

Three Birds and One Stone

By Steven Keltner

There has been a lot of talk these days about the difficulty of creating jobs, alternative fuels of the future, and the city's attempt to save its struggling recycling program. But the fact is that all three actually go hand in hand.

We don't need to look any further than to our neighbors to the east to see a plan in action. Ohio has a fantastic voluntary recycling program that has a staggeringly positive effect on their economy. According to the 2005 Hamilton County Environmental Services Progress Report, Ohio's statewide recycling program supports 4.3% of the job in the state. It supports 3,177 business establishments employing 98,302 people, and generates \$490 million in state taxes.

In one year, Ohio recycling allows aluminum companies to save the equivalent of 19 million barrels of oil. This is because it is much more energy efficient to melt down and reuse aluminum than to separate raw aluminum from bauxite (a rock that is the only natural source of aluminum made up of aluminum oxides, hydroxides and numerous impurities.) Many sources show that throwing away a single 12-ounce aluminum can is the same as dumping out 6 ounces of refined gasoline. For every ton of paper made from recycled material 463 gallons of oil, 587 pounds of air pollutants and 4,077 kilowatt hours of energy are conserved.

An investment in this industry is no less important than bringing automotive plants to the state. However, it goes unnoticed year after year. This is a prime example of how current leaders have been unable to see the forest through the trees. In his 2006 Post-Session Report, Speaker of the House, Brian Bosma (R) nearly breaks his arm patting himself on the back for promoting 'legislation that vastly increased new energy production in Indiana.' You see, in the next year, "plans will be finalized to produce 6-8 biofuel plants that will employ 375 Hoosiers."

How about my plan of investing in an industry that in Ohio has annual revenues of \$22.5 billion, generating that \$490 million in state sales taxes mentioned before. Ohio's recycling program employs 97,927 more people than Mr. Bosma's biofuel plants.

To make recycling work in Indiana, we need to make it a statewide program because volume is a key to success. A residential recycling incentive program would give money back to the community for their recycling efforts. In Ohio, \$1,150,000 is given back to the communities each year by such a program. Holly Christmann, a program manager for Hamilton County Solid Waste Management in Ohio observed, "A few years ago Cincinnati was in the same dilemma that Indianapolis finds itself in currently." Further, "phasing out the recycling means the waste must go to a landfill, and that also cost money. The cost savings is minimal when you figure landfill cost into the equation."

Indiana legislators have never been able to see the power of small businesses in large numbers. Their recent policies have almost crippled 31 Indiana wineries like Oliver Winery, which incidentally, was named "one of the 12 must see wineries in the U.S." by the Wall Street Journal. N.K. Hurst is another example of the low value legislators place on small business. While big business is important to Indiana success, they fail to see that small businesses can collaborate to form profitable industries as has occurred in

Ohio. Waste Management is a positive economic force in Ohio and its model can be easily adapted to Indiana. The adaptation of such models will greatly reduce unnecessary and costly legislation. Unfortunately, our current legislators fail to recognize its potential because they don't understand waste management. Need proof? Just look at our annual 12 billion dollar budget.

Authorized by the Committee to Elect Steve Keltner, Amy LeBrun, Treasurer

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