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xml

- HOME
- NEWS
- SPORTS
- LIFESTYLES
- ENTERTAINMENT
- OPINION/BLOGS
- MULTIMEDIA
- SPECIAL SECTIONS
- CLASSIFIEDS
- SITE SERVICES

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## Tip List: Why aren't businesses, apartment dwellers offered recycling like homeowners have?

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In honor of Earth Day earlier this week, Tip List is paying tribute to the Merced apartment dwellers who are turning red over the green issue of recycling.

Jennifer Juarez, a single mother who calls a two-bedroom apartment on Loughborough Drive home, said she has to take her bottles, cans and cardboard to a drop-off site if she wants them recycled.

"I just don't have that kind of time," said the 23-year old. "It would be nice if we could do it here where we lived."

A few quick calls to five other apartment complexes in the city showed that none of them provide a way for their tenants to recycle. But it isn't because they don't want to take part in saving planet Earth. It turns out the city of Merced doesn't provide the service.

Currently, Merced's single-family houses are the only places curbside recycling pickup is offered. The Merced City Refuse Division doesn't collect recyclable materials at apartments or businesses.

"At this point in time, it's a matter of economics," said Stan Murdock, the city's solid waste manager. The cost of additional collection trucks, receptacles and sanitation workers would mean monthly trash pickup costs would rise.

Murdock said back in January that there's more material that can be recycled than is being recycled -- "The big question is, is it economically feasible to the customers to do so?" he wondered.

When the city began residential recycling in 2003, it cost about \$1 million to start the program and added about \$7 a month to garbage bills, said Murdock. How much expanding to apartments would



SUN-STAR PHOTO BY GEORGE MACDONALD  
David Steffen says he can make up to \$20 a day recycling from apartment trash.

April 24, 2008

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cost has yet to be determined.

But the city's working on it. Murdock said his department is devising a plan to add recycling services to apartments and businesses in Merced. He said the plan will be brought to the city council by early 2009.

WHAT'S WRONG: Apartment complexes in Merced don't offer recycling services to residents.

WHAT'S BEING DONE: Merced City Public Works is working on a plan to add recycling services to both apartment complexes and businesses in the city.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE: Merced Public Works, (209) 385-6800.

For more information on recycling in Merced, check out <http://mercedrecycles.com/>

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