

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDY:



CABARRUS COUNTY - ELECTRONICS COLLECTION

Jurisdiction:	Cabarrus County
Best Management Practice:	Annual Electronics Collection
Purpose:	Provide residents with a recycling service to avoid disposal of electronics in the landfill
Ordinance:	No
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DESCRIPTION

Cabarrus County has had two electronics collection events, held in 2001 and 2002, with a third scheduled for January 2003. The same contractor has handled all three collections. For the 2001 collection, all office-type electronics (except for televisions) were accepted and the entire event was offered free of charge. For the 2002 collection, televisions were added to the list of acceptable materials, though a contractor fee per unit was charged for televisions, monitors and copiers. The county will partially subsidize the third collection event in order to reduce the direct cost to residents.

Businesses are not included in the regular collection dates but can arrange for separate times to drop off electronics at the full contracted price. Cabarrus County also works with the nonprofit Voices and Choices organization during electronics collections to reclaim products where possible and to offer residents the opportunity to claim a tax exemption. Local municipalities assist with information distribution and labor where possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

The events contractor provides a convenient service to the county by charging for only the cost of recycling the units and not for any transportation costs associated with the collection. The county advertised for the events through brochures, news releases, utility bill inserts, a quarterly newsletter, and the Cabarrus County Web site.

For the second collection, the county was informed that the contractor would charge a new fee per unit for televisions, monitors and copiers; since the event budget had been set, the fee had to be passed onto the residents. Therefore, for the second collection, there was an \$8-15 dollar (and possibly greater) charge for televisions depending upon size; computer

monitors were \$5, and copiers ranged from \$10-50. For the third collection event, the county plans to subsidize the costs of televisions, resulting in a \$5 flat fee for citizens on televisions and monitors (up to 35"). Businesses are still required to pay the full cost.

RESULTS

During the 2001 collection event, the county issued surveys to garner citizen feedback and had a total of 285 surveys completed. (The actual event participation was slightly higher, as some residents did not get surveyed if materials were dropped off during a heavy rush or after hours.) Out of the 285 surveyed, 118 stated that if the collection event had not occurred they would have continued to store the materials; 137 stated that they would have thrown away the old electronics. The county collected 29.7 tons of recyclable electronics during its first collection.

For the 2002 collection, surveys were also distributed and 202 were completed. Again, participation was higher as the staff ran out of survey forms. Of the 202 surveyed the second year, only 32 had participated the previous year. Eighty-five participants stated they would have continued to store the items if the event had not occurred, while 86 stated that they would have discarded their old electronics. For the second collection event, more than 17 tons of electronics were collected. The charge for the second year, with no county subsidy, may have deterred some from using the service.

For the third collection year, although there will be some county subsidy to reduce fees, the event has also been relocated. The county has advertised for the new location and hopes that the change does not hinder participation.

