Americans conserve electricity and recycle at home.
- More than half of all Americans have purchased a product because advertising indicated that it was environmentally friendly.
- One-quarter of Americans go to the store and seek out recycled-content products to purchase.

What can you do to make your home and environment safe?

Look for safer alternatives

- Buy the least hazardous product.
- Let signal words serve as your guide.
- Buy only as much of a hazardous product as you need to do the job.
- Do not rely entirely on the words "non-toxic" on the label. A product that qualifies as non-toxic can still contain hazardous ingredients, just not in large enough amounts to cause an acute reaction. Chronic hazards often are not considered.
- Read the label carefully. Make sure it is the product you want to buy and that you are willing to follow the safety precautions.
- Avoid aerosol products. They produce tiny droplets that can be deeply inhaled into the lungs and quickly absorbed into the bloodstream.
- Buy hazardous products in childproof packaging.

Use products safely

- Pay careful attention to proper use instructions and dangers.
- Measure amounts accurately. Twice as much does not mean improved results.
- Do not mix products unless instructed by label directions.

Mixing products can cause explosive or poisonous chemical reactions.

- If pregnant, avoid toxic chemical exposure. Many toxic products have not been tested for their effects on unborn children.
- During use, keep hazardous products out of the reach of children and pets.
- Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides. They can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemical against your eyes.
- Do NOT eat, drink, or smoke while using hazardous products. Traces of chemicals can be carried from hand to mouth.
- Use products in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes. Try to keep product lids closed as much as possible while working. If you feel dizzy or nauseous, tightly seal the product, go outside, and take a break.
- Use protective gloves, goggles, and a respirator that are appropriate to the task if the product presents hazards to skin, eyes, or lungs.
- Clean up after using hazardous products. Carefully seal products and properly fasten all caps.

Store products safely

- Keep products out of the reach of children and animals. Store

all hazardous products away from food items in locked cabinets or in cabinets with childproof latches.

- Make certain all products are clearly labeled before storing them.
- Leave products in their original containers. Never put hazardous products in food or beverage containers!
- Keep products away from sources of heat, spark, flame, or ignition (such as pilot lights, switches, and motors).
- Store products containing volatile chemicals, or those that warn of vapors or fumes, in well-ventilated areas.
- Never store rags contaminated with flammable solvents (such as wood stain, paint stripper, and paint remover) because they can spontaneously start on fire.

Dispose of products safely

- DO NOT DISPOSE of household hazardous products: in your household trash, by dumping down a storm drain, by dumping into creeks, by pouring down a sink or toilet, by pouring on the ground, or by burning.
- Dispose of household hazardous products according to manufacturer's guidelines printed on the label or at our annual collection event. For details, see Page 1.



Cleaning recipes for a healthy home

One way you can reduce the number of hazardous products you have in your home is to make your own cleaning products.

Wise buying decisions and good management practices can reduce the hazards in the home, in the air we breathe, and in the water we drink.

All-Purpose Cleaner 1 — Dissolve 4

tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water. Apply with a sponge. Rinse with clear water.

All-Purpose Cleaner 2 — Apply baking soda to a damp sponge. Rinse with clear water.

All-Purpose Cleaner 3 — Mix 1 tablespoon ammonia, 1 tablespoon liquid

detergent, and 1 pint (2 cups) water, and put in a spray bottle. Spray on surface. Wipe. Rinse with clear water. (Note: Ammonia is a toxic ingredient. Handle it with care and store properly. Use this for more difficult cleaning jobs.)

Drain Cleaner — Pour 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain. Add 1/2 cup white vinegar and cover the drain, if possible. Let set for 5 minutes. Then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain. Do not use this method if you have used a commercial drain opener as it may still be present in the drain.

Furniture Cleaner and Polish — Mix together 3 cups olive oil and 1 cup vinegar until well blended. Use a clean, soft cloth to apply to furniture.

Lime and Mineral Deposit Remover — Soak paper towels in vinegar. Apply the paper towels to the lime deposits around the faucet. Leave them on for approximately one hour. The deposits will be softened and can be removed easily.

Aluminum Cookware Cleaner — Combine 2 tablespoons cream of tartar and 1 quart water in cookware. Bring solution to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Wash and dry as usual.

Brass Cleaner — Using lemon juice and baking soda, make a paste of about the consistency of toothpaste. Rub onto brass with a soft cloth. Rinse with water and dry.

Chrome and Stainless Steel Cleaner — Dip soft cloth in undiluted white vinegar. Wipe surface.

Oven Cleaner 1 — Sprinkle water on oven surface. Apply baking soda. Rub using very fine steel wool. Wipe off scum with a damp sponge. Rinse well and dry.

Oven Cleaner 2 — While oven is still warm, sprinkle water on the spill, then sprinkle salt on it. When the oven cools down, scrape the spill away and wash the area.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner — Sprinkle baking soda into the toilet bowl. Add vinegar. Scour with a toilet brush.

Glue/Decal Remover — Soak in white vinegar.

Grout Cleaner — Use a toothbrush with either undiluted vinegar, 3 parts baking soda with one part water, toothpaste, or denture cream.

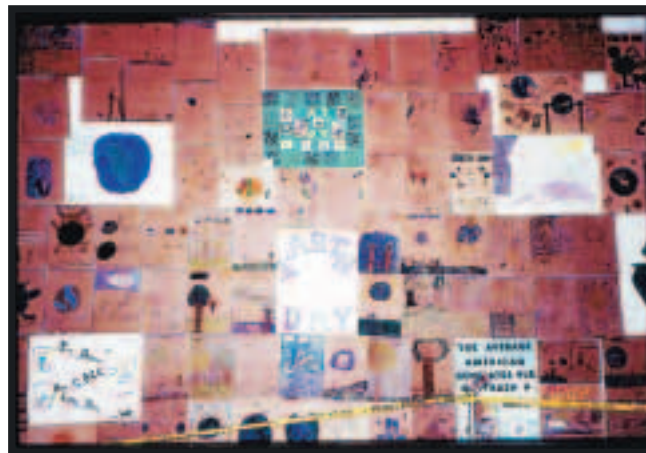
Window Cleaner — Use 1/2 cup vinegar in 1 gallon warm water.

Check out our website, www.rome-floydrecycles.org, for links to more information on "natural" cleaning products, pesticides, and more.

Students invited to spread the Earth Day message

We're inviting students to help us celebrate Earth Day in April. Even though Earth Day comes just once a year, we want everyone to think about taking care of the Earth every day. Students will be helping us spread this message through two special art projects.

Elementary school students from all City of Rome and Floyd County elementary schools are being invited to decorate brown paper grocery bags with an Earth Day theme. Teachers acquire bags from local grocery stores and have the students decorate them by April 15. The Recycling Center will pick up the bags on Wednesday, April 16 and take them to Mount Berry Square Mall, where they will be placed on display from Sunday, April 20 through Sunday, April 27. At the end of this week, the Recycling Center will take the bags down and return them to the stores they came from. The grocery stores then use the bags for customers' groceries—and send the wonderful and artistic Earth Day



messages home!

High school students are being invited to create posters with an Earth Day message. Teachers just need to have students create the posters by April 15. On Wednesday, April 16, the Recycling Center will pick up the posters, which will also be on display at the Mall from April 20 through 27.

In addition to seeing your bag or poster on the Earth Day Wall of Fame at the Mall, one student from each grade level will receive a \$25 prize!

We want your suggestions, questions, and comments!

We are also available to speak to clubs and organizations about solid waste, waste reduction, recycling, and composting.

Rome/Floyd Recycling

405 Watters Street

Rome, GA 30161

706-291-5266

rffrecycl@roman.net

www.rome-floydrecycles.org

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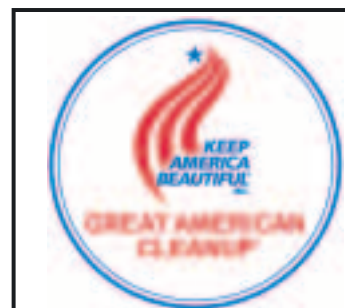
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Please recycle this publication after you have read it!



Get involved in the Great American Cleanup!
For details, contact Mickie Dobbs at Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful, 236-4456.