

Recycling big hit at Seafood Festival

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MOREHEAD CITY — Rachel Eckert was impressed with her first visit to the N.C. Seafood Festival, but not only because of the tempting tastes of the shrimp burgers and clam chowder.

Eckert, an environmental specialist with the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance, noted the recycling boxes set up along the waterfront streets and snapped photographs of festival visitors who stopped by her booth to show their commitment to recycling and keeping plastics and other materials out of the landfills.

“People have really shown their appreciation for the environment,” Eckert said.

A group of Croatan High School students admired the chain of plastic bottles that decorated the tent and posed for a picture holding a sign that read, “I promise to recycle my plastic bottles.”

They see recycling as a way to protect the beaches and waterways around them.

“We live on the beach, and it’s important that people recycle and not just throw things out there,” said Summer Mathis.

RE3.org is a statewide recycling campaign, and representatives were invited to attend this year’s festival to promote its educational efforts.

“One of the things we’ve been trying to promote is recycling on the go because so much is disposed of by people while they are on the go, while they are traveling,” Eckert said.

Convenience is a key factor when it comes to recycling, Eckert said. And while people may practice recycling at home, school or work, it may not be as convenient to do so when they are out and about.

Eckert said they held a series of workshops on event and venue recycling; and Stephanie McIntyre, the executive director of the Seafood Festival, was among those who attended and has worked to encourage recycling during the event.

Representatives from two other festivals had stopped by during the day, and Eckert is hopeful they will be recycling during their events as well.

The RE3.org stop at the Seafood Festival also followed on the heels of the plastic bottle landfill disposal ban that took effect Oct. 1.

“Less than one out of every five plastic bottles generated in North Carolina are being recycled,” Eckert said.

Plastic juice, soda and water bottles can be recycled into new plastic bottles and items such as carpet, polyester textiles, toys and plastic lumber. And with the growing demand for recycled

materials, there is also a growing number of jobs in the recycling industry.

Recycling currently provides more than 14,000 jobs in North Carolina, Eckert said.

For more information about recycling and the statewide campaign, visit their [Web site](#).

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