

Repak Green Christmas calls members to action

(Dublin, 23-11-06) Repak is calling upon larger companies and retailers to actively participate and grow recycling rates of all material types, not just used packaging alone, this Christmas. Repak, for the sixth year running, is urging businesses and consumers to recycle the 25% additional packaging waste that is consumed over the festive period. The campaign which has gone from strength to strength last year resulted in nearly 29,000 tonnes of used household packaging to be recycled. This was 65% ahead of the previous year and 30% ahead of the target. As part of this year's Green Christmas campaign local authorities will designate 90 recycling centres as Green Christmas centres. The key thing about these centres is that they will, at a minimum accept packaging materials like glass, metal and aluminium cans, plastics, cardboard and Tetrapak, with many accepting a wide range of material such as batteries, old mobile phones, used electrical goods and textiles. Nearly all local authorities now offer designated drop off points for Christmas tree recycling as part of their Christmas recycling campaigns.

Last year Repak Green Christmas helped grow packaging recycling to nearly 29,000 tonnes in December'05/January'06, compared to 17,000 tonnes the previous year. This was an increase of 65% on the same period in the previous year or 9,000 tonnes over the target tonnages of 20,000 tonnes. In individual material types alone, Green Christmas 2005 saw the recovery and recycling from households in Ireland of:

- 9,873 tonnes of paper and cardboard
- 3,520 tonnes of plastic
- 462 tonnes of aluminium
- 1,127 tonnes of steel

and

- 13,872 tonnes of glass

Commenting on the extra effort required over the Christmas period, Andrew Hetherington, CEO, Repak, said, "What we have seen is that with some encouragement people have reacted positively to the call for recycling their used packaging. We are confident with the growth in the collection infrastructure and our ongoing awareness campaigns that we can continue to grow the level of packaging recycling. With an increase in the amount of recyclable packaging consumed over Christmas period it is useful for householders to use local Recycling Centres which can accept a large range of materials to help deal with the extra demand placed on bring banks and household kerbside collection systems. Our members are also undoubtedly at the front line of this awareness building campaign and their voice and participation is crucial in helping to reduce our Christmas waste mountain."

Repak Green Christmas takes place between the 22nd December 2006 to 7th January 2007. The Campaign is in its sixth year, having expanded from 1 participating Local Authority covering 11 recycling centres in 2001 to all local authorities in 2003 to partnering with Race Against Waste in 2004 and involving over 85 recycling centres nationwide.

Of packaging waste alone, it is estimated that the increased consumer activity generates an additional 80,000 tonnes of waste or 170 million used packaging containers. This is equivalent to:

- 20 million wine bottles
- 48 million aluminium beer cans
- 35 million soft drinks cans
- 13 million beer bottles
- 45 million plastic drinks bottles
- 2.5 million spirit bottles
- 4 million cardboard sweet boxes
- 2.5 million cardboard toy boxes

- 4 million rolls of wrapping paper

The organisation is encouraging member companies to investigate the opportunity to install temporary bring bank facilities in their premises for use by employees for the recycling of Christmas used packaging. Repak are also encouraging all members to encourage their employees to recycle their used back door packaging waste over the Christmas period.

During December and January Repak will run a nationwide TV, national and local print, Outdoor shopper lights and radio advertising campaigns to support the call to recycle and also to encourage people to visit the special Green Christmas recycling centres. The 80 plus centres have in many cases extended opening hours and will accept a wider range of materials than the normal bring banks. In addition the existing network of nearly 2,000 Bring Banks dealing mainly glass bottles and kerbside collection systems reaching nearly in excess of 850,000 households will help to facilitate the recycling of much of the xmas packaging (e.e Cans plastic bottles, wrapping paper cardboard and paper. Full details of Green Christmas recycling centres, and their opening hours and Christmas tree recycling drop off points will be available at www.repak.ie.

About Repak

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved packaging compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National Packaging Recovery and Recycling Targets of 25% of packaging waste in 2001 and 50% in 2005 and is well on their way to achieving their 2011 target of 60%.

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Appendix 1

The 12 Days of Green Christmas

Day 1 Boxes

Buy separate boxes for storage of your used glass bottles and jars and cans, newspapers etc.

Day 2 Compost Bin

Put a compost bin in your garden for kitchen vegetable waste and garden waste.

Day 3 Organise Household Bins

Put three bins in the kitchen: one for recyclables; one for compostable vegetable waste; one for general waste. Organise for storage space in backgarden/room.

Day 4 Reduce

Check for products with less packaging, use re-usable plates, cups and bags. Buy vegetables loose.

Day 5 Find your nearest recycling centre

Check local paper or visit www.repak.ie for details of the nearest Repak Green Christmas Centre or Bring Bank.

Day 6 Christmas wrapping

Gather all the wrapping paper, cardboard boxes from presents into large bags for recycling or reuse.

Day 7 Morning After

Gather up all plastic/glass bottles and aluminium cans in separate bags or bins.

Day 8 Wash 'n' Squash

Rinse out bottle and cans, remove lids and squash plastic containers to save space.

Day 9 Card Recycling

Collect all Christmas cards together, which can also be recycled.

Day 10 Recycle used batteries

Collect up all the used batteries. Look up www.repak.ie to find your nearest recycling centre.

Day 11 Christmas decorations

Take down decorations and tree.

Day 12 Christmas tree

Recycling Bring Christmas tree to local Christmas tree recycling centre.