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Give old electronics new life this holiday season

‘Tis the season for unwrapping new tablets or splurging on a big TV to make it through the long, cold months ahead. It’s also the time of year to consider what to do with all the old electronics now gathering dust in the closet, attic or basement.

Most electronics have been banned from landfills since 2010 under Wisconsin’s electronics recycling law. As part of this law, electronics manufacturers help pay for the responsible recycling of items like TVs, computers, laptops, printers and tablets through the DNR’s E-Cycle Wisconsin program.

Since E-Cycle Wisconsin began in 2010, it has helped divert more than 150 million pounds of electronics from landfills and incinerators. The metals, plastics and glass from those electronics are put to good use in the manufacturing of many new products. At the same time, their toxic components have stayed out of the groundwater and soil.

E-Cycle Wisconsin has a network of participating collectors – some running permanent sites and others operating collection events – that covers almost every county in the state. By bringing your old electronics to a collector registered with E-Cycle Wisconsin, you can further the seasonal spirit of giving.

“Electronics recycling is a way to give unused devices new life,” said Ann Coakley, director of the Department of Natural Resources’ Waste and Materials Management Program. “It is also a way to help keep jobs in our state while protecting land, air and water.”

E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors may ask customers to pay a fee before they take electronics. This fee will help cover the cost of recycling toxic or low-value materials in the device while keeping workers safe. The fees that electronics manufacturers pay to recyclers do not always fully cover the cost of responsible recycling. It may be up to you, the consumer, to cover the difference.

To find the E-Cycle Wisconsin collector nearest you, go to dnr.wi.gov and search “E-Cycle.” The “Find an electronics collection site” button will allow you to search for a collector by county.

FOR QUESTIONS CONTACT: E-Cycle Wisconsin, (608) 266-2111 or DNRWae-cycling@wisconsin.gov