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“Tis the season to recycle” -- Holiday Recycling tips from LDEQ

BATON ROUGE – “Tis the season to be jolly,” but Louisiana, like the rest of the nation, produces more waste in December than any other month. Planning ahead of time can reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfills, and if you reuse, you can even generate useful items. You can “Be the Solution” and have a more waste-free holiday season by following a few simple tips from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

When you prepare for the coming holidays, think green: reduce, reuse and recycle. Wrapping gifts can be a challenge since wrapping paper is frequently not recyclable. Be creative! Wrap a gift in a gift -- such as a scarf, bandana, dishtowel or cloth shopping bag. The comic pages from the Sunday paper and most colorful flyers reuse paper and are still recyclable. Last year’s Christmas and holiday cards can be used in crafts and as ornaments.

Out with the old so you have room for the new! Before the holidays is a perfect time to clean out your clutter and unused items. If you have outgrown toys and clothing, consider donating them to charitable organizations. Discarded electronics (computers, copiers, fax machines, printers, and monitors) may be donated to a local nonprofit agency or the Capital Area Corporate Recycling Council (CACRC). CACRC provides computers to schools, families and nonprofits. Visit the council’s website at www.cacrc.com for details.

When decorating your home, there are ways to consider the environment. An artificial tree doesn’t have to be discarded and a live tree can be replanted. If you purchase a cut tree, remember that it cannot be flocked or have tinsel or decorations on it if it is to be recycled. Cut trees are usually collected in early January and are ground up into compost or mulch. You can find information about seasonal pickups and recycling at the East Baton Rouge Parish Recycling website: <http://brgov.com/recycle>. Many parishes will have programs to recycle trees. LED lights last longer, save energy and money. Go to <http://www.holidayleds.com/christmas-light-recycling-program.aspx> for recycling instructions.

Recycling packaging materials such as cardboard and plastic foam peanuts really helps. For information on recycling plastic foam peanuts, or if you are a retailer interested in foam peanut recycling, go to www.loosefillpackaging.com hotline. Buy rechargeable batteries for toys, cameras and gadgets. When those batteries no longer hold a charge, call the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation at 800-8-BATTERY, or go to their website at www.rbrc.org for information on the nearest batteryrecycling drop off location.

Have a safe holiday season and remember to never burn wrapping paper or Christmas trees in the fireplace. For more recycling ideas, go to: www.deq.louisiana.gov/recycling.