

Ohio Power Company Launches Utility Pole Recycling Program

AKRON, OH — Wooden utility poles no longer fit for use in Ohio are receiving a new lease on life, thanks to a program launched by FirstEnergy Corp. to repurpose discarded poles and keep them out of landfills.

Under the new Wood Pole Diversion Program, utility poles no longer in use by FirstEnergy's Ohio utilities – Ohio Edison, The Illuminating Company or Toledo Edison – will be redistributed to interested parties for direct reuse. Alternative uses for poles include fencing, parking bollards, guide rail posts, furniture, landscaping or treated wood construction.

When a FirstEnergy pole is retired, utility personnel will remove any hardware from the pole and store it at one of its participating service centers. Each pole, which weighs roughly 50 pounds per cubic foot, must be at least eight feet in length to be part of the reuse program.

When a service center has collected approximately 12 tons of utility poles, the company will work with a transportation and materials management firm to pick them up and distribute them for reuse. The poles will be delivered at no cost to interested parties who are willing to accept a full load, can be accessed by tractor trailer and are located within a certain distance from the collection sites.

In the past, FirstEnergy's discarded utility poles had been cut into smaller pieces and stored on site until a waste management company took them to a landfill for disposal. Since the trial phase of the initiative started in 2020, FirstEnergy has diverted more than 1 million pounds of discarded utility poles from landfills.

In addition to being offered in Ohio, the pole recycling program was recently rolled out by all of FirstEnergy's electric companies in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and West Virginia. The program is expected to reduce FirstEnergy's waste stream significantly over time, as most poles weigh between 300 and 4,100 pounds.

Compost University to Launch in May

As the compost industry expands nationally there is great demand for trained and certified compost operators and professionals who run safe, efficient, neighbor- and environment-friendly operations.

A new online learning platform, Compost University (Compost U), will enable individuals and companies to achieve their continuing education objectives and aspirations as well as overcome challenges caused by limited time and ability to travel.

The new online learning management system, Compost U, will combine industry-leading content from USCC (US Composting Council) and CREF (Compost Research & Education Foundation) training and education resources, such as conference talks, webinars, short classes and new longer advanced courses. This new platform offers hundreds of digital coursework covering a wide range of business, science, management, safety, and technical topics which can be taken anytime, anywhere.

The USCC's professional credential programs boasts nearly 100 Certified Compost Operation Managers (CCOMs) and Certified Composting Professionals (CCPs). Each certified individual must participate in continuing education totaling 30 Professional Development Hours (PDHs) every three years. Compost U will be tied into the USCC's database so that certificants' PDHs will be automatically tracked through the certificants' personal account.

Compost University will launch in mid-May and help USCC and CREF to bolster the industry and train the next generation of compost professionals.

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