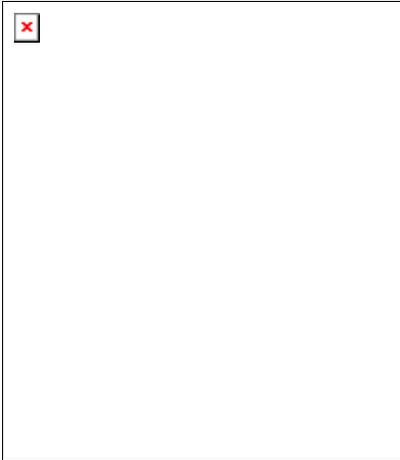




Tehama County part of unique pilot program

By Julie R. Johnson/Tri-County Newspapers

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Tehama County has been selected as one of only three counties in the state to work on a pilot program developing a state sanctioned Paint Product Stewardship Program.

"I think it is exciting to bring this pilot program to the county," said Kristina Miller, Tehama County Sanitary Landfill Agency manager.

The state selected Tehama County as the rural representative in the program, San Joaquin County as the suburban and the city and county of San Francisco as the urban representatives.

These three areas in partnership received a \$400,000 California Integrated Waste Management Board of Household Hazardous Waste Discretionary Grant to develop the paint stewardship program. San Joaquin will act as the grant manager.

The purpose of funding the pilot program is to educate consumers and retailers on better ways to collect paint from retailers and the public and teach how to purchase the right amounts of paint to avoid unwanted left-overs.

"We also want to work closely with paint retailers to develop collection sites for take-back latex paint, implement paint reuse programs, and work closely with all involved to help teach and give financial help to implement the stewardship program," Miller said.

Americans spend \$90 million annually buying excess paint, with two million gallons per year being disposed as hazardous waste in California, and the state spending \$16 million annually to dispose of it.

"One of the goals of the stewardship program is to see the financial burden of disposing of the public's excess paint that is currently on county and city landfills, be placed on paint manufacturers," Miller said. "We would like to see the paint industry begin to design less toxic paint and believe if manufacturers have to take on more of the financial responsibility of disposing of it that will occur."

Each paint retailer in the county that takes part in the take-bake program will receive training for their staff on the identification and collection of latex paint. There at least three paint retailers in the county who have already agreed to take part in the program, Miller said.

One of those retailers is Hatfield Ace Hardware right here in Corning. The store is owned by Chip and Connie McCoy.

"We haven't been able to get any of the big-box name stores to join in the efforts, it has been more of the mom-and-pop stores that are willing and enthusiastic," Miller said.

As part of the program she would also like to see the county utilize public paint swaps and looks to inundate the public with information on how to measure and purchase the right amount of paint.

"That way we don't have so many left-over half-empty cans of paint," Miller said. "That alone could solve much of the problem."

The trio of county is hoping once the program is up and functioning within their areas, they can hand it over to the paint industry by 2011.

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