

## Pollution Prevention: State Task Force on Recycling

In 2004, the Mississippi Legislature created a State Task Force on Recycling (Task Force) under House Bill 818 to develop a comprehensive plan to establish a system to recycle household items in Mississippi. Specifically, Task Force duties included the development of a statistical and qualitative examination of the benefits of recycling, development of a comprehensive plan to recycle household items and report their findings to the Mississippi State Legislature by December 31, 2004 with a system to allow counties and municipalities to collect items to be recycled. The Task Force members included representatives from 13 agencies and 6 members appointed by the Governor from various recycling industry sectors.

The Task Force met on several occasions in an open meeting format so that members of the community could attend and offer comments and suggestions. During these meetings members of the Legislature indicated that while the intent of the house bill focused on the recycling efforts in residential areas, the Task Force should also include recycling efforts within the business community.

The recycling report focused on four areas: 1) Benefits of recycling: describing the environmental, economic and quality of life benefits of recycling; 2) Recycling education and outreach: describing the importance of education in implementing successful recycling programs; 3) Collection of recyclables: a focus on the various residential collection programs; and 4) Market development: to discuss the programs and services necessary to grow and enhance current recycling markets. The full report can be accessed from the MDEQ web page ([www.deq.state.ms.us](http://www.deq.state.ms.us)) under the Key Topic "Recycling".

A central obstacle to recycling programs is that the public is unaware of the recycling opportunities in their community. This is compounded by lack of education on the importance and benefits of recycling. Recycling has proven to be a profitable enterprise for many school districts, agencies and institutions. However, many small businesses have not implemented recycling programs.