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Providing a solution to hard-to-dispose of items

By Robert Rickman, San Joaquin County Supervisor
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Few can argue the fact that we live in a hidden gem, a gateway to San Joaquin County from Silicon Valley and the Bay Area. We take pride in all that our area has to offer, and that pride extends to keeping our communities clean.

Residents may not know that one of the largest items – mattresses – that folks are unsure of where to dispose properly, are actually one of the easiest items to recycle. Doing so keeps them out of the landfill, where they take up precious space and are hard to break down. More than 75% of a mattress can be recycled and made into other products. This process is accomplished by cutting open mattresses and separating them into their different components, including steel, foam, fibers and wood. The materials are then remade into carpet padding, appliances, mulch and more.

The Mattress Recycling Council's Bye Bye Mattress program, which has operated in California since 2016, has helped divert more than 7 million mattresses from landfills in the state - including more than 120,000 in San Joaquin County.

Two locations in Manteca and one in Tracy are among the Bye Bye Mattress program's more than 220 permanent collection sites around California. These sites allow residents to drop off mattresses at no cost. Other eligible items include box springs and futons not attached to a frame. The participating locations are: the Lovelace MRF & Transfer Station, located at 2323 E. Lovelace Rd. (Open Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), the Manteca City Recycling Division at 210 E. Wetmore Ave (Open Monday through Friday 6:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.), and the Tracy Material Recovery Facility & Transfer Station located at 30703 S. MacArthur Drive (Open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.).

A recycling fee collected when a mattress or box spring is sold in California supports this program. The Mattress Recycling Council, a nonprofit formed by the mattress industry to operate programs like Bye Bye Mattress, uses the fee to establish no-cost drop-off locations, support communities with addressing hotspots for illegal mattress dumping and fund research that helps improve mattress recycling efficiency and develops more uses for recycled mattress products.

San Joaquin County is a great place to live, raise a family and build a business. By working together and doing our part by recycling, we can continue to keep this gem sparkling.

Robert Rickman is the San Joaquin County Supervisor for District 5.

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"I hope I shall possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles), the character of an honest man."
- George Washington -