

Directorate of Public Works-Environmental

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Turn in your electronic junk on Fort Hood For FREE!

By Christine Luciano

Is there an old computer in your closet at home? Does it just sit there collecting dust and hasn't been turned on for years?



You'd like to get rid of it, but you don't know how or where. Now you can clear out your closets and get rid of your computers and other electronic junk on Fort Hood.

What's the cost to you? Nothing! It's a free service and you'll help divert toxic waste from the landfill.

"Advances in technology decrease the lifespan of computers," said Derrick Born, an Environmental Compliance Assessor for DPW. "In a couple of years, computers become obsolete and are sometimes discarded into our waste stream."

Disposing electronics improperly can create health and environmental hazards.

"Computers, televisions, and other electronics contain toxic metals such as cadmium, lead, and mercury," said Leslie McGaha, DPW's Environmental Trainer. "These toxic metals can be harmful to people if they are handled wrong."

"When electronics meet the end of their lifespan they are considered as e-waste, electronic waste" McGaha said. "But most of these electronic products can be reused and recycled."

"Other e-cycling programs in cities like St. Louis and Seattle charge a fee for recycle and disposal," said Gary Tooke, DPW's Classification Unit Manager. "But the Classification Unit will be accepting electronic products for free."

Soldiers and retirees, their families, contractors, and DoD personnel can take advantage of this free service and drop off their electric products to the Classification Unit on Fort Hood at North Avenue and 37th Street.

The Classification Unit will accept electronic products including monitors, televisions, computer systems, keyboards, mice, power strips, game systems, cell phones and all other electronic

'gadgets' as well as low grade electronics such as battery backups, printers, fax machines, scanners, and copiers.

The Classification Unit will also accept metal products including lawnmowers, toasters, irons, bicycles, frying pans, and other scrap metal products. Recycling questions may be addressed to the Classification Unit at 288-7627.

"Recycling electronic waste reduces the amount of toxic materials in the landfill," Born said. "It saves resources and reduces the pollution and energy used to create new products."

According to the Environmental Protection Agency more than 3.2 million tons of electronic waste ends up in landfills each year.

At that rate, electronic waste is becoming one of the fastest growing waste streams in the country, the EPA claims.

"Electronic waste ends up in the landfill because people don't know how to recycle or properly dispose their electronic products," McGaha said. "But now when products reach the end of their lifespan, they can be recycled through the Classification Unit."

The e-cycling center is on North Avenue and 37th Street. Program participants should call the center before stopping by.

The contact phone number is (254) 288-7627.