

Recycling barrels will give Winthrop pedestrians a choice

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The town of [Winthrop](#) is launching a new recycling project in collaboration with [Recycling Roundup](#) and local businesses.

Recycling barrels will be placed downtown this spring to encourage residents and visitors to recycle cans, plastic bottles and glass. Several Winthrop businesses have agreed to pay Recycling Roundup to collect the recyclables and to maintain the barrels.

The town council last week allocated \$510 for the Winthrop Public Recycling Project. The funds will be used to create the recycling barrels used in the project.

The recycling project was proposed by Casey Bouchard, co-owner of Recycling Roundup, a company founded last year that provides onsite recycling collection throughout the Methow Valley.

Bouchard said about a dozen Winthrop businesses have expressed interest in supporting the new recycling program. The project will start with four recycling barrels placed along the downtown boardwalk, and barrels at the Town Trailhead and in the Winthrop park.

"This is an effort to take materials out of the waste stream," Bouchard said.

The idea for the project gained momentum in recent months when Bouchard began asking Winthrop businesses if they would contribute to a public recycling effort in town, and got a very positive response. "The business sponsors... said 'we'll sustain this going forward'," Bouchard said.

Last fall, Bouchard noticed wine barrels in front of the [Lost River Winery](#) tasting room on the north end of town. It occurred to him that with a little modification, the barrels could serve as recycling bins that would fit in with Winthrop's Western theme. He approached Lost River Winery with his idea, and owner John Morgan agreed to sell him six barrels at a bargain price, Bouchard said.

The barrels are being retrofitted to include a metal liner that will hold the plastic bag for the recyclables. Bouchard said local resident Mark Monteverde is volunteering carpentry work to turn the wine barrels into recycling bins.

The exterior will be painted with the names of sponsoring businesses and the town logo, as well as the logos of Recycling Roundup and [Methow Recycles](#), the valley's recycling center.

"Our goal is to put up a visible symbol of our town's and valley's commitment to recycle," Bouchard said. "Through the creativity and generosity of the community and local businesses we've been able to come up with a recycling bin that will have unique local character at a fraction of the cost of similar commercially available bins," Bouchard said. The barrel design will need final approval by the town's Westernization Committee, he said.

The recycling containers will be placed next to trash cans in town. "Having the recycling next to the trash helps people make a choice," Bouchard said. Recycling Roundup will maintain the recycling barrels, collect, sort, and deliver the recyclables to the recycling center.

"We're making this single-stream to make it convenient for people," Bouchard said.

Recycling Roundup has provided recycling collection for special events including the wine festival and auto rally in Winthrop. "That's what confirmed my conviction to move this forward," he said.

Bouchard said the recycling project will be launched on Earth Day, April 22, with a reception at [Farmers State Bank](#), one of the project's business sponsors.