

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Siuslaw Elementary School Students Launch Milk Carton Recycling Program

Siuslaw Elementary School students have introduced a new recycling initiative in their cafeteria this year, transforming how more than 500 milk cartons used daily are managed. Instead of disposing of cartons as garbage, students now empty any remaining milk into a designated receptacle and place the cartons into a dedicated recycling cart provided by the local hauler, County Transfer and Recycling (CTR). The collected cartons are transported to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in Eugene for proper recycling and processing.

“This program is designed not only to teach students about the importance of recycling and reducing waste, but also to emphasize the value of empty, well-sorted materials for responsible end markets. Knowing *how* to recycle, so new products can be created, is just as important as knowing *what* to recycle,” said Britte Kirsch, Florence Master Recycler and Chair of the Environmental Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) for the City of Florence. Members of the Master Recyclers and EMAC volunteered on the program’s Kick-Off Day, Monday, September 28, to help educate students on the new procedures.

In preparation for the launch, several student groups created signage and produced an informational video that was shared with students, staff, and families the week prior. The school also continues to operate a “No Thank You” bin, allowing students to reduce food waste by sharing unopened or unwanted items from their lunch trays.

“The students are already amazed by the number of milk cartons used each day,” said Principal Amy Flora. “Seeing the volume collected in the recycling cart really shows the impact we can make together. We plan to continue building education around recycling, reducing, and reusing throughout the school year.”

Since 2025, Oregon’s Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) has reshaped how packaging, paper products, and food service ware are managed in recycling programs statewide. The inclusion of milk and juice cartons in the recycling stream has created new opportunities for schools to develop programs like this one. More information about the RMA is available at:

<https://stage.oregon.gov/deq/recycling/Pages/Modernizing-Oregons-Recycling-System.aspx>

About the Partners

The Siuslaw Elementary School is part of the Siuslaw School District. The Master Recyclers Program is a volunteer program of Lane County Waste Management. EMAC is a volunteer advisory committee of the City of Florence that supports the development of programs and actions promoting healthy, environmentally responsible practices in the community.

More information about milk carton recycling in schools can be found at:

<https://recyclecartons.com/schools/>

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