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### **Grant to Fund Electronics Recycling Event**

A \$10,000 grant from Dell, Inc. will allow Oak Park to host an electronics collection event where residents can safely recycle their old computers, printers, monitors and related items free of charge.

Oak Park received one of 20 grants awarded by computer manufacturer Dell, which chose recipients from a field of 175 applicants, including state and local governments, higher education institutions and non-profit organizations. Oak Park is the only Illinois community to earn a grant through the Dell program.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to offer area residents a free, convenient way to safely dispose of their old computer-related items,” said Karen Rozmus, who manages the Village’s recycling and refuse collection programs. “Anything we can do to reduce the amount of refuse we send to a landfill is good for the community and the environment.”

Recycling companies typically charge about \$10 per computer monitor collected. The grant will allow Oak Park to offer the program free to participants by covering the costs of the equipment *demanufacturing* process.

Rozmus said all of the details of the recycling event have not yet been worked out, since the Village just learned of grant award. The event could be as early as mid-November, she said, and likely will be held at the Public Works Department Service Center, 131 South Blvd. More details will be announced as they become available.

In addition to the funds, Oak Park also will receive technical assistance and guidance from the National Recycling Coalition to help make the event successful. NRC will conduct a series of training sessions to share best practices and encourage interaction among grant recipients. Training will include strategies for developing effective partnerships for collection and selection of responsible recyclers and fund raising strategies, as well as media and community outreach.

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The grant review board, consisting of Dell, federal government and environmental and recycling organization representatives, based its selections on considerations of the quality of the collaborative effort, prospects for successful programs, geographic diversity, sustainability of the program beyond the grant period and the ability to leverage the local community's existing recycling infrastructure.

"Raising consumer awareness of the need to responsibly recycle electronics is one of the key challenges our industry faces, and Dell is committed to doing its part," Dell's Sustainable Business Director Pat Nathan said in a statement announcing the grants. "The grant program empowers communities to begin developing local programs that will help retire used computers and the resulting events illustrate to consumers the importance of recycling rather than wasting used computers."

Oak Park has considerable experience with recycling events, having hosted the *Great Paint Exchange* now for several years. The paint exchange allows residents to safely dispose of unwanted, but usable paint, that is then given away free to anyone in need of paint.

The Village also has an aggressive residential recycling program and works with local business to help them recycle more and toss less. In addition, the Village has helped promote regional recycling events, including for electronics, household hazardous wastes and gas lawnmower exchanges.

"Oak Parkers are big on recycling," Rozmus said. "That's why it is exciting to be able to offer a safe and convenient way for them to dispose of their old electronics so close to home."

For more information on the electronics recycling event and other recycling programs, call 358.5700 or email [publicworks@oak-park.us](mailto:publicworks@oak-park.us).

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