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4603 Vine Street, 466-4045, Lincoln

Coordinator says recycling big at NU

By **TED McCASLIN**
Staff Reporter

UNL sophomore Sean Masters said he doesn't go out of his way to recycle his pop cans on campus.

"One can will do something but not enough," Masters said. "It may be a good idea, but what will it accomplish?"

Add 781 tons of materials collected on campus for recycling, and it makes quite a difference.

Along with saving energy, water and trees, recycling has saved the university thousands of dollars in landfill fees, said Dale Ekart, University of Nebraska-Lincoln recycling coordinator.

In the last fiscal year, UNL recycled 781 tons of material used on campus.

Of that material, 719 pounds was paper, which saved 12,223 trees, according to industry standards set by the Paper Institute.

It also saved enough energy — 2.95 kilowatt-hours worth — to power 307 average homes in Lincoln for one year, said Lincoln Electric System spokesperson Russ Reno.

Five million gallons of water also were saved by recycling this paper.

Cardboard, office paper and newsprint comprise most of the paper products recycled, Ekart said. Paper towels and disposable napkins are not recycled.

Daily Nebraskans made up more than half of the newsprint recycled from academic buildings on campus, Ekart said.

The program also recycled four tons of aluminum, 5.7 tons of steel and 4.2 tons of plastic in the last fiscal year. Other recycled materials included wood pallets, fluorescent tubes and Styrofoam peanuts.

But some recyclable material makes it to the landfill, because people throw it in trash cans instead of recycling bins, Ekart said.

The recovery of recyclable material also saves costly landfill space, Ekart said. The university saved more than 2,742 cubic yards of landfill space by recycling last year and avoided nearly \$12,500 in landfill fees.

The program has a budget of \$40,000 to \$45,000, Ekart said. But the

"Our bottom line is improving the human environment."

DALE EKART
recycling coordinator

program makes some money by selling recycled materials.

"Our hope is to run a free program," Ekart said.

The program made \$2,300 in fiscal year 1996, he said, because paper sold at an unusually high price.

The university made about \$37,000 from selling recyclable materials in fiscal year 1996 and \$15,000 in fiscal year 1997.

But Ekart said recycling's economic benefit to the university is not the primary goal of the recycling program.

"Our bottom line is improving the human environment," he said. "Most recyclers' job is work themselves out of a job."

"We really want to reduce waste." Michelle Haddix, projects coordinator for UNL Recycling and Ecology Now! director, said her job also is to reduce waste.

"It's a really messy job," she said about picking up drink containers. "It gets all over your shoes."

Despite the mess, Haddix said her job is worthwhile because she is "trying to help make a difference for the benefit of the environment."

UNL Recycling is working to increase the number of recycling bins on campus to make recycling more convenient.

But "it's not all that convenient," junior Jeanette Burbridge said.

"If it's by a trash can I'll put it in there," she said, because "it's a positive thing for the environment."

Junior Steph McCann said she approves of on-campus recycling.

"I feel guilty if I don't," McCann said. "Everybody has to (recycle) together."

"We can't throw any more away."

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