

FORT IRWIN CALIFORNIA IS BASICALLY A BIG TOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CALIFORNIA DESERT. AND LIKE MOST TOWNS THE IRWIN COMMUNITY GENERATES A LARGE AMOUNT OF SOLID WASTE, BUT MOST OF IT NEVER SEES THE LAND FILL, ENVIRONMENTAL CORRESPONDENT JAVIER HERNANDEZ REPORTS.

LAST YEAR FORT IRWIN, CALIFORNIA SPENT 3 AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS TO EXPAND THE LANDFILL. TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE NEW AREA INSTALLATION OFFICIALS STEPPED UP THEIR EFFORTS TO DIVERT WASTE AWAY FROM THE DUMP.

“I WOULD SAY THAT 80 PERCENT OF EVERYTHING THAT COMES INTO YOUR HOUSE IS RECYCLABLE...AND WE WOULD LIKE TO GET EVERY BIT OF IT.”

JAMES WILLIAMS, FT IRWIN WASTE MANAGEMENT, BRANCH MANAGER THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE GOAL IS TO DIVERT 40 PERCENT OF WASTE BY 2005. FORT IRWIN IS ONE OF A HAND FULL OF INSTALLATIONS ON SCHEDULE TO MEET THAT GOAL THANKS TO AN AGGRESSIVE RECYCLING PROGRAM.

PART OF IRWIN'S SUCCESS IS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. THESE TROOPS ARE DUMPING WOOD PALETTES FROM THEIR TRAINING EXERCISE.... AND SANFORD SHADLE IS PICKING THEM UP.

“YOU SEE ALL THIS WOOD? IT’S GETTING RECYCLED. (CUT) MY WIFE DOES WOOD CRAFTS. I COME UP HERE AND PICK UP THE WOOD AND SHE MAKES HER NICK-KNACKS OUT OF IT.” – SANFORD SHADLE, RESIDENT

THE COMMUNITY GENERATES NEARLY A THOUSAND TONS OF WOOD, GRASS AND LEAFY CUTTINGS ANNUALLY. MOST OF THIS IS PROCESSED INTO COMPOST AND USED FOR RE-VEGETATION PROJECTS DOWNRANGE. IT’S ALSO AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY.

THE RECYCLING PROGRAM GENERATES MONEY SO IT PAYS FOR ITS SELF. AND STATE REGULATORS GIVE THE PROGRAM HIGH MARKS FOR ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

“THEIR OPERATION AS A WHOLE HAS BEEN REALLY GOOD AND WE’VE BEEN PRETTY PLEASED WITH THE WORK THAT THEY’VE...THAT THE ARMY IS DOING.” – MIKE MISTICA, INSPECTOR, SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY WATER WASTE MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FORT IRWIN OFFICIALS SAY RECYCLING DOES TAKE A LITTLE EFFORT, BUT IT SURE BEATS DUMPING MORE MONEY IN THE LANDFILL, JAVIER HERNANDEZ, FORT IRWIN, CALIFORNIA.