

COMMUNITY REUSE FAIRS*

*Formerly Known as Garbage
Fairs or Reuse Roundups

An easy guide to
organizing a
successful Reuse Fair



Waste Management Branch
September 2005



BENEFITS OF A REUSE FAIR

A Reuse Fair, formerly known as a Garbage Fair or Reuse Roundup, is a one-day community event where unwanted but reusable household items are collected and passed on to charities, non-profits, artisans and schools that need them.

Some examples of typical items include milk jug lids, old bedding, onion bags, keys, spices, corks, broken jewellery, nylons and old calendars. Believe it or not these are not worthless items but valuable resources that can be reused!

REUSE FAIRS SERVE MANY PURPOSES

- Community and charitable organizations save money with items that can enhance their programs.
- Waste is reduced and diverted from Edmonton's landfill.
- Encourages community members to join in, clean out clutter and pass it on.
- Promotes community and environmental stewardship which in turn generates pride in the area.
- The Free Table and Book/Magazine Exchange gives everyone a chance to find a treasure.
- Volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life get involved in a community activity. It's a fun opportunity to meet like minded people.



PLANNING A COMMUNITY REUSE FAIR

FIRST THINGS TO CONSIDER....

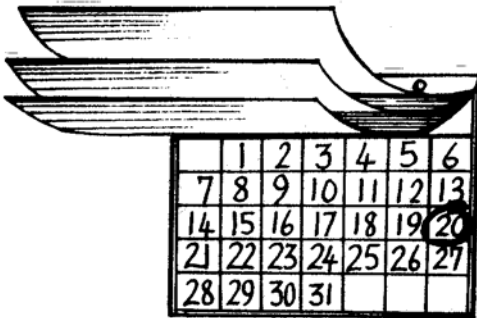
SIZE OF FAIR

Reuse Fairs can be stand-alone community events or can be held in conjunction with other simple events. Past fairs have worked well with bottle drives, BBQs and community garage sales. Remember, “keep it simple” is often the most effective approach when deciding what size of a fair you can manage. Although fairs have been combined with more complex events such as community league open houses the planning of both events can turn out to be overwhelming for organizers.

Tip: First time Reuse Fairs should try to keep their event simple and plan to build it up from year to year. It is reasonable to assume that new Reuse Fairs will attract around 100 people. Larger, well-established fairs have attracted over 650 people.

LOCATION

A key element to planning your fair is finding a location. In addition to floor space you will need to consider accessibility and parking when picking a site. Most Reuse Fairs are held at community halls, but church halls and other similar spaces work as well. To be feasible the space should be available at no charge the day of the fair and ideally for set-up the evening before.

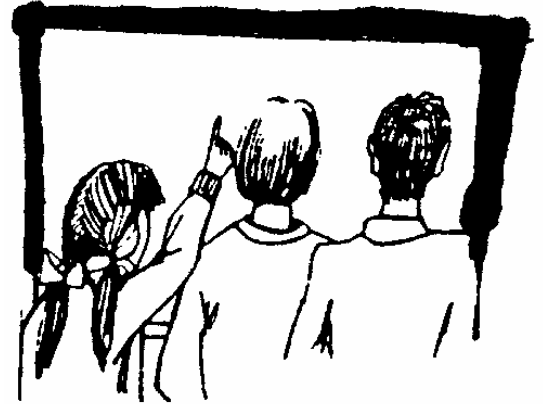


DATE AND TIME

Reuse Fairs held during the mild weather of spring (March to mid-June) and fall (September to mid-October) draw the highest attendance. Summer fairs attract fewer people because everyone is busy enjoying the short season. Fairs held on Saturdays from 10 am to 3 pm have proven to be the most successful.

DISPLAYS

To create a fun, fair-like atmosphere at your reuse event invite interesting artisans and organizations to set up displays. This provides an opportunity to engage visitors, present creative ideas for 'reuse' and promote environmental stewardship. For a list of displays that may be available contact the Waste Management Branch.²



FREE TABLE & BOOK EXCHANGE

You will find that items that you did not request will be brought to the Reuse Fair. These items can be directed to a "Free Table" for visitors to take as they wish. The Free Table is a necessary element to all Reuse Fairs and is also one of the most popular. Another draw for a Reuse Fair is a "Book and Magazine Exchange Table". Visitors can drop off magazines and books they no longer want and take home new ones!



Tip: Offering a food concession can add to the friendly fair ambience. This can be a fundraising venture for the Reuse Fair, the community league or a group like the Boy Scouts.

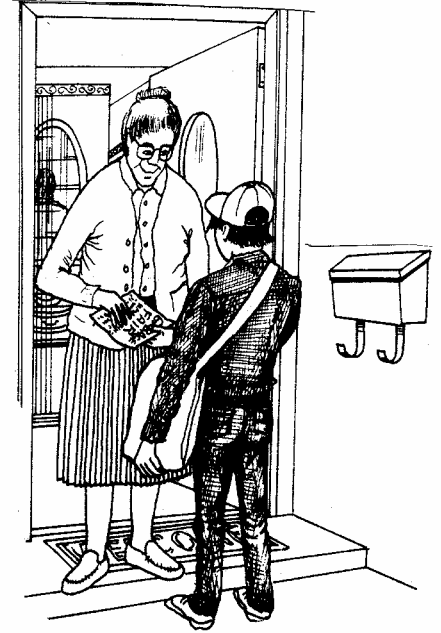
One person's trash is another person's treasure.

² Contact Amy Baxter, Reuse Coordinator, at 496-5666 or amy.baxter@edmonton.ca

GETTING THE WORD OUT³

There are many ways to let people know about your Reuse Fair:

- Place announcements or inserts in community and school newsletters or newspapers.
- Hand-deliver notices door to door (possibly by Boy Scouts or Girl Guides).
- Provide hand outs to schools, churches and daycares.
- Post notices on community bulletin boards.
- Arrange to have information posted on large community league signs.



The City of Edmonton's Waste Management Branch will also help promote your fair:

- Your Reuse Fair information and flyer is posted on the city website at www.edmonton.ca/waste under 'Reuse & Reduce'.
- Advertisements are placed in the Edmonton Examiner – one ad for all spring Reuse Fair dates and one ad for all fall dates.
- The Waste Hotline answers inquiries with information on upcoming Reuse Fairs.

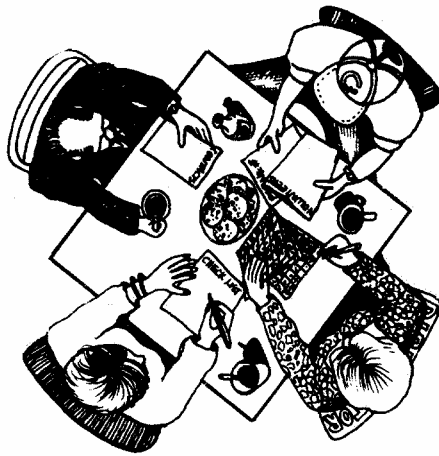
OTHER SUPPORT AVAILABLE FROM THE WASTE MANAGEMENT BRANCH:

- Training and additional organizational resources
- Up to \$200 in funding to cover publicity and food for volunteers
- People
 - Assistance in recruiting volunteers from the City's Master Composter Recycler Program
 - A staff member to help with fair set up
 - A staff member (with a City van) to help with clean up
- Logistical resources
 - All signs typically needed for a Reuse Fair
 - Plastic boxes for sorting items at the fair
 - Plastic bags for packing orders
 - Miscellaneous items: tape, pens, nametags etc.

³ Related additional resources: Reuse Fair Flyer - *Sample*

Organizers' Roles⁴

- Chooses the date and time and makes the location booking
- Contacts organizations, collects their wish lists, and makes arrangements for items to be picked up at end of fair
- Publicizes the fair and the list of collection items
- Invites artisans and organizations to participate in displays
- Recruits and trains volunteers
- Organizes set up and clean up
- Provides organizational leadership on fair day
- After the Reuse Fair submits a report to the City of Edmonton Waste Management Branch to claim funding.

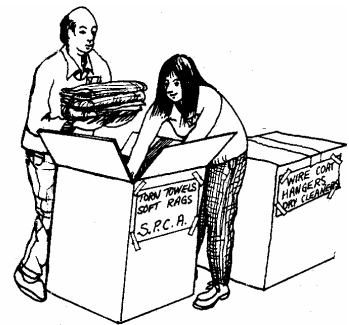


Tip: Although some fairs have been coordinated by a "Lone Ranger" it can be more satisfying and less work if there is a team approach to organizing the event.

Volunteers' Roles

An average of 22 people are needed on the day of fair (Reuse Fairs have been run with as few as 8 people and as many as 40).

- Greets and assists visitors in unloading donations
- Sorts donations as they arrive
- Packs orders throughout day
- Keeps the Free Table, Book Exchange and other collection areas organized
- Cleans up at end of fair



Many hands make light work.

⁴Related additional resources: Reuse Fair Planning Checklist, Sorting Items and Filing Orders, Organizing Volunteers.



Other Ways to Reuse in Your Community

- Hold a community garage sale.
- Plan a perennial plant exchange.
- Organize a neighbourhood exchange or large item charity collection day.

For these additional resources – Contact Amy Baxter

- ✓ Finding Outlets for Reuse Fair Items
- ✓ What to Collect at a Reuse Fair
- ✓ Wish List Order Form – *Sample*
- ✓ What is a Reuse Fair? – *Information for potential outlets*
- ✓ Reuse Fair Flyer – *Sample*
- ✓ Reuse Fair Planning Checklist
- ✓ Sorting Items and Filing Orders
- ✓ Organizing Volunteers

QUESTIONS?

Contact City of Edmonton Waste Management Branch

Amy Baxter – Reuse Coordinator

Phone: 496-5666

Email: amy.baxter@edmonton.ca