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# Students mob for a cause

## Freeze on Brickyard raises awareness for bottle ban, how recycling helps economy

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Today, at 11:30 a.m., students from around campus will gather in what Division of Pollution Prevention's Education and Outreach Project Manager Kelley Dennings calls "a smart flash mob."

Dennings works for the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources and was looking for ways to raise awareness about the plastic bottle ban coming into effect. Drawing from an idea popularized by Improv Everywhere's freeze in Grand Central Station, Dennings gave to universities across the state her idea to combine a flash mob, which forms quickly, and a smart mob, which forms for a cause.

"We're merging the two," Dennings said. "You can do various things when you come, and freezing is just one of the things you can do. It's really quick, and people will learn about plastic bottle recycling."

With time and money in short supply, "this seemed like something we could do to make an impact," she said.

Education and Outreach Coordinator for Waste Reduction and Recycling Analis Fulghum said knowing about the bottle ban is important.

"Although many students do recycle, it's important to now know that it is a law," she said. She and the rest of the office have worked to publicize the freeze on the Brickyard in various ways, particularly on Facebook.

"[Facebook] was our means to get the word out," Fulghum said. "We saw that there was a freeze done before at the University, and they had a group with over 800 fans."

The user "N.C. State Recycles" has about 268 fans and attributes a recent increase in that number to knowledge of the Bottle Ban Freeze, according to Fulghum.

Natalie Bunch, a senior in landscape architecture, also interns in this office.

“Our goal for Thursday is to raise awareness and show it’s not a small group on campus who recycles,” she said.

Also, as each student participating unfreezes and takes his or her plastic bottle to the nearest recycling receptacle, it will “introduce people to what the bins look like,” Bunch said.

Bunch also thinks the freeze will demonstrate the WRR office’s mission for campus.

“People feel like they’re giving up money when they recycle, when, in fact, it’s a sponsored program,” she said. “The recycling on campus doesn’t actually make money. It gets it through grants.”

The freeze will also show students how easy recycling can be.

“Recycling on campus is a service that we’re giving to you,” Bunch said. “If you go off-campus, it’s much harder to recycle.”

The WRR office also wants to publicize the economical advantages of this ban.

“There was a ban in 1994 on aluminum cans,” Dennings said. “Plastic bottles came up in 2005 as a commodity that had another high recyclable value. We have a lot of companies in North Carolina specifically that need material to create new products.”

Among those products are Tide and Downy bottles, soda bottles and even carpet. Both polyester and plastic are petroleum-based, so thread can be made from a plastic bottle, Dennings said.

“There’s just a huge need,” she said. “Even if we recycle every bottle in North Carolina, we would not give them all the plastic they need.”

Recycling can also combat the recession, according to Bunch.

“It’s better for the economy to put those [bottles] back in the economy and create jobs,” she said.

The freeze on the Brickyard aims to work with the Bottle Ban to do just that, according to Dennings.

“I hope students will recycle more plastic bottles,” she said. “If that requires that they bypass a trashcan to recycle it, I hope they do it.”

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