

News Release

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Declutter Mailboxes to Save Trees and Time

Stop Junk Mail San José campaign encourages residents to opt out of unwanted mail

SAN JOSE, Calif. — To help San José residents more effectively save resources and the time involved in recycling paper, today the City of San José and Bay Area Air Quality Management District launched the *Stop Junk Mail San José* campaign.

The campaign supports the mutual goals of San José's Green Vision and the Air District to improve residents' quality of life by preserving trees. Trees help keep air clean by absorbing carbon dioxide emissions and exuding healthy oxygen. The two agencies formed a San José Green Vision Resource Team to collaborate on ways to reduce emissions that affect public health and induce climate change. The team identified Catalog Choice, the nation's largest junk mail opt-out service, as an easy step that residents could take to make a difference.

A proponent of Catalog Choice is San José resident Lisa Hettler-Smith. She was tired of carrying junk mail straight from her mailbox to the recycling bin on almost a daily basis. Then Hettler-Smith discovered Catalog Choice. "I reduced my unwanted mail by about 90 percent within a year simply by occasionally going to the Catalog Choice website to opt out of publications," said Hettler-Smith. "Now, I'm saving the time of throwing away all that paper, and I like knowing that I'm helping to conserve natural resources."

Catalog Choice provides a convenient online path to opt out of junk mail, and they developed a link to the city's website at www.sanjoseca.gov/catalogchoice. Throughout the remainder of 2013, Our City Forest, a local urban forestry nonprofit group, will be promoting the campaign and website at their tree plantings and environmental events; the goal is to bring the total of registered households opting out of junk mail in San José to 12,000.

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“Every thousand opt-outs has the potential to save 36 trees, 14,600 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, and reduce solid waste by over 5,000 pounds over a lifetime,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Reducing junk mail is an easy step residents can take to improve air quality and help our environment.”

Reducing junk mail reduces the volume of recyclables that need processing as well as the volume of material that bypasses recycling and gets sent to landfill. “While paper recycling has increased in recent years, a surprising amount of junk mail still winds up in the garbage and our landfills,” said San José Environmental Services Director Kerrie Romanow. “Residents have done a great job of recycling, but by utilizing Catalog Choice, they can reduce unwanted mail before it gets to them, which is more beneficial to the environment.”

Our City Forest President & CEO Rhonda Berry concurred. “Stopping junk mail addresses the impacts of the paper production process itself, which creates air emissions, uses precious water, and generates wastewater. And it preserves mature trees, enabling them to play their important role in absorbing greenhouse gases and filtering unhealthy toxins from our air and water.”

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About Catalog Choice

Catalog Choice (www.catalogchoice.org) launched its free online mail preference service in 2007 and saw immediate and enthusiastic adoption from individuals looking for an easy way to reduce unwanted mail. Since then, TrustedID Catalog Choice has grown to serve more than a million people, thousands of companies who honor consumer choice, and communities looking for effective zero-waste solutions.

About the San José Environmental Services Department (ESD) and San José Green Vision

ESD (www.sanjoseca.gov/esd) helps make daily life possible by delivering world-class utility services and programs to improve our health, environment, and economy. ESD implements a variety of environmental programs for San José and surrounding cities, and many such programs promote San Jose’s Green Vision (www.sanjoseca.gov/greenvision). The City Council adopted the Green Vision in 2007 as a plan to lead our community into a sustainable future and enhanced quality of life. The vision includes bold goals for clean tech jobs, reduced energy use, renewable energy, green buildings, waste reduction, water reuse, sustainable development, a clean fleet, more trees, zero emission streetlights, and interconnected trails.

About the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and San José Green Vision Resource Team

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.go) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. The district has formed nine teams in the Bay Area to address local air quality. The team representing San Jose adopted the Green Vision moniker as much of their work supports the City’s Green Vision. The team’s membership includes representatives from business and nonprofit sectors as well as from the Air District and ESD. For more information, visit <http://sparetheair.org/Get-Involved/Your-Community/Resource-Teams/San-Jose.aspx>.

About Our City Forest

The mission of Our City Forest (www.ourcityforest.org) is to cultivate a green and healthy San José metropolis by engaging community members in the appreciation, protection, growth and maintenance of our urban ecosystem, especially our urban forest.