

Wal-Mart Awards \$35,000 to Oregon Schools for recycling efforts

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Company's Plastic Bag Recycling Program Encourages Local Elementary Students to Help Remove Nearly 44 Tons of Plastic from the Local Waste Stream

Through its Kids Recycling Challenge program, Wal-Mart today announced it is awarding \$35,020 to 130 Oregon schools for students' efforts to become responsible stewards of their environment. The company's Kids Recycling Challenge effort is the largest plastic bag recycling program of its kind ever undertaken.

From last September through March, elementary school students in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming were encouraged to bring plastic retail and grocery bags to their schools for recycling. For each 60-gallon collection bag filled with plastic bags and brought to a local Wal-Mart store, the school was awarded \$5.00 from Wal-Mart.

Schools were grouped into geographic regions, and competed against other elementary schools in their region. The ten schools in each region that brought in the most collection bags received additional cash grants from Wal-Mart: \$3,000 for first place, \$2,000 for second place, \$1,000 for third place, and \$250 each for fourth through tenth places.

Additionally, the top school in each region will be rewarded with an entertaining and educational school-wide assembly performance, courtesy of Wal-Mart.

Oregon was designated as one region, with schools across the state competing against each other.

“As an active leader in the local communities that our stores serve, Wal-Mart is committed to improving the environment, increasing awareness about recycling, and helping our schools get much-needed funding,” said Sharon Hamm, Manager of Wal-Mart Store #2029 in Medford. “It was a thrill to see the principals, teachers, and parent volunteers come into the store with their cartloads of bags, and we were all surprised to see just how quickly they added up. Many schools have asked us if they can continue bringing in bags even though the current program is over. They have become so accustomed to recycling that earning money for the bags has almost become secondary.”

Oregon region results

Collectively, 130 elementary schools in Oregon participated in the program, filling a total of 5,454 collection bags “weighing 87,264 pounds” and earning \$35,020 in the process.

Jacksonville Elementary School in Jacksonville topped all participating Oregon schools by filling 698 60-gallon collection bags (totaling 11,168 pounds). In addition to earning \$5.00 per bag, and the \$3,000 grand prize, the students of Jacksonville Elementary will also be rewarded with an entertaining assembly focusing on the environment, courtesy of Wal-Mart. The assembly will take place today at 8:45 a.m. Prior to the assembly, a representative from Wal-Mart will present a check for \$6,490 to the hard-working students.

“We’re glad to be able to partner with Wal-Mart to teach our kids the importance of recycling,” said Rick Snyder, Principal of Jacksonville Elementary. “Our students, parents, and staff worked very hard on this project, and I’m thrilled with the way everybody rallied together to make the Kids Recycling Challenge a huge success at our school.”

Rounding out the top ten schools, the big winners in the Oregon region include:

Standing	School	Location	Bags Collected	Amt.
2	Foster Elementary	Foster	532	\$4,660
3	Salish Ponds Elementary	Fairview	321	\$2,605
4	Kingsview Christian School	North Bend	291	\$1,705
5	Memorial Elementary	Mcminnville	217	\$1,335
6	Whitworth Elementary	Dallas	206	\$1,280
7	Redwood Elem.	Grants Pass	151	\$1,005
8	Sherwood Heights Elementary	Pendleton	128	\$890
9	J.C. Clyde Hopkins Elementary	Sherwood	123	\$865
10	Crooked River Elementary	Prineville	116	\$830

All told, nearly 2,800 schools in 12 states filled more than 131,000 60-gallon collection bags from September 2006 through March 2007, and earned more than \$830,000 from Wal-Mart.

A history of success

The Kids Recycling Challenge debuted in February 2005 in Sacramento, Palm Springs, and Salt Lake City, and has since expanded to Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Since its inception, nearly 2,800 schools have enrolled in the program, representing more than one million

students. Participating schools have recycled 1,400 tons of plastic bags and have collected nearly \$1.2 million from Wal-Mart.

The next Kids Recycling Challenge will run from Fall 2007 through Spring 2008 in the same states. Interested schools are invited to visit www.kidsrecyclingchallenge.com to learn more and to enroll.

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