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754 North Sherman Drive, Suite 220 Indianapolis, IN 46201
Phone: (317) 532-1367 Fax: (317) 532-1369
www.work-force-inc.com

The electronic waste recycling company RecycleForce is a division of Workforce Inc., a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization providing job training and support services to help ex-offenders successfully re-enter civil society. As a viable business venture with a social purpose, RecycleForce creates transitional jobs for at-risk workers, with an emphasis on formerly incarcerated fathers. Participants benefit from an integrated array of training, housing, and rehabilitation services, with paid work as the organizing principle. After a six-month training period, participants graduate to full-time employment in the community. In addition to creating job opportunities for ex-offenders, the work of RecycleForce keeps tons of potentially hazardous electronic waste out of Indiana's landfills. To date, more than 500 tons of e-waste has been processed through RecycleForce and kept out of Indiana landfills.

Did YOU know...?

Electronic devices often contain hazardous materials like lead or mercury, which should not be land-filled or incinerated. In normal use, a computer, cell phone or other electronic device containing toxic materials is not dangerous. However, we can create risks to the environment and to our health when we improperly dispose of these electronic devices.

When we don't properly dispose of electronic devices, the toxic metals contained in them like (lead, mercury, cadmium, and hexavalent chromium) can be released into the environment. Exposure can occur through inhalation, ingestion of soil and food, and chromium can also be absorbed through the skin.

Because many serious health problems are associated with exposure to toxic metals, legislation is taking shape to mandate e-waste recycling.

Facts about e-waste

- Every day across Indiana people use tens of millions of cell phones, printers, copiers, hand-held games, MP3 players, PDAs, remote control units and other electronic devices that will eventually break or become outdated.
- There are at least 5 toxic materials that can potentially cause serious health problems found in the electronic devices we use each day.
- 130 million cell phones are estimated to go out of service each year in the US.
- 40 million computers and televisions are discarded in the US every year.
- 1.2 million computers and TVs are discarded by Hoosiers annually.
- At least 4 pounds of potentially toxic lead is contained in each old computer monitor or television.

What YOU can do to help: 1) Try to buy electronic products from companies that have pledged to eliminate toxic chemicals from their products and take responsibility for properly reusing and recycling them. 2) When you have finished using them, return products to the manufacturer. 3) Recycle your e-waste through the Indianapolis eCycles program. For more information log on to www.recycleindianapolis.org or call the Mayors Action Center at (317) 327-4622.