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Keeping spray cans out of landfills

October 19, 2010 | 3:21 pm



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The soda can, beer bottle and newspaper all end up in the same place nowadays -- the recycling bin. But what about the roughly 3 billion aerosol cans sold in the U.S. annually?

Odds are they go into landfills. Hence, Aerosolv Nation, where dozens of college and university students have announced they will team up with a company that makes a system that recycles aerosol cans to put spray cans where they belong. The endeavor was announced at a conference on sustainability in higher education last week.

"We ask students, teachers, community leaders, university sustainability staffers, artists and other creative, committed individuals to join with us to promote proper aerosol can disposal," said Michael Campbell, president of Katec Inc. "Many businesses and communities still throw their aerosols in the trash, which in many cases is illegal, dangerous and wastes valuable landfill space. They are fully recyclable and by doing so removes an entire waste stream."

Liz Alnutt, a senior at New York State University in Buffalo and the director of the school's Undergraduate Student Association's Environmental Department, was among the first to join the effort.

"It was shocking that we hadn't thought about aerosol can recycling before," Alnutt said. "So many people don't know this is an issue."

-- Nicholas Riccardi

Photo: *Recycling an aerosol can involves punching the container down while draining the fluids inside.* Credit: Katec Inc

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