

Rebuild-It Center celebrates Earth Day, reorganized facility

Hard to recycle plastics collected April 24

By Trisha Walker
Columbia Gorge News

Gorge Rebuild-It Center will be the site of a free, hard to recycle plastics collection event on Saturday, April 24 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in honor of Earth Day.

Plastics that can't go in the blue bin — see sidebar, below — can be brought to the old Produce Kountry site, located next to Gorge Rebuild-It Center, 995 Tucker Road, Hood River. The event has been organized by Board Member Julie Tucker (also owner and project manager for Emerald Systems LLC) and Cindy Allen, the center's bookkeeper.

Gorge Rebuild-It has also partnered with Anson's Bike Buddies and will have free bikes to give away during the event (children must be present to receive a bike, which are limited to supply on hand).

In the days leading up to the recycling event, Gorge Rebuild-It Center is welcoming the community to come and check out the newly reorganized facility — and consider donating quality items for resale.

The center has undergone many changes since Executive Director Steve Carlson was hired by the Gorge Rebuild-It board of directors in September 2019.

The longtime nonprofit was in a state of economic decline, and he immediately got to work reducing overhead, he said — which included reducing staff to Carlson himself.

"Items of value were sold as fast as possible and the process of cleaning up the



Gorge Rebuild-It Center hosts a recycling event April 24. At right, center staff in front of the main building. Contributed photos

facility began," he said. After months of cleaning and \$10,000 spent on dump fees — "mostly hard to sell items," Carlson said — the year 2020 was looking brighter. He had even started to take steps to rehire staff.

And then, on the morning of Feb. 7, 2020, Carlson came into work to find a lock had been cut, the store trashed and items missing — including the store's point of sale system and video surveillance equipment, which was another setback.

As was the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Carlson was forced to lay off himself and close the facility for five weeks.

"Fast forward to May 1, 2020 — with funds again dwindling, it was time to reopen and get back to work, without any new staff," he said. "The community rose to the occasion, and donations and sales increased."

By late October, the center was able to hire its first staff member, with a second soon following — there are now five employees. That winter, they reorganized the entire store and created a more effective drive-through donation area.

Carlson said that by summer, the center "is positioned to serve the community effectively." Gorge Rebuild-It

Center has furniture like chairs, as well as some sporting goods, also for sale.

With rising costs of building materials, he added that the center is a great place to find materials that would otherwise be diverted to the landfill. He lists some of those items on the center's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/GorgeRebuildIt. And they sell fast.

"Donations are welcome — people bring in wonderful stuff," he said. Acceptable donations fluctuate with market conditions and the facility's capacity; donations are accepted daily up to one hour before closing.

Because the center is a nonprofit, donations may be tax deductible "if your donation is in good used condition or better," according to its website, rebuildit.org. Donation guidelines and contact information are also on the website.

Gorge Rebuild-It Center is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Face coverings are required, and card payment is preferred.

Plastic popup depot

A pilot program that collects otherwise unrecyclable plastics is scheduled at Gorge Rebuild-It Center on



Saturday, April 24. Accepted materials:

- No. 3 polyvinyl chloride (PVC or V) like clear food packaging, wire/cable insulation, shower curtains, lawn chairs and children's toys
- No. 4 low-density polyethylene (LDPE) like dry cleaning bags, bread bags,

squeezable bottles and various molded lab equipment

- No. 5 polypropylene (PP) like ketchup bottles, most yogurt tubes, syrup bottles, bottle caps and packing tape
- No. 6 polystyrene (PS) like disposable plates and cutlery, cafeteria trays, meat trays, carryout containers

and packing peanuts

- No. 7 (other plastics) like juice bottles, plastic lumber, safety glasses, and gas containers

For more information, email womaninthehood@gmail.com.

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EVOLUTION: BIOLOGICALLY IMPOSSIBLE #26

One more article on blood clotting. The clotting of blood in a body is so complex it tires the mind when an attempt is given to understand it. If you are interested I have copied 24 pages from a book written by a biochemist who gives a real good explanation of this difficult process that we laymen can understand. I will send them to you if you wish. Blood coagulation is a cascade process. It is a process that has very precise steps for it to function properly. There are approximately 24 different proteins, which in themselves are extremely difficult to understand that make up the cascade. These proteins must work in order at the precise time at the proper place or the animal will bleed out. It is a process that includes so many parts acting in unison that it simply could not have occurred by chance random mutations. Looking at this process one would see immediately that it is impossible to expect it to "come together" over millions of years piece by piece. All the animals on earth would have died off from simply bleeding to death waiting for their blood to clot when it needed to. Once again we can not criticize Darwin for he could not "see" this fine biochemical process. We can. This one single process has so many complicated components that make it work that it would be very unreasonable to demand that it just mutated into place over millions of years. Look it up if you dare. Or contact me for the papers.

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Spring community clean up event canceled

The Spring Community Clean Up Event 2021 that usually takes place in May of each year is canceled, according to a press release from the City of The Dalles Public Works. To maintain social distancing and minimize the possible spread of COVID-19, the decision was made to again cancel the Spring Community Clean Up event.

However, long time

Spring Community Clean Up co-sponsor, The Dalles Disposal, is accepting yard debris, from The Dalles city residents only, at no charge during the month of April 2021 if taken to the transfer station at 1317 West First Street Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Landscape care companies and non-residential properties are not eligible for

this special offer. For more information on this option contact The Dalles Disposal at 541-298-5149.

The release stated, "It was tough to give up this annual city-wide spring-cleaning tradition for a second year in a row. We appreciate everyone who has made this event a success in the past. We hope to be able to hold the event again in 2022."

EDUCATOR Staff 'just hitting our stride'

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said HROA's challenge has been to remain flexible and "not get too systematic" as the program has grown. She said many students and families joined the program because they weren't comfortable returning to in-person learning during the pandemic.

"I'm glad it wasn't my first year," Running said. A school board member told her "thank god we had this," at a meeting last week, she said.

Preston said this year has been especially difficult for students in transitional years of their academic career.

"They don't get to have a first day of middle school or high school or a normal senior year," she said.

Staff work with students on social skills and emotional health along with academics, Preston said. Hosaka said life skills are part of education and many students deal with adult problems and situations like work-life balance and family responsibilities.

Counselors and teachers work together to combine social and emotional education with more traditional academic study, Preston said.

"Teachers are the brains and counselors are the heart," she said.

Lyon, hired as a middle school science and visual arts teacher, said she was trained as a teacher but works as a "learning coach." A group of high schoolers sat together working in her room a few

desks over from Dandy the rabbit and kindergartner Mathews.

Hosaka said staff feel like they're "just hitting our stride."

Running said the program is working towards keeping its building open on weekends. She wants to start offering academic achievement testing and teacher support to local homeschool students. She hopes to offer summer programs to make up for any gains that may have been lost due to the pandemic.

Many students have made gains this year, rather than stagnating, despite the pandemic, Running said. She believes schools around the world will be able to make up losses.

"Kids are pretty resilient," Running said.

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