

Use good 'R' words to conserve resources

BY ALAN STYLES

For The Salinas Californian

A new year has begun; it's an ideal time to reflect on our lives and make fresh starts. Especially during an economic recession (the dreaded "R" word), it makes sense to get back to basics and conserve resources. Here are more "R" words to help you get started.

Reduce

Reduce waste and you'll keep more resources in your wallet.

At least 10 cents of every dollar we spend on groceries pays for packaging. Buy the biggest size you can use and products with less packaging; you'll throw away less of your money. Avoid single-serving packaging.

Time is money, and you'll save time when you reduce the junk mail you handle. www.stopjunkmail.org offers free online resources to help you remove your name and address from mailing lists.

Reuse

When you have a choice between a single-use product and a durable product, choose to reuse.

Two reusable items with big impacts on your local environment are reusable shopping bags and reusable drink containers. Many grocery stores give discounts for bringing your own bags. Some coffee shops and convenience stores will do the same when you bring your own beverage container.

Reuse through second-hand stores is a terrific way to save on things you need while keeping useful products out of the landfill. Donate unwanted goods with remaining life. Get a receipt, because your donation may be tax deductible.

Recycle

We can't always avoid packaging or single-use containers, so it's important to recycle anything that can't be



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Recycling

ONLINE

For practical ways to conserve your resources and incorporate more R's into your life, visit www.svswa.org.

reused. Avoid buying products with packaging that can't be recycled, such as Styrofoam. Glass, metals, paper, cardboard, and plastics with recycle arrows and numbers corresponding with those your waste hauler accepts can all be recycled.

Rot

Rot refers to composting. Even people living in smaller places or apartments can compost. Composting turns food waste into a nutrient-rich soil amendment on which plants thrive.

Repair

Rather than throw out (or recycle) items, it's often more economical to repair them than to purchase a replacement.

***ALAN STYLES** is recycling coordinator for the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority. His column appears the third Saturday of the month in Central Coast Living. Contact him at alanst@svswa.org.*

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