



Recycle Your Holidays™ still going strong in Bemidji

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The holiday season may be over but Recycle Your Holidays™ is still going strong in Bemidji. Recycle Your Holidays™ is a statewide holiday light recycling program of the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) in partnership with WCCO TV, Xcel Energy, Ace Hardware and CERTS. This is the first-of-its-kind holiday light recycling program which kicked off on November 15, 2010. To date there are over 330 collection locations statewide and is well on its way to exceeding the goal of collecting 200,000 pounds of holiday lights this holiday season.

"Recycle Your Holidays recycles every part of the light strings. Even the little lights are recycled by another project partner Green Lights Recycling," stated Ellen Telander, Executive Director of RAM. "Our goal last year was to recycle 50,000 pounds of lights which we more than doubled! We also encourage Bemidji residents to make the switch to LED light strands, which will save a lot of energy."

Recycle Your Holidays™ is a unique grass-roots program of RAM which employs adults with disabilities from local vocational centers throughout the state. In Bemidji the closest public drop off location is the Bemidji Ace Hardware Store. It is free for businesses or organizations to participate and it offers free collection of holiday lights, free collection bins and signs. It's a win-win for businesses and organizations who want to provide a unique way to go green this holiday season.

Bill Shaw, Manager at the Bemidji Ace Hardware Store commented, "We are participating in the Recycle Your Holidays™ program because we wanted to help out our community and the environment."

"This is a great chance to combine recycling with energy efficiency," says Joel Haskard, a coordinator with the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs). "People can reduce their home energy costs with new LED lights, plus there is an 85-90% reduction of energy using recycled copper from the old holiday lights versus extracting copper." Haskard notes many utilities and hardware stores now offer rebates on LED holiday lights.

According to estimates by the Clean Energy Resource Teams, recycling 50,000 pounds of lights in Minnesota would save about 530,000 kilowatt hours, or about 960,000 pounds of carbon dioxide-that's the same as powering 55 Minnesota homes for a year, or taking 75 average-sized cars off the road! This is assuming 20,000 pounds of lights are replaced by LEDs and homeowners with lights use them for

about six hours a day from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day.

RAM is making it easier than ever to find out where you can recycle your holiday lights with interactive maps on their website at www.recycleminnesota.org. For more information about Recycle Your Holidays™, the statewide effort to recycle holiday lights, visit: www.recycleminnesota.org.

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About Recycling Association of Minnesota

The Recycling Association of Minnesota RAM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with more than 200 members from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. RAM is the Minnesota affiliate of the National Recycling Coalition. RAM is committed to promoting resource conservation through waste prevention, reuse, recycling, composting and purchasing practices using the most cost effective and environmentally sound methods available in Minnesota. RAM is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

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