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NAPO Gives ‘Green’ Light to TV Recycling Effort

Has the upcoming digital TV conversion left you turning off your outdated tube for good?

Before you ditch your old TV in favor of bigger screens and sleeker designs, think about recycling it. The National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) is urging people to consider donating their television sets to be reused or recycled for scrap parts.

“The task of getting organized is multifaceted, but the common thread in any project involves properly disposing of unwanted or unused items,” said NAPO President Standolyn Robertson. “It is important to adopt environmentally friendly approaches, by recycling, reusing or donating goods, including televisions, during the purging process.”

I can recycle a TV?

Various Web sites, including www.earth911.com, let consumers know the closest drop-off location for TVs, as well as other electronics and cell phones. In addition, TV manufacturers have established collection programs as a result of the digital conversion — which takes effect on June 12 — to help take the guess work out of TV recycling.

Holly Machina and Linette George, NAPO members from the Chicago Chapter’s Green Team, strive to teach their clients, and the general public, about proper electronics recycling efforts.

“How many millions of televisions are going to be chucked?” George asked. “Most people still think they can throw those in the landfill.”

According to an estimate from the Environmental Protection Agency, 23.9 million antiquated television sets were expected to end up in landfills in 2008 alone. That is the equivalent of more than 710,000 tons of televisions.

Dumping electronics now ... could hurt you later

Besides the fact that landfills are reaching their capacities, George points out that lead and other toxic chemicals in electronics makes it dangerous to dispose of them in landfills. Chemicals could seep into nearby soil and contaminate drinking water.

“If people know what chemicals are in TVs that might help,” she said. “I look at my computer and I don’t see toxic. I just see a computer.”

See, that old TV isn’t so bad

Instead of recycling your TV and replacing it with a flashier model, another alternative is to buy a converter box.

“Really the best green choice we can make is to keep our existing TVs and buy the conversion box,” Machina said. “Older TVs are comparable or more energy efficient than most of the flat panels. In fact, plasma TVs eat up a ton of energy, almost the amount of energy as a refrigerator.”

Tips for recycling your TV

- Research to see where TVs can be dropped off in your area
- Check to see that the company/individual collecting televisions meets the ISO 14,001 environmental certification to ensure your TV is properly and safely reused and recycled
- Donate other unwanted electronics goods, DVDs and CDs

Tips for preparing to buy a new TV:

- Consider Energy Star TVs to ensure maximum energy efficiency
- Look for Eco TVs to cut down on energy usage and toxic chemicals
- Determine where the TV will be placed
- Figure out the size the room can accommodate
- Decide what the TV will be used for: Movies, exercise, etc., to allot enough space
- Stick to your budget and space needs: Even if a larger TV is cheaper than you anticipated, it may not fit in your living room

About NAPO

The premier national association dedicated to the field of organizing, the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) is The Organizing Authority®. Formed in 1985 as a nonprofit professional, educational association, NAPO is dedicated to serving its members through education, networking, industry resources, and promoting the profession to the public. NAPO’s mission is to develop, lead, and promote professional organizers and the organizing industry. For more information, visit www.napo.net.

What is a professional organizer?

A professional organizer enhances the lives of clients by designing systems and processes using organizing principles and through transferring organizing skills. A professional organizer also educates the public on organizing solutions and the resulting benefits. Professional organizers help individuals and businesses take control of their surroundings, their time, their paper, and their systems for life.

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