



Plastic Bag Recycling Project ***PA-TSA Green Initiative***

Prepared by the PA-TSA Environmental Committee

Goal(s)

- Spread awareness of the environmental impact of plastic bag usage through an insightful project
- Recycle a large amount of plastic bags within the PA-TSA community.

Explanation

We all use plastic bags. Whether we use them to carry our groceries home or projects to school, or even to pick up dog excrement, plastic bags have become a habitual, near-daily necessity. The environmental impact of these bags has also been well established (source: www.reusablebags.com):

- In landfills, plastic bags can take up to 1,000 years to degrade. As litter, they typically degrade into smaller, pieces, contaminating our soil, water, roadsides parks, campgrounds, and neighborhoods.
- Hundreds of thousands of sea turtles, whales and other marine mammals die every year as a result of eating discarded plastic bags mistaken for food. Turtles think the bags are jellyfish, their primary food source. Once swallowed, plastic bags can choke animals or block their intestines, often leading to an agonizing death.

TSA members use a large amount of plastic bags for various reasons including transporting projects and carrying personal goods to conferences. There are two ways in which this consumption can be directly offset thereby reducing how many plastic bags the membership uses and reusing/recycling the plastic bags that are used. Although reducing the initial use of plastic bags is the more effective method in dealing with the problem, it's an inconvenient and non-feasible solution. Recycling plastic bags appears to be the more practical and environmentally pragmatic approach.

Implementation

At the PA-TSA State Conference this year, the Environmental Committee will set up two collection bins for plastic bags. Adjacent to these bins, signage will encourage the membership to deposit their used plastic bags for a PA-TSA Green Initiative project. Environmental Committee members will collect the bags on the Friday preceding the end of the conference.

If a large amount of plastic bags are collected, the Environmental Committee plans to take these bags and link them together in the form of a chain. This "chain" will then be taken outdoors, either to the parking lot or adjacent to the hotel building, and measured, to demonstrate it's relative length. Pictures and video will be taken to publicize the event.

When the event is finished, the Environmental Committee will seek Seven Spring's help in recycling these bags, or take them off-site to be recycled at a supermarket or recycling center. Prior to the conference it will be determined if Seven Springs will be able to help us with the recycling efforts and providing bins for the project.



Tentative "To Do" List

- Contact Seven Springs to determine if they will be able to provide bins for the project and recycle the plastic bags after the event.
- Preceding the State Conference (Tuesday, April 13, 2010), the collection bins will be set up by the Environmental Committee and State Officer Team.

Written by
Phil Hayes, Chairman
PA-TSA Environmental Committee

Sponsored by
PA-TSA State Officer Team