

Plastic bags drive up costs, drive down value of curbside recycling



Waste Management workers risk life and limb to remove plastic bags caught in the recycling equipment.

Oak Park ranks among the most conscientious municipalities in the region when it comes to diverting materials away from landfills and into recycling.

But many Oak Parkers also are guilty of a common practice that is driving up costs and driving down the value of the community's curbside recycling program — putting single-use plastic bags into their blue carts.

It's not that single-use plastic bags can't be recycled into new materials. They just require a different collection system and processing equipment that few curbside recycling programs — including Oak Park's — can provide.

Clean plastic bags should be returned to grocery stores and big-box retailers that collect them for proper recycling.

Bag use declining — see page 5

Using plastic bags to collect and carry your recyclables to the bin is okay, too, so long as you empty them into the

recycling bin and then put the bag with those going to retailers, or toss the bag into the regular trash.

So what happens to those plastic bags so many of us toss into the recycling bin when they make it to the plant that processes Oak Park's residential recycling?

Most likely, they will end up wrapped around equipment, bringing the processing line to a halt and requiring workers to remove the bags by hand in a harrowing experience that sometimes occurs multiple times a day.

The bags that don't jam up the equipment are likely to be caught within the neatly bound bundles of cardboard, bringing down their value for reuse.

Officials are quick to accept that proper recycling can be a challenge, given the vast range of materials that comprise modern product packaging. But just keeping those single-use plastic bags out the blue carts is a major step in the right direction, they say.

For more information on refuse and recycling collection in Oak Park, visit www.oak-park.us/recycling.

A Day in Our Village festival is June 3



The 45th annual A Day in Our Village festival celebrating diversity and community involvement is scheduled for Sun., June 3.

Activity booths representing Oak Park civic, cultural, social service, educational, religious and business organizations will fill Scoville Park, Lake Street at Oak Park Avenue, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. along with live performances and a food court featuring local restaurants. Rehm Park & Pool and the Oak Park Conservatory, Garfield Street at East Avenue, also will offer many activities from 1 to 6 p.m., with \$5 wristbands for unlimited access to carnival games, rides, entertainment, inflatables and the hand-powered trains. Admission to Rehm Pool will be half price during the event. An Oak Park Township mini-bus will provide free transportation between venues. Organizations or businesses interested in hosting a booth can register at www.oak-park.us/dioivregistration. The registration deadline is May 18. For more information, call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us.



Outdoor sculpture walk returns

The *Oak Park Sculpture Walk* returns for a seventh season in May, with 12 sculptures on display in an outdoor exhibit in the Southtown Business District along Oak Park Avenue between Lexington and Van Buren streets. Sculptures are chosen through a juried competition and vary in materials. This year's Sculpture Walk features work by artists from throughout the Midwest and beyond, with submissions coming from as far as Key West, Fla. The sculptures will remain on display through early September. Visitors will be able to download the free *Otocast* app on their smartphones to access information about the sculptures and hear descriptions of the work by the artists. The Sculpture Walk is organized by the Oak Park Area Arts Council. For more information, email sculpturewalk@oakparkareaartscouncil.org.

Inspectors walking neighborhoods

Village property inspectors are checking single-family homes and apartment buildings for visible code violations to ensure public safety and community aesthetics as part of the Neighborhood Walk Program. If you receive a violation letter, please take care of the repairs within the period specified in the letter. For more information call 708.358.5430 or email building@oak-park.us.

Free concerts, movies in the park

Families are invited to bring lawn chairs and blankets for feature films set to begin May 19 in Scoville Park on Lake Street, just west of Oak Park Avenue. In addition, the Park District of Oak Park hosts free Sunday concerts in Scoville Park beginning June 10 that feature a variety of local and well-known bands that cover a wide range of music from oldies and rockabilly to blues, folk and rock. For details on the movies and bands, visit www.pdop.org where rain dates also will be posted.

Mobile stroke ambulance rolls into Oak Park



Residents who report symptoms of stroke may receive state-of-the-art, emergency care on site rather than having to wait to reach an emergency room now that Rush Oak Park Hospital has deployed a specially designed mobile ambulance in Oak Park. The custom-built Rush Mobile Stroke Unit, one of only six in the nation, is equipped with technology and drug therapies that are critical to accurately diagnosing and immediately beginning treatment for stroke. Patients typically cannot be treated until they get to an emergency department. But with the mobile stroke unit, immediate diagnosis and treatment can begin wherever there is need, which will improve chances of a good recovery. The mobile stroke team will respond to 911 calls reporting symptoms indicating stroke and can perform CT scans of patients promptly upon arrival. Rush radiologists then analyze transmissions of these detailed brain images from the unit, allowing neurologists to evaluate the patients remotely and decide what kind of treatment is needed. Critical care registered nurses staffing the mobile unit will administer the appropriate stroke medication after conferring with the stroke neurologist and then transport the patient to the most appropriate center. The mobile stroke unit will respond in support of Oak Park firefighter/paramedics. For more information, email fire@oak-park.us.

Lawn sprinkling, hot water heating systems require backflow preventers

As Oak Parkers get ready to put their lawn sprinkling systems back online for the season, they are reminded that federal, state and local regulations require a device that prevents any water from flowing back into and possibly contaminating the municipal water supply. Cross connections between in-home devices and the public water supply typically are protected by a valve called a backflow preventer. Property owners are required at their own expense to have these valves installed and checked annually. Most plumbing contractors can install backflow preventers and are certified to test them. But it is not just water irrigation systems that require backflow-prevention valves. Residential backflow preventers typically are found on systems for filling swimming pools and water features, and on fire sprinkler systems. If your heat is supplied by radiators, the hot water boiler should have a backflow preventer, too, as should a water softener. Toilets, bathtubs, sinks, hot water heaters and other standard plumbing fixtures do not require backflow preventers. The Village has contracted with Aqua Backflow to administer and oversee the local backflow prevention program. Property owners contacted by the firm for compliance inspections or surveys are urged to follow the instructions in the communications. Aqua Backflow does not test, install or repair backflow preventers. For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Parking ticket payment plans offered

Vehicles owners with large outstanding parking fines may be eligible for payment plans. The typical plan involves fines in excess of \$500, allows payments to be made over a six-month period and charges a \$2 monthly administrative fee. Longer payment plans may be available in special circumstances. Only the registered owner of a vehicle may enter into a payment plan. Owners of vehicles that have been booted or towed or that have had their licenses suspended are not eligible. Individuals who fail to successfully complete a payment plan will be responsible for the balance of the citations due, any administrative fees and a \$100 default penalty. Immobilization or license suspension procedures also may be initiated, if applicable. Payment plan requests must be submitted in person to the Office of Adjudication, Oak Park Village Hall, 123 Madison St. For more information, call 708.358.5630.

Vehicle sticker sales begin in May



Village vehicle stickers for the 2018/2019 season are scheduled to go on sale in mid-May, after renewal notices are received by the owners of vehicles registered to Oak Park residents.

Every Oak Park resident who owns or leases a motor vehicle is required to display a valid Village sticker annually before July 15 to get the lowest rate. The rate increases by \$20 after the deadline. Failure to display a valid Village sticker also could result in a \$75 ticket.

A current vehicle sticker is needed to purchase a parking permit.

Residents whose vehicles already are registered with the Village can save time by renewing online at www.oak-park.us/onlineservices, rather than via mail or in person at Village Hall, 123 Madison St.

Vehicle owners who renew online have the option to receive next year's renewal notice via email, eliminating the need for a paper notice sent by mail.

First-time vehicle sticker purchasers — and residents who have turned 65 since they last renewed — must come to Village Hall and provide proof of residency, such as a lease, utility bill or other government-issued item. A driver's license and vehicle information also is required.

Renewal forms mailed to current sticker holders include a unique web identification number that allows a vehicle owner to correct or update most data, including address and telephone number, and vehicle information. Online renewals require a credit card and an email address for confirmation.

Anyone who loses the renewal notice will be able to look up their web ID number using the email address or telephone number registered during the previous year's application.

In-person sticker purchases and renewals will be available at Village Hall from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays, and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, except holidays.

Individuals renewing in person are urged to bring their renewal notice to speed up processing. Lines and wait times for in-person renewals grow as the deadline nears.

Vehicle sticker rates vary by type of vehicle. Persons age 65 and older, and anyone who has a state-issued handicapped license plate or placard, receive a discount. Disabled and active-duty veterans with the proper documentation are eligible for free stickers.

For more information call 708.358.7275, visit www.oak-park.us/parking or email parking@oak-park.us.

Be prepared for severe weather

Tornadoes, lightning, flash foods, damaging winds and destructive hail strike Illinois each spring, summer and fall, sometimes with incredible violence. Being aware of severe weather safety rules and knowing what to do might save your life, which is why the National Weather Service urges you to develop a safety plan for use at home, work, school, driving and during outdoor activities. For more information, visit www.ready.illinois.gov.

Know the terms...A tornado watch means severe thunderstorms and tornadoes are possible over the next few hours, so be prepared. A tornado warning means a tornado has been sighted by a trained storm spotter, or intense rotation that will likely produce a tornado has been detected by Doppler radar — get to a place of safety immediately.

Local warning siren...The West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center (WSCDC), the emergency 911 hub for Oak Park, River Forest, Elmwood Park and Park Ridge, sounds a warning siren when a tornado is sighted within a 10-mile radius. The sirens also are activated at 10 a.m. on the first Tuesday of every month as part of a regular statewide test. For more information, visit www.oak-park.us/beprepared. Information on severe weather also is posted by the National Weather Service at www.spc.noaa.gov.

Water quality report is online

Oak Park residents interested in knowing about the quality of the water they drink need go no further than www.oak-park.us/waterqualityreport to read the latest report. Each year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires communities to prepare a Consumer Confidence Report that provides information on the quality of the local drinking water. In addition to detailed analyses of substances in the water, the report also includes facts about the community's drinking water delivery system and source, which is Lake Michigan for Oak Park. The Village is dedicated to supplying drinking water that meets or exceeds all state and federal standards. An archive of past water quality reports is posted at www.oak-park.us/waterquality. For more information on Oak Park's drinking water or if you would like a paper copy of the annual water report, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

House walk offers rare glimpse of historic homes



The owners of historic Frank Lloyd Wright houses in Oak Park will invite the public inside their carefully restored homes from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat., May 19 for the 2018 *Wright Plus Housewalk*. The walk will include the Peter A. Beachy House (1906), the Rollin Furbeck House (1897), the Charles E. Roberts Stable (1900), the Stennett House (1885) and the Charles E. Roberts House remodeled by Wright in 1896. The walk also will feature the Burton F. Hales house (Henry Fiddelke, 1904-05). Proceeds from the event help support the education and preservation programs of the Frank Lloyd Wright Trust. For more information about tickets, the house walk and its related events, visit www.flwright.org/wrightplus.

Yard waste collection underway

Collection of bundled brush and yard waste is underway through November. Bundled brush and yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, shrubs, vines and storm debris are picked up along with garbage and recycling on regular refuse collection days from the same collection point. Each brush bundle should be no larger than two feet in diameter and four feet in length and have a green yard waste sticker attached. Yard waste should be in 32-gallon paper bags or rigid containers, each with a green yard waste sticker attached. Stickers are available for \$2.60 each at Oak Park grocery and hardware stores and the Cashier's Office at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Residents are urged to look for alternatives to bagging yard waste such as mulching mowers, leaf shredders or composting (www.oak-park.us/compost). For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Where to Buy Yard Waste Stickers

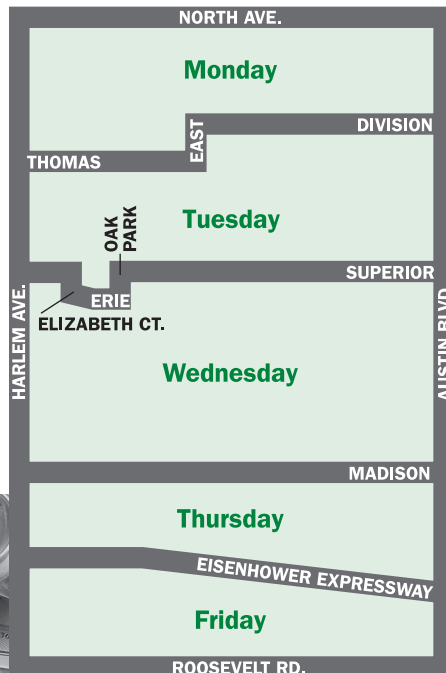
- **Village Hall**, 123 Madison St.
- **Dressel's Ace Hardware**, 1137 Chicago Ave.
- **Fair Share Finer Foods**, 6226 Roosevelt Road
- **Jewel Food Stores**, 438 Madison St., 7036 Roosevelt Road, 7525 Lake St. (River Forest)
- **Pete's Fresh Market**, 259 Lake St.
- **Schauer Ace Hardware**, 7449 Madison St. (Forest Park)
- **Walgreens**, 811 Madison St., 6412 Roosevelt Road

Owners responsible for storm debris on private property

When severe weather creates debris from trees on private property, owners are reminded not to bring limbs or brush to the curb, but make other arrangements for its disposal. Public Works crews pick up debris only from parkway trees — a big job with nearly 19,000 trees on public property throughout the Village. However, brush from private property will be treated as yard waste if it is tied into bundles, each tagged with a green yard waste sticker and placed in the regular refuse pick-up area. Each bundle should be no larger than two feet in diameter, four feet in length and not exceed 50 pounds. Yard waste is collected from early April through November from buildings with five or fewer units. The Village's contract refuse hauler also will come to a home and estimate the cost for removing larger, unbundled quantities of yard waste — call 888.656.5350 to request an estimate. Refuse collection is funded by user fees billed quarterly with the water bill. For more information on yard waste, recycling and refuse hauling, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Refuse collection schedule

The Village provides refuse collection services once a week for all residential buildings with up to five units. Owners of larger multifamily dwelling and commercial buildings must contract directly with private refuse haulers. All trash, recyclables and yard waste are scheduled to be picked up on the same day of the week. For more information, call 708.358.5700, email publicworks@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us/refuse.



Clip and Save

Who to Call

Dial Direct (area code 708)

Village Hall	oak-park.us
TTY	711
Adjudication	358.5630
Development Customer Services	358.5420
Business Services	358.5425
Neighborhood Services	358.5410
Housing	option 1
CDBG	option 2
Property complaints	option 3
Permits & Inspections	358.5430
Planning	358.5440
General questions	option 1
Historic Preservation	option 2
Zoning	option 3
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire (nonemergency)	358.5600
Human Resources	358.5650
Job Hotline	358.5650
Mayor & Trustees	358.5784
Police (nonemergency)	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	434.1636
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Public Works	358.5700
Parking	358.7275
Village Clerk	358.5670
Village Manager's Office	358.5770

EMERGENCIES 911

Park District	www.pdop.org
Administration	725.2017
Customer Service	725.2000
Building & Grounds	725.2050
Business Operations	725.2015

Public Library	www.oppl.org
Main Library	383.8200
Maze Branch	386.4751
Dole Branch	386.9032

School District 97	www.op97.org
Administration	524.3000

School District 200	www.oprfhs.org
Administration	383.0700

Township	www.oakparktownship.org
Senior Services	383.8060
Youth Services	445.2727
General Assistance	383.8005
Assessor Services	383.8005
Mental Health Board	358.8855

- facebook.com/vopnews
- instagram.com/oakparkil
- pinterest.com/oakparkil
- twitter.com/vopnews
- youtube.com/vopnews

Volcano mulching epidemic threatens young trees

A growing epidemic of a particularly bad gardening practice is threatening trees on the Village's many parkways. Known as volcano mulching, the aesthetic-driven practice of piling mulch in a volcano-like mound around the base and up onto the trunk is a recipe for the slow decline, and likely death of these important community resources. Property owners who mulch the trees on parkways have the right idea when it comes to keeping the roots moist and limiting the competition by encroaching grass. But if they or their landscape contractors are mounding the mulch over the root flare at the base of the tree they are setting the stage for root strangulation, rot and insect infestation, problems that typically cause a slow death. Planters built around the base of trees can have the same effect. Mulching with wood chips up to four inches deep is beneficial to trees, but only if a space of two-to-three inches is created so that the chips don't touch the bark. Think of mulching as creating a donut around the tree, rather than a volcano. For more information on the care of Oak Park's urban forest, call 708.358.5700, email publicworks@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us/trees.



Village Forester Rob Sproule demonstrates the difference between harmful volcano mulching and proper mulching.

Help keep Oak Park beautiful

Alley clean-up...The Village's alley clean-up program, developed by the Keep Oak Park Beautiful committee, provides free plastic bags, refuse stickers, disposable rubber gloves and information on organizing a safe and successful event. The committee will monitor the program by taking before-and-after photographs for the regular reports issued to Keep America Beautiful, Inc. Call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us for more information.

Adopt a block...Residents, community groups and business owners are invited to adopt a block by committing to remove litter at least once a month for a year. The Keep Oak Park Beautiful committee will provide trash bags, refuse stickers, gloves, safety vests and an adopt-a-block sign listing the name of the participating individual or group. Call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us for more information.

Limit leaf blower noise...The use of gas-powered leaf blowers emanating more than 65 decibels or failing to meet federal emission regulations is prohibited from June through October. The ban applies to both landscapers and homeowners. Gas-powered blowers that emanate fewer than 65 decibels and meet emission standards may be used during the ban if they have been tested and approved by the Village. For more information call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Youth scholarships available

A limited number of Financial Assistance Scholarships (FAS) are available for youth in low-income families through the Oak Park Township. Funds may be used towards registration and participant fees in local activities and programs. A counselor, dean, social worker or referral agency representative must complete the application. For more information, including guidelines and qualifying programs, visit www.oakparktownship.org/services/scholarships.

Plastic bag use declining

Data from the first two months of the Village's single-use bag fee indicate the fee is having the intended effect — encouraging people to bring their own bags. Retailers reported charging customers for more than 198,200 bags in February, compared to about 225,500 bags in January. Data for March is not yet available, but indications are that use continued to decline. Retailers charge 10 cents for every single-use bag they provide. Half of the 10-cent fee is retained by retailers to allay cost of implementing the program, while the other half is remitted to the Village to help fund local environmental initiatives. The local law is not about making money, officials say, but reducing the negative impact single-use bags — both plastic and paper — have on the environment. High-density polyethylene plastic bags, which are made from non-renewable fossil fuels, take more than 200 years to degrade. Paper bags have an even higher carbon footprint than plastic because more energy is required to produce and transport them. Free reusable bags are available to in the lobby at Village Hall, 123 Madison Street, the second-floor lobby at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd and at other locations in the Village. For more information, visit www.oak-park.us/bringyourbag.



Warmer weather means construction

With warmer weather comes construction as crews make needed improvements to vital infrastructure like water and sewer lines, streets, alleys and sidewalks. An interactive map of all construction projects planned for 2018 and scheduled through 2021 is available at www.oak-park.us/construction, which also includes regular project updates. For more detailed information about specific construction projects, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Scan with a
smartphone QR
app for more
information



Village of Oak Park
Village Hall
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



OP/FYI

Mayor Anan Abu-Taleb

Trustees

Deno J. Andrews
Dan Moroney
Simone M. Boutet
Jim Taglia
Andrea Button
Bob Tucker

Village Clerk Vicki Scaman
Village Manager Cara Pavlicek

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL

PAID
U.S. Postage
Standard
Presort



Farmers' Market to begin 43rd season

The Oak Park Farmers' Market will open its 43rd season on Sat., May 19. The Market is held from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday from opening day through October in the Pilgrim Congregational Church parking lot, 460 Lake Street, one block west of Ridgeland Avenue. More than 25 independent farmers and producers participate in the Farmers' Market, offering everything from fresh fruits and vegetables to meat, cheese and eggs, flowers, bedding plants, dairy products, bread, grains, honey and maple syrup. The Market also features donuts made on-site, fresh coffee and live bluegrass music. Non-profit bake sales are offered most Saturdays as well as occasional cooking demonstrations featuring chefs from local restaurants. A majority of vendors now accept credit/debit cards, as well as WIC and senior coupons. All vendors accept LINK cards.

Special events are held throughout the season, starting with the celebration of *Go Green Days* on opening day and May 26, featuring seed-potting for children, demonstrations from local environmental organizations and information about the Village's composting and recycling programs. A limited supply of free reusable bags also will be available on *Go Green Days* to encourage shoppers to bring reusable bags throughout the season. Other special events planned for the season include children's activities hosted by the Oak Park Conservatory on June 9 and the Chicago Botanic Garden on June 23. Children's activities typically take place the second and fourth Saturday of each month.

Support for Market administration comes from sales of a variety of items available at the information tent, including reusable shopping bags, t-shirts and travel mugs.

For more information call 708.358.5780, email farmersmarket@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket.

July 4th parade to showcase Oak Park diversity

The many dimensions of Oak Park will be on display when the annual July 4th parade steps off at 10 a.m., Wed., July 4 from Longfellow Park at Ridgeland Avenue and Adams Street. Parade participants march north on Ridgeland Avenue to Augusta Street and disperse at Whittier School. The route will offer many viewing opportunities along the way. More than 75 groups typically participate in the parade, including social and special interest groups, community groups, athletic teams, politicians, businesses, service organizations, children's groups, animal lovers with their pets and musical groups. Some participants bring floats and drive vintage cars. Others play music, carry banners, ride decorated bicycles and skate. Most dress up in all manner of red, white and blue to commemorate the nation's birthday and to celebrate Oak Park's rich diversity. Of course, the Police and Fire departments always are part of the parade, too, with vehicle lights flashing and sirens blaring. Weather permitting, a fireworks display typically begins at dusk in the football stadium of Oak Park and River Forest High School near East Avenue and Lake Street. For more information or to volunteer to help out at the parade, call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us.

