

## **What you need to know about CRTs (Cathode Ray Tubes) – but didn't know to ask.**

With few exceptions, the computer monitors or televisions in your home or business use a CRT to display information. When it is time to upgrade your monitor or your TV set breaks down, disposing of these electronics properly no longer means tossing them in the trash. In fact, as of July 1, 2006, State law bans CRTs from disposal with your trash.

### **CRTs contain hazardous substances.**

- An individual CRT may contain between two and six pounds of lead. Lead is a toxic metal that can affect virtually every organ system in the body. CRTs contain enough lead to be hazardous waste. In fact, they have been identified as the single largest source of lead in Minnesota's trash.
- For any TV or computer manufactured before the early 1980s, poly-chlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) may be present. A PCB is a highly toxic chemical that builds up in the food chain to levels harmful to human health and the environment.

### **Waste volumes are rapidly increasing.**

- It's estimated that the useful life of a computer is between three and five years, and it's shrinking. The National Safety Council estimates that nationally 5,000 million computers will be obsolete by 2007.
- Trends in TV design will create the potential for a huge volume of waste. New projection TVs, LCD flat screens, Plasma and High Definition Television (HDTV) will replace traditional TVs which will then need to be disposed of. In addition, by the end of 2006, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will require a switch from the current analog system of broadcasting to a digital signal. After the switch is made, TVs that are not equipped to receive the digital signal will need a converter box, or will no longer be useable.
- TVs and computers are becoming obsolete at a rate faster than they are being discarded. In 2003, a Florida Department of Environmental Protection residential survey indicated that half of the households with a broken TV or computer had them in storage. In many cases, it is because people aren't sure what they should do with them.

### **What's the solution?**

The preferred solution lies with electronics manufacturers sharing in the responsibility for managing end-of-life TVs and computer monitors. Discussions on this approach have been occurring for several years at both the state and national level. In the 2004 legislative session, several bills were proposed to establish a process by which manufacturers would collect and recycle TVs and computer monitors. None of these bills was successful, but it is anticipated that similar legislation will be proposed in the upcoming legislative session. Until manufactures develop a system, you should recycle your TV or monitor rather than put it in the trash.

## **Disposal Options for Residents**

**Sell It:** If you have a working computer that is in good condition, call a business that buys and sells computers. Look in the Yellow Pages under “Computers – Dealers” and “Computers – Used”, or list it in the local classifieds to sell it yourself.

**Give It Away:** If you have a usable computer or TV, get connected with the Twin Cities Free Market. The Free Market is an on-line service that connects free, reusable items with people who want them. Go to [www.twincitiesfreemarket.org](http://www.twincitiesfreemarket.org) and follow the instructions on how to list your computer or TV or other household items.

**Recycle It:** Return your computer or TV to the manufacturer. Several offer take back programs. Check: [www.moea.state.mn.us/plugin/recyclers-household.cfm](http://www.moea.state.mn.us/plugin/recyclers-household.cfm)

Call your waste hauler and ask if they accept computers and/or televisions for recycling.

**Self-Hauling Options:** The following companies will recycle your old television or computer. Call for information on items they accept and cost of disposal.

**Blaine:** Green Light Recycling - 763-785-0456

**Eagan:** Materials Processing Corp - 651-681-8099

**Inver Grove Heights:** JR’s Appliance – 651-766-7422

**Little Canada:** Retrofit Recycling – 651-766-7422

**Roseville:** Mercury Waste Solutions – 651-628-9370

**St. Paul:** Asset Recovery 651-602-0789

Plaza TV & Appliance – 651-731-3603

Twin City Refuse & Recycling – 651-227-1549

NRG Transfer Station – 651-228-1324

**West Saint Paul:** Plaza TV & Appliance – 651-457-1196