

Research Underway on Waste Re-Use

The Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Health, Education, and Welfare have announced the establishment of a joint research and development pilot project aimed at helping the nation's cities reconvert solid wastes into useable materials.

The project is being conducted at Madison, Wisconsin, to develop the technology needed to transform discarded cans, bottles, plastics, paper and other solid trash into materials that can be re-used in the economy.

Later on, the Departments

hope to build a full scale demonstration facility capable of demonstrating to cities and towns across the country one way to handle their solid waste production. The design of this facility will begin this year.

The disposal of solid wastes is one of the nation's most pressing environmental pollution problems. Last year, municipalities across the United States spent about \$4.5 billion to collect and dispose of nearly 350 million tons of solid wastes, much of which went to open land dumps, creating new health and pollution problems. By the early 1980's

solid discards are expected to exceed one half billion tons annually.

Under the agreement announced today by the three Departments, the source of the materials in the new pilot project will be the municipal waste of Madison, Wisconsin, which is being ground into shreds by a huge grinder. The grinder project is a demonstration of the Bureau of Solid Waste Management in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Environmental Health Service.

Personnel at the Department

of Agriculture's Forest Products Laboratory at Madison will separate the paper waste from the grinder's output to convert it to such products as boxes, corrugated board and tissue paper.

The Interior Department's contribution will be to separate the metals from the grinder's output for use in experiments at its laboratory in College Park, Maryland. The Department's Bureau of Mines already is operating a mechanical process at the laboratory for reclaiming scrap and waste metals. The objective is to find ways to reprocess such

metal waste as iron and aluminum into an acceptable state — and at a low enough cost — for re-use by manufacturers.

This summer, the Bureau of Mines plans to send personnel and equipment from its College Park laboratory to Madison to increase its participation in the project.

The laboratory now uses metals separated from incinerator residue. The waste metal at Madison will be preferable to this because it will be clean and thus easier to process.

The Bureau of Solid Waste Management supports research in virtually every phase of solid waste problems — incinerators, sanitary and land fills and in finding new uses for wastes.

Ordinary municipal wastes collected annually contain 10 million tons of iron, 1 million tons of non-ferrous metals such as aluminum, copper, nickel, tin, lead, silver, gold, and zinc, and 15 million tons of glass. The Bureau of Mines has developed systems that can efficiently separate and recover these materials and can even separate crushed glass into its clear and colored components. At present nearly all of these potentially valuable resources, worth nearly \$1 billion are incinerated, buried in dumps, and lost.

Approximately half the bulk of urban refuse collected by municipalities consists of paper and wood products. This amounts to more than 35 million tons of wood fiber annually that is not now being reclaimed. At the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, Forest Service research has been developing ways to recover and utilize this resource.

Re-use of only half of this waste paper would, in effect, reduce the drain on our wood resource each year by 30 million cords. This is equivalent to the total timber production from a million acres of forest land.

CHURCH AUCTION

Location — Refton Firehouse just off Rt. 222, 8 miles south of Lancaster, Pa.

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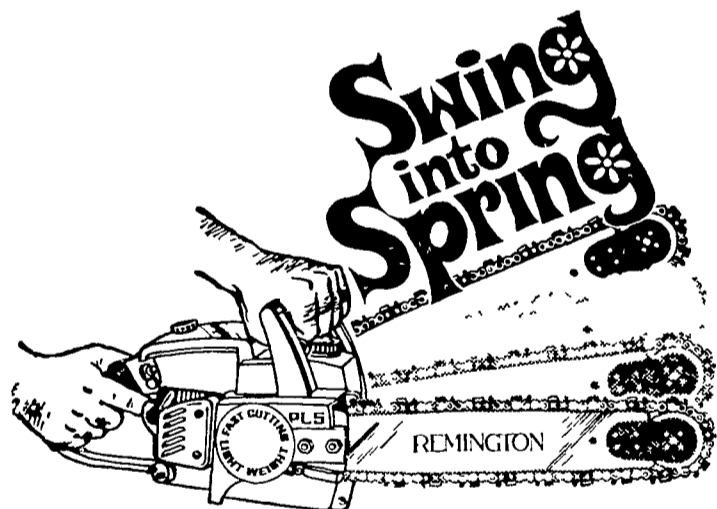
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