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Mixed responses from student communities on recycling law

Only seven out of 22 complexes have on-site recycling centers

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Oct. 1, a new law went into effect in North Carolina making it illegal to throw away plastic bottles, wooden pallets and motor oil filters. These items have been added to a growing list of things already considered unlawful to trash in North Carolina, including aluminum cans, whole tires and yard waste.

According to RE3.org (short for reduce, reuse, recycle), in a year, North Carolinians throw away enough plastic bottles to line the Blue Ridge Parkway 642 times. That translates to about 207 million pounds in plastics each year.

Also documented on the site is the fact that North Carolinians recycle 85.4 pounds of materials a second, but "throw away more than 752 pounds of trash a second."

While recycling laws are difficult to enforce, students who do want to comply with the new legislation may find it difficult to do so depending on where they live.

For most students living on campus, the nearest recycling bin is only a short walk to the trash rooms. While the university is constantly making efforts to make it even easier for students to recycle, ultimately, the responsibility still lies with the individual.

It is developing the habit of recycling with students that is one of the hardest things to accomplish. Aaron Lucier, director of ECU housing operations, notes that many students come from areas where recycling has been more of a voluntary thing and thus the university is faced with the challenge of trying to build the habit here.

The university has been doing their part to help build that habit with both the students living on campus and those off campus by adding more recycling bins in the buildings and on the grounds.

Lucier said one of the issues is finding good places for the bins and that the placement has a lot to do with whether some students will use them or not.

However, for students that live off campus, developing or even keeping that habit in their own

residences may be more of an obstacle.

In a poll of 22 apartment complexes around campus, only seven offered recycling centers for their residents.

The ones that did not offer a recycling service had mixed responses about adding one in the future in order to help tenants comply with the new law. One complex stated that they are already on the waiting list with the city of Greenville to get a recycling service implemented as soon as possible.

Conversely, another complex, located near Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, said that they would not be implementing one anytime in the future "unless it's free."

Still, even for the complexes that said they did offer recycling, the biggest issue lies in the fact that the individuals are the ones that need to take on the responsibility.

Out of the seven complexes that have recycling, only three thought that a good number participated in using the service.

Regardless of whether they had recycling on site or not for their residents, every complex polled stated they did offer trash disposal for their tenants. In the case of the complexes without recycling, whether their trash disposal allows for residents to meet the legal standard using their services alone was apparently not taken into consideration when answering in the affirmative.

For those wishing to recycle on their own, Pitt County has 14 Collection and Recycling Centers for citizens. Information on how to locate the nearest one can be found on the Pitt County Web site.

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