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## The Blue Bins: Town to start recycling pickup as new landfill restrictions near

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JOURNAL REPORTER

Kelley Dennings, a recycling educator, stood in front of Town Hall yesterday to spread the word about keeping plastic bottles out of landfills.

"Every second, 100 bottles are disposed of in North Carolina," she said.

That will stop abruptly next Thursday, when recyclable plastic bottles, wooden pallets and motor-oil filters join the list of items banned from landfills across North Carolina.

About the time the statewide ban goes into effect, North Wilkesboro plans to start its new curbside-recycling program.

The town has bought about 1,500 blue roll-out containers for recycling, paid for with a \$40,000 grant from the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The town will pickup the materials using a garbage truck it would have retired from service.

The town started curbside garbage pickup last year, with plans to phase in the curbside recycling.

Residents will put all their recyclables in the blue bins, without separating plastic bottles from cans, magazines or other items. Instead, they can simply put them all in the container, which will be sorted by workers at Foothills Sanitation and Recycling.

"I've always felt if you really want to be serious about recycling you've got to make it as easy as throwing something away," said Town Manager Hank Perkins, who started his career as a recycling coordinator with the town of Smithfield.

Back then, Perkins used to visit schools and urge children to help their parents recycle.

Dennings, an employee of the state environmental agency, is working with area teachers today, leading a workshop about teaching schoolchildren about the importance of recycling.

The informational display she set up yesterday at Ninth and Main streets included a line of plastic drink bottles stretching from the intersection, across the front of Town Hall and past the entrance to Wilkes Towers.

That line represented those 100 bottles thrown away every second in the state. In a year, the line would be long enough to stretch the length of the Blue Ridge Parkway 642 times.

Dennings said that the bottles can be recycled to make such things as carpet or more bottles.

"The message we're really trying to get out is, in North Carolina there's a huge demand for plastic

bottles," she said. "If we recycle all the plastic bottles in North Carolina, it's still not enough to meet demand."

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For more information about recycling in North Carolina, go to [www.re3.org](http://www.re3.org).