



**KENT COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC WORKS**

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **WANTED: Mercury Thermostats**

*Rewards for residents to raise awareness*

**GRAND RAPIDS, MI** (October 20, 2016) - Mercury is harmful to humans and wildlife if improperly handled. Keeping mercury-containing products out of the trash and sewer system benefits the environment and people.

To manage the potential hazards of mercury, the Kent County Department of Public Works, Covanta, the operator of the Kent County Waste to Energy facility, and the Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC), are joining forces to sponsor a special promotion promoting awareness about proper mercury management beginning October 24, 2016. The first 200 residents to drop off a mercury-containing thermostat during the promotional period will receive a \$5 gift card to Jimmy Johns\* courtesy of Covanta.

“Though this promotion specifically references thermostats, it is meant to raise awareness about the importance of safely managing all mercury-bearing devices,” said Nic VanderVinne, Kent County’s Resource Recovery & Recycling Manager. “Thermostats contain between three and four grams of mercury each, which equates to the amount in 1,000 compact fluorescent bulbs.”

Residents who are replacing their mercury thermostats with new programmable ones should deliver the old thermostats intact. The mercury vial should not be removed! If the thermostat is digital/programmable, it can be recycled through Kent County’s electronics recycling program at separate facilities but is not eligible for this program.

Covanta, TRC and the Kent County Department of Public Works appreciate the outstanding efforts and vital role that residents have already played in the safe and proper removal of mercury from the waste stream. Kent County residents turned in 599 pounds of mercury during 2015 and another 2,791 pounds of fluorescent light bulbs, which also contain mercury.

In addition, the Thermostat Recycling Corporation will buy 500 lbs. of carbon off-sets for every mercury thermostat returned. This covers the environmental costs of driving a car to the event, plus a little extra to make sure the event recovers more carbon than it consumes.

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“We are pleased to team up with Covanta and Kent County Department of Public Works to help stimulate mercury thermostat collections in the state,” said Ryan Kiscaden, TRC’s Executive Director. “Events like this help create awareness of the importance of recycling mercury thermostats and other mercury products, while offering an easy solution to do so.”

“We are excited to partner with Kent County DPW and TRC to recognize and promote the outstanding efforts of Kent County residents to remove mercury from the waste stream. It is our hope that the thermostat reward program will encourage more residents to participate in collections for products containing mercury and other household hazardous waste,” says Matt Marler, Covanta Kent business manager.

In addition to mercury thermostats, Kent County residents are invited to bring other mercury-containing products, gasoline, lawn and garden products, pool chemicals and other household hazardous waste to any of the four County Hazardous Waste collection sites during the weekly scheduled operating hours. For a list of other items, visit [www.recyclekent.org](http://www.recyclekent.org).

Kent County Department of Public Works  
1500 Scribner Ave NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
*Wednesdays from 8:00 am to 10:00 am*

North Kent Recycling & Waste Center  
2908 Ten Mile Rd. NE  
Rockford, MI 49341  
*Fridays from 8:30 am to 10:30 am*

City of Kentwood Public Works  
5068 Breton Rd. SE  
Kentwood, MI 49508  
*Tuesdays from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm*

Wyoming Clean Water Plant  
2350 Ivanrest Ave SW  
Wyoming, MI 49418  
*Mondays 1 pm to 3 pm &  
Thursdays 7am to 9am*

*\*One gift card per household, regardless of the number of mercury thermostats or other mercury-containing products that are dropped off.*

**About Kent County DPW:**

*Kent County Department of Public Works fosters collaborative solutions that deliver value to our stakeholders by managing discarded materials to conserve natural resources and promote a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community. Kent County’s 20x’20/90x’30 Vision aims to reduce discarded materials headed to landfill from Kent County from 602,083 tons in 2015 to just 60,210 tons by 2030.*



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**About Covanta Kent:** Covanta Kent operates the Kent County Waste to Energy Facility, which serves Kent County with sustainable waste disposal, processing approximately 550 tons of municipal solid waste per day into more than 320 megawatts of clean, renewable electricity. The facility also recycles approximately 3,600 tons of ferrous metal annually – enough to build 2,770 automobiles. For more information, visit [covanta.com](http://covanta.com).

**About Thermostat Recycling Corporation:** The Thermostat Recycling Corporation (TRC) is a non-profit stewardship organization that facilitates and manages the collection and proper disposal of mercury-containing thermostats. It was originally founded in 1998 by Honeywell, White-Rodgers and General Electric as a voluntary venture. Today more than 3,600 businesses and communities in 48 states are enrolled in TRC's program. Since founding, TRC has collected over 2.1 million mercury-containing thermostats – that has kept 10 tons of mercury out of the waste stream.

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### KENT COUNTY DPW CONTACTS:

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