



# Saint Louis County

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Iron Range students praised for recycling efforts during school year**

It's not included on their report cards, but students at a number of Iron Range schools earned high grades for recycling from the St. Louis County Environmental Services Department. With recycling totals tallied for the school year, it's clear students and schools have worked hard to minimize their waste through recycling and waste reduction programs. Recycling programs in several school districts on the Iron Range are supported through a partnership and grant program between St. Louis County Environmental Services and Iron Range Youth in Action.

Both the Cherry and North Woods schools achieved considerable success. North Woods School in Cook wins top bragging rights, having recycled 8.49 tons or 16,980 pounds. Cherry School was close behind, ending the 2014-15 school year recycling 8.45 tons or 16,900 pounds of materials. Combined, that's nearly 17 tons of recyclables that these schools would otherwise have had to pay to throw away. It's also more than 33,800 pounds of valuable resources that are now being made into new products, saving energy and not taking up space in a landfill. Both schools had kicked off recycling programs during the 2013-14 school year and continued efforts this past year.

Cherry and North Woods are among seven schools that now recycle milk cartons in their cafeterias. Four schools in the Hibbing School District, plus the Northeast Range School are also recycling milk cartons. St. Louis County Environmental Services began accepting cartons – including gabled milk and juice cartons, soup and gravy boxes, and juice boxes – for recycling in November 2013 and has named 2015 the “Year of the Carton.” As part of the Year of the Carton campaign, several area schools received recycling bins to collect milk cartons. These bins were provided by the Carton Council, a group of carton manufacturers working to keep their products out of landfills. According to the Carton Council, a school of 500 students can conserve 170,561 sheets of paper, 5,970 gallons of water, and 417 bags of trash per year by recycling milk cartons. North

Woods School took its recycling program a step further by sending leftover milk to a sow as she prepared to give birth to eleven piglets.

Mt. Iron-Buhl (MIB) High School used all three “Rs” – reduce, reuse and recycle – with its second annual low-waste locker cleanout. This coordinated effort keeps recyclable and re-usable materials out of the trash as students clean out their lockers at the end of the year. Students recycled 195 pounds of paper and 78 pounds of re-usable school supplies from their lockers. MIB moved toward school-wide iPad distribution this school year, noticeably reducing paper usage compared to last year’s paper recycling. Even with this decrease, the amount of recyclable and reusable material was far greater than the amount of actual garbage.

Meanwhile, elementary students have been hard at work learning about the importance of recycling and how they can reduce waste at home and school. K-6 graders at several schools had the opportunity to sort through a sample bag of trash to identify what could be recycled, composted, or reused to prevent stuff from going to the landfill. These students came up with creative ideas to give “trash” new life, such as using a glass jar as a pencil holder or turning an unwanted shirt into a costume or quilt. More than 385 first and second graders from Virginia and Hibbing visited the St. Louis County Recycling Processing Facility this spring. The trip gave them a first-hand look at where their recycling ends up and how it is sorted before being baled and sent away to be made into new products.

To learn more about how to reduce waste and recycle more in schools, visit [stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle](http://stlouiscountymn.gov/recycle) and click on the School Recycling link.

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*First and second grade students from Washington and Greenhaven schools tour the St. Louis County Recycling Facility earlier this spring.*