



State law mandates organic waste composting

Did you know that California disposes 30 million tons of waste in landfills every year? It is estimated that over 30% of what ends up in the landfill could be used for compost or mulch.

To combat this needless waste, State law AB1826 now requires businesses to recycle organic waste, including food, food soiled paper, and yard waste. The law is being phased in, with the largest generators of organic waste required to begin recycling since April 2016. The material will be hauled by Republic Services to an industrial composting facility in Richmond.

★ Diablo Valley College (DVC)

Diablo Valley College's culinary and custodial departments have embraced the program, working together to ensure the campus is in compliance with the law.

"We are happy to be part of the program," culinary department chair Chris Draa said. "Recycling is a large part of the industry. It is good to teach students this from the beginning."

Culinary student Maria Ellis Do Amaral said the program builds on what she has been learning in two Sustainable Hospitality courses, one of which is held at Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm. "It shows the commitment of the school and the State to move forward with composting, recycling, and reducing waste."

★ Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm

Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm was ahead of the curve and has been helping the culinary department compost vegetable trimmings and other items since 2012. "The students fill up big barrels in the kitchen, and then come to class at the farm and work on the compost piles. This has been a real eye-opener for them. Seeing what you toss into the trash and working to chop it up in the compost bin really makes you appreciate just how much gets thrown out," says John Matthesen (Farmer John), head of Rodgers Ranch Urban Farm.

DVC's new organics recycling program can accommodate additional items that traditional home-composting programs cannot handle, including meat and other processed foods, as well as paper towels and plates.

"It's not just garbage anymore," Chef Paul Bernhardt said. "It's all about environmental responsibility and teaching students the importance of recycling to the environment."

Kudos also to Contra Costa Country Club for beginning their organic waste recycling program, spearheaded by Executive Chef Chad Whitman. ♣

Golf Club Road Bridge replacement project

City leaders and other elected officials celebrated the opening of the new Golf Club Road Bridge on April 12 with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Originally built in 1952 with two lanes, the bridge was widened to four lanes in 1969, and further widened in 1977 to include sidewalks. In 2000, the structure of the bridge was significantly reinforced to repair damage done by a fire.

The current bridge replacement project was completed in December 2015 and included reconstructing the bridge to withstand a 100-year-flood event and to meet state seismic standards.

The new bridge structure includes:

- New concrete curb, gutter, and wider sidewalk
- New ADA compliant curb ramps
- New bike lanes
- New decorative LED street lighting and pedestrian level lighting
- New enhanced pedestrian crosswalks along Golf Club Road
- New drought tolerant landscaping and water efficient irrigation system.



This project was funded by \$5.6 million in Federal Highway Bridge Program funds, administered by the California Department of Transportation; \$496,000 in Measure J Transportation for Livable Community funds, administered by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority; and \$604,000 in local City funds, for a total of \$6.7 million dollars. ♣

