

# Recycling gets mixed reviews from area businesses



Enterprise photo by Angela Schneider

**Jessie Wilcox, Food and Nutrition Services manager at Livingston Memorial Hospital, places recyclable materials in the back of her pickup Feb. 19 to take to Bozeman for recycling. The hospital, as well as other Livingston businesses wanting to recycle certain items such as plastic bottles, must drive the materials to Bozeman.**

**By Tahlia Ganser**  
*Enterprise Staff Writer*

Many of Livingston's businesses have pumped up their recycling programs in recent years due to increasing pressure to be "green."

But without a place for major waste producers to take their recycling in Park County, much of the waste stream ends up in the trash, and some of the responsibility to recycle falls on business employees who care about sustainability.

Park County and the City of Livingston provide recycling of newspaper, magazines, office paper, glass and aluminum for city and county residents, but do not accept items from businesses — except for cardboard.

"It's really hard to recycle in this town," said Chad Johnson, one of the owners of Highsides Brew and Tunes.

Highsides, like most of the bars in town, doesn't have a way to recycle the thousands of pounds of glass thrown away each week, Johnson said.

"Each of our trashes weigh about 50 pounds, and it's not French fries," he said.

The City of Livingston received a \$100,000 grant toward buying a glass pulverizer and plans to have

one up and running around May, according to City Manager Ed Meece.

Jessica Wilcox, the new food and nutrition services manager at Livingston HealthCare, founded a volunteer employee sustainability committee recently to help the hospital reduce waste.

Some recycling, like plastic bottles, needs to be driven to Bozeman, so the group's members take turns going over the hill.

Counterpoint Vocational Center staff and clients pick up the hospital's aluminum cans to recycle, along with several other local businesses and organizations, such as The Owl Lounge, Treasure Lanes and Sleeping Giant Middle School, said Counterpoint Vocational Coordinator Daryl Wiltshire Monday morning.

"It's a good money-maker for us," Wiltshire said.

Counterpoint accepts donations of aluminum and also pays 45 cents per pound, then sells the metal — several tons a year — to Pacific Steel in Bozeman, she said.

PrintingForLess.com has a program similar to the hospital's, where employees volunteer to take items like plastic bottles, glass and aluminum cans to Bozeman, according to PFL Business Analyst Karen Cox.

The company also ships a full 50-foot semitrailer of shredded and baled paper to Seattle every Friday for recycling.

Similarly, The Livingston Enterprise ships out about one semi load of paper every two months — or about 285,000 pounds of baled paper per year, according to Enterprise Production Manager Mike Croskrey.

Albertsons store manager Joe Bennett said the grocery store recycles about 5,000 pounds of cardboard a week in Bozeman; and about 250 pounds of soft cellophane plastic, used to wrap crates of product, gets shipped to Salt Lake City to be recycled.

Bennett would like to see the local recycling program expand.

"I just think it's the thing that we need to do," Bennett said. "It just makes sense. Why would you just let it go to waste?"

Park County Commission Chairman Larry Lahren said the county is trying to expand the local recycling program, but it is challenging because it costs more for the county to recycle than to throw away trash.

"It's definitely something that needs improvement and cultural awareness and cultural change," Lahren said.