

## Local Information



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Eugene (KMTR) - Not long ago, the phone company published a new phone book once a year.

But now some homes are getting a new phone book from a variety of companies every couple of months.

When you've got one phone book there's no problem. When you get two or three within a six-month span it can be a nuisance. Some people say it's also a waste of resources.

Now some consumer groups say, like any other junk mail, we should have the choice to refuse delivery.



With information as close as the click of a mouse or a three digit phone number, phone books aren't always the go-to place to get a number anymore.

People like Jacquelyn Low of Eugene say getting new phone books so frequently is getting out of hand.

"I'm getting more phone books on my doorstep throughout the year," she says. "I've had, I'm thinking, like five so far, and I've only been here a year. I'm just going to toss it. They're a nice weight, so they're nice and flingable!"

Waste managers agree. Here are the numbers:

- In 2004, 7.2 million phone books were distributed in Oregon.
- For three months of the year, Lane County recycles about two tons of phone books every day.
- Across the nation, it adds up to 660,000 tons a year.

"It is a waste of resources. That's one of the big issues. Just because they're recyclable, that doesn't make it okay to have all this waste," says Tom Watson of the National Waste Prevention Coalition.

Getting rid of the directories has gotten easier, at least in Lane County. Now you can just throw them in you regular mixed recycling bins.

But as all those unwanted phone books pile up in recycling bins, some people are wondering if it's time to stop the delivery of so many different phone books.

That's where the National Waste Prevention Coalition comes in.

Started in the State of Washington and spreading to cities around the country, the group is pushing legislators to regulate phone book companies just like junk mail. They say their aim is to make it easier for residents and businesses to opt out of receiving those phone books.

For people who are bothered by receiving extra phone books, they recommend contacting the companies who publish the books and finding out how to stop delivery.

So why are there so many new phone books?

Unlike a few years ago, the companies that put out the telephone directories are now separate from telephone service providers; they're not part of the phone company anymore. That has made a new market for advertising dollars for anyone who cares to jump into the business.

And none of those new phone directory companies have to contribute to the cost of recycling their products.