

NEVADA DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Governor
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State of Nevada

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NEVADA DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROMOTES RESIDENTIAL MERCURY RECYCLING

Recycling events in Elko, Incline Village, Winnemucca and other communities as part of Nevada Recycles Day

CARSON CITY—In January 2004, the Pau Wa Lu Middle School in Gardnerville, Nev. was contaminated when a child brought mercury to school. Days later, a Las Vegas teenager was hospitalized following mercury poisoning. Both incidents required significant involvement by NDEP to clean up contaminated sites and coordinate with local, state and federal agencies. In response to these unfortunate incidents, the NDEP has coordinated a residential mercury removal project to reduce the quantity of unwanted elemental mercury and mercury containing devices from homes, garages and storage areas.

The first such event was held on Sat., Oct. 23 in Elko. NDEP teamed up with the City of Elko to collect unwanted mercury from residents as part of Take Pride in Elko Day. The residential mercury items will be recycled or disposed of safely. Incline Village will host a mercury thermometer exchange on Sat., Nov. 13 during the Celebrate Nevada Recycles Day 2004 and the Winnemucca will host a recycling event on the same day.

“We’re urging citizens not to throw elemental mercury in the trash, down the drain or on the ground,” said David Friedman, recycling manager for NDEP. “Elemental mercury, the substance found in a thermometer, is a hazardous chemical that can cause serious health problems and environmental damage if not handled properly. It’s also illegal to improperly release or dispose of mercury.”

Washoe County has collected nearly 20 pounds of mercury as a result of 35 calls to the NDEP hotline. Residents of Washoe County may contact the Environmental Health Services of the District Health Department at 775-328-2434 to arrange disposal options.

NDEP recommends that residents handle elemental mercury in a well-ventilated area and use disposable gloves to place the items inside a zip-lock bag.

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection aims to remove elemental mercury from the hands of children and adults in an effort to protect human health and the environment.

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