

## Editorial: Council takes strong step with recycling expansion

Sunday, April 11, 2010

Greenville's commitment to environmental protection took a needed step this week with the long overdue decision to install recycling centers in multi-family apartment complexes. The containers will promote the practice in areas of high density, and will be particularly valuable in encouraging students to recycle.

The city stands as a regional leader in many areas, including education, commerce and entertainment, and it sets a proud example in its efforts to reduce waste and promote recycling as well. That cause has advanced throughout this community in recent years, and the City Council's decision on Thursday is another sign of progress.

In February, Pitt County received the surprising news that the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources had ranked it tops in the state for recycling, having collected more than 47,400 tons of material in 2009. That represents an average of 610 pounds per resident, an incredible performance for this community.

Pitt County did not reach that status by itself, but rather with the willing commitment of residents and the dedicated work of officials with the county and the city of Greenville. While the county has worked to gets residents in rural areas invested in recycling, the City Council has served as a strong advocate of recycling as a way of reducing the city's overall solid waste. It has seen a high level of participation as it has accelerated and expanded those efforts.

Now, the council will bring more residents into the fold by collecting recyclables in multi-family complexes, a decision made on Thursday. By accepting the project, the city will install about 1,000 96-gallon containers for those materials at a cost of \$197,000. The funds will come through a 42-cent tax imposed on residents for the service, which will be lowered after two years to 9 cents to fund maintenance.

The city has long needed to involve these complexes in its recycling efforts, particularly because it would affect thousands of college students who call this community home and would be strong targets for involvement. The integration of apartments also affects areas with a high concentration of residents, raising the city's participation rate and greatly reducing the amount of material sent to area landfills.

This community's commitment to recycling has already paid dividends, and this shows that its resolve has yet to waiver. The City Council should be commended for this decision, which has great potential for positive environmental impact.

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