



TAKE YOUR YARD DEBRIS TO TRI-COUNTY ORGANICS... COMING SOON, COMMERCIAL FOOD WASTE COMPOSTING



Did you know residential and commercial customers pay county/state taxes for garbage collection (not to mention hauling fees) but there's no tax for recycling yard and organic waste? Composting saves businesses money on waste disposal and helps the environment. Just ask Jamie Phenow, General Manager at Tri-County Organics, a 19-acre public yard waste drop-off site and soon-to-be organics compost facility, located at 40-35th Ave. NE in St. Cloud. The facility is open from 11:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. Monday through Friday and 11:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. on Saturday.

"I'm confident we'll be accepting organic waste from commercial establishments by this fall," says Phenow, noting the origin of this cafeteria food waste is typically schools, universities, hospitals, and prisons. "We can actually convert the whole cafeteria, paper products as well."

Tri-County Organics, owned by Kevin Johnson, opened in October of 2012. It has secured a conditional use permit from Minden Township to produce compost from yard waste and organics, and is waiting to hear if the final application with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has been accepted. The recycling site plans to pattern itself after the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District (WLSSD) in Duluth and the composting set up at the Minnesota Arboretum, in Chaska. (Go to www.wlssd.duluth.mn.us or www.arboretum.umn.edu.) Once that happens, says Phenow, the facility will need a little time to organize its organic composting operation, prior to opening to the public.

In the meantime, the facility is open to accepting yard waste from residential and commercial customers—brush, broken

branches, leaves, grass clippings, plants, logs, and tree stumps. The company cuts and chops the debris for a fee, and creates wood chips and mulch for purchase. These are sold by bags or by the yard or by the truckload, in bulk or packaged. A \$20 Season Pass allows savings on various services, especially the stumps. Please note there is an additional charge for tree stumps over 6" in diameter.

"We've had to accept the stumps because of all the wind storms," says Phenow, who explained they take up to a year to process. "You have to let them sit and then, roll them to release the dirt and small rocks." These he doesn't want in the grinder.

Tri-County Organics also doesn't want construction lumber, whether lead painted or wood "green treated" with copper arsenate or other chemicals or oils. Phenow suggests taking those materials to Henkemeyer Demolition Landfill or the Minden Transfer Station.

Questions? Visit www.tri-countyorganics.com, or contact Jamie Phenow at: Jamie@tri-countyorganics.com or call 320.493.3270.

THE COMPOSTING PROCESS —



Visit <http://vimeo.com/4547507> to see the WLSSD Garden Green operation, which produces 60 tons of compost a week.

1. Yard debris is broken down and mixed with food waste in an industrial mixer.
2. Nitrogen, carbon, and water go into the mix in prescribed quantities.
3. Sometimes, sawdust and sheetrock are also added.
4. Long rows (wind-rows) of the mixture are constructed.
5. Oxygen is pumped into the base of each wind-row via a hose.
6. Each wind-row is allowed to "cook" with micro-organism activity, which kills harmful pathogens.
7. The core temperature reaches from 130 to 160 degrees and is kept there for seven days.
8. Moisture content should be 50 to 60%.
9. The compost is screened to remove small wood particles.
10. The compost is "cured" (allowed to sit) for 30 to 90 days.
11. Finished, the compost smells and crumbles like garden dirt.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Amnesty Day

Saturday, September 7th, 2013
7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Benton County Public Works building
7752 Highway #25 NE, Foley – one mile north of the Highway 23 intersection

Household Hazardous Waste Event

Saturday, September 14th, 2013
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Benton County Public Works building

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ADOPT A HIGHWAY OR COUNTY ROAD

Volunteers with the state's Adopt-a-Highway program and the Benton County Public Works/Highway department put in substantial hours over many miles to beautify and clean Minnesota's landscape. They free up employees from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the county to work on more critical undertakings, such as pothole repair and guardrail installation. Yearly, the effort saves taxpayers over \$6 million, says Ernest Lloyd, State Adopt-a-Highway Manager. It's dirty work, and they've chosen to do it. How about you?

In Benton County, the Adopt-a-Highway effort cleans 66.5 miles of **state highways** with another 277 miles still in need of volunteers for pickup. Thirty-three groups—comprised of church members, service groups, community groups, businesses, and individuals—conduct at least two pick-ups per year, collecting approximately 6,600 pounds of litter, according to Lloyd. These are typically conducted in the spring and fall.

Interested in organizing an Adopt-a-Highway effort for a stretch of state highway? Call Cindy Senger, District 3B

Adopt-a-Highway coordinator, at 320.223.6545 or 800.657.3961 to organize your group.

According to Mark Ebnet, Maintenance Superintendent for the Benton County Public Works/Highway department, 60 groups participate in the **county's** Adopt-a-Highway program. Volunteers now clean 150 miles of roughly 425 miles of county roads. This leaves 275 miles still in need of citizen cleanup.

Are you interested in beautifying a Benton county roadway? Call Beth Brenny in the Benton County Public Works/Highway department at 320.968.5053.

Benton County's numbers fall between those of two other counties in our tri-county area. Sherburne County uses 16 groups to clean 32 miles of the 400 miles of county roads. Stearns County benefits from 197 volunteer groups, which clean about 400 of the 968 miles of county roads, according to an April 2012 article in the *St. Cloud Times*, "Who keeps your highways clean? These people."

So, what types of litter are collected in those bright yellow plastic bags?—paper, paper cartons, aluminum cans, glass bottles,



mostly. Car parts, furniture, weapons, sharp objects, hypodermic needles, dead animals, and human waste are tagged and set aside for MnDOT or the Benton County Public Works/Highway department.

Collection can be a dangerous undertaking, which is why there are rules in place for volunteers. Volunteers are told to wear gloves, safety shoes, and vests. They're encouraged to watch a safety video and told how to park their vehicles on the side of the roadway. Also, be aware

that some areas of roadway are so dangerous that volunteers may not handle them. An adult must accompany children less than 12-years-old on state highways, 14-years-old on county roads.

"Volunteers' enthusiasm and willingness to do this cleanup is very commendable," says Lloyd. "Because of these dedicated groups out there, statewide, taking their own free time to keep the state system clean and beautiful, Minnesota taxpayers save money and perform a great civic duty."

CONCRETE BURIAL SUBJECT OF TWO MINNESOTA STATUTE REVISIONS



Various changes have been made or proposed to two statutes covering the disposal of concrete on rural farms, residences, and small businesses. Read the information below. If you have any questions, please contact your county's Solid Waste manager.

Potential changes to MPCA general guidelines for uncontaminated concrete disposal — Under Minnesota's Permit By Rule (PBR) for Burial of Demolition Debris statute (Minn. R. 7001.0210) of 2009, rural homes, small businesses, and farms were subject to strict requirements for the disposal of concrete and rebar, according to Stearns County Solid Waste Manager Troy Freihammer. A "Farm Exception" was

made in 2011, allowing farmers to bury concrete and rebar without a permit. Freihammer and other members of the Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association petitioned MPCA to relax restrictions on small rural businesses and residences. Many drafts and compromises later, Freihammer hopes the current draft of the General Permit for Disposal of Uncontaminated Concrete proposal will be adopted soon. **Watch for an update.**

Questions? Call the following:
Stearns County, contact **Troy Freihammer at 320.656.3600**, troy.freihammer@co.stearns.mn.us.
Benton County, contact **Mark McNamara at 320.968.5074**,

mark.mcnamara@co.benton.mn.us.

Sherburne County, contact **Dave Lucas at 763.765.4464**, dave.lucas@co.sherburne.mn.us.

Burial of concrete and rebar on the farm — If you operate a farm, you've probably buried concrete and rebar from an old house, shed, barn, or silo, either as a kid with your father or as an adult. Burying concrete and rebar is the easiest way to be rid of it. This method is legal. However, Minnesota Statute 17.135 Farm Disposal of Solid Waste now mandates various actions you must take if you bury concrete and rebar.

First, you must bury the materials "in a nuisance-free, pollution-free, and aesthetic manner on the land used for farming."

Second, you must now record the burial within 90 days at your county registrar's or register of titles office.

Third, there is a \$46 fee in Benton County for this burial affidavit, which records a legal description of the property and a map drawn showing the boundary of the property and location of the buried concrete and/or rebar.

- **Call Marilyn Novak, Benton County Recorder, at 320.968.5037** or email her at: mnovak@co.benton.mn.us if you have questions about the statute change.
- **Call Diane Grundhoefer, Stearns County Recorder, at 320.656.3855** if you have questions.
- **Call Michelle Ashe, Sherburne County Recorder, at 763.765.4420** or email recorder@co.sherburne.mn.us with your questions.

KIDS' CORNER

KIDS, DO YOU KNOW? Nearly 80% of school waste materials could be diverted from the trash into organic composting and container/paper recycling programs? Of course, it also helps to clean your plate. (Source: "Teachable moment: what to do with waste organics, food and paper at schools," MPCA)

DO YOU KNOW? Food waste is the largest type of waste entering the country's landfills, says the EPA. It was estimated in 2010 that 133 billion pounds of food from U.S. homes, restaurants, and retailers were tossed, or \$400 worth of food PER PERSON each year. (Source: "Government works to reduce food waste," by Mary Clare Jalonick, Minnesota Public Radio, June 5, 2013)

DO YOU KNOW? Food waste in the landfill breaks down into methane gas, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide. EPA notes this gas production begins within one to two years of disposal in the landfill, continuing from 10 to 60 years. (Source: "When good food goes bad," MPCA)

DO YOU KNOW? The USDA and EPA launched a U.S. Food Waste Challenge in June, calling upon American citizens to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste. (Source: "USDA, EPA Launch U.S. Food Waste Challenge," Growing Minnesota <http://growingminnesota.com/news/2013/06/usda-epa-launch-us-food-waste-challenge>)

DISPOSE OF TREATED WOOD RESPONSIBLY



Chemicals used for treating wood (green treating or pressure treating) can cause health issues for humans and animals; some are even lethal. So, it is of the utmost importance that businesses and individuals handling, using, and disposing of these materials do so with CARE—for themselves, others, and the environment.

Which chemicals are the culprits? **Chromated copper arsenate (CCA)** is a chemical wood preservative containing chromium, copper, and arsenic and is used in "pressure treating" wood. Even though this chemical was abandoned for use around 2003, notes the MPCA, people can still come into contact with it during demolition and renovation activities. Be aware. Next is **pentachlorophenol (PCP or 'penta')** used for utility poles. **Creosote** is another deadly chemical, usually found in railroad ties and construction pilings.

(There are many other chemicals used to treat wood. Consult the MPCA for a .pdf information sheet "Waste/Hazardous waste #4.67 – September 2010" for

business and "Waste/Hazardous waste #4.75 – July 2009" for consumers.)

Federal guidelines recommend not using penta- and creosote-treated wood inside the home, on decks, or in playground equipment. You should find "consumer information sheets" from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at your local lumber provider.

If they're so dangerous, why use treated wood? Well, treating wood with chemicals keeps it from decaying quickly, making it good for outdoor fencing, decorative borders, and decks. This is the upside to which there's also another downside—**disposal of treated wood.**

Here are a few "don'ts" from the MPCA:

1. Don't mulch, compost, use as fill, or use as fuel without the MPCA's OK.
2. Don't burn treated wood at your residence/business unless you use a permitted solid waste incinerator.
3. Don't bury, burn, chip, or grind this wood for disposal.
4. Don't donate or sell treated wood for prohibited uses.

5. Don't put treated wood in the landfill, including a demolition landfill, even if it's designated "non-hazardous." Instead, "segregate treated wood from other demolition debris and dispose of it at a permitted, lined, industrial or mixed solid waste landfill," says MPCA.
6. DO dispose of old green-treated wood promptly so it's not confused with clean wood, says Jim Chiles, MPCA staff person. "Often, green-treated wood weathers to a brownish gray, and the markings are no longer visible."

Locally, these facilities will take treated wood: **Sauk Rapids' Henkemeyer Demolition Landfill** (320.252.6487) will accept the wood. Cost is based on volume, with a typical pick-up truckload costing approximately \$65. **Tom Kraemer, Inc.**, Cold Spring (320.685.8226) accepts treated wood at \$20 per cubic yard, with approximately two to three cubic yards comprising a pick-up load. The wood is then hauled to Vonco II landfill in Becker. The **Elk River Landfill** (763.441.2464) takes green treated wood at approximately \$80 for loads up to 1,200 pounds; a pickup load might be a little over half of that. The landfill also takes railroad ties.

Two other Twin Cities north metro locations also take CCA wood, says Chiles:

- Veolia Environmental Services, 175 County Rd. 37, Buffalo (320.963.3158)
- Interstate Disposal, 440 Garfield St., Anoka (763.785.1155)

Questions? Call Mark McNamara, Benton County Department of Development, at 320.968.5074, or call the MPCA at 651.296.6300.

BATTERY RECYCLING IS EASY... ONCE YOU KNOW YOUR RESOURCES!



Huguette Roe, Shutterstock.com

According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), over two billion household batteries are bought in the U.S. each year. These contain chemicals like lead, mercury, cadmium, silver, and in the case of electric cars, nickel. All of these minerals are dangerous to human health if they enter the environment through improper disposal such as incineration, burying, or abandonment. Yet, recycling outlets are available to consumers.

Batteries Plus in St. Cloud and Sauk Rapids will take your cast-off batteries—**sealed lead acid (Pb)** from scooters, wheelchairs, ride-on toys, metal detectors, and emergency lighting; **lithium ion (Li-ion)** batteries, found in camcorders, notebook computers, and wireless phones; **nickel cadmium (Ni-Cd)** batteries, used in

power tools, toys, and electronic devices; and **nickel metal hydride (Ni-MH)** batteries power from camcorders, GPS systems, digital cameras, and other personal electronic devices.¹ **The store will recycle these as well as lead acid vehicle batteries for free.** For powersport batteries—used in motorcycles, ATVs, snowmobiles, personal watercraft, riding mowers—**Batteries Plus offers cash for these or store credit.** It will give consumers **\$.99 per pound** for small **alkaline batteries.**

Batteries Plus also recycles hybrid car Ni-MH batteries and will give you .30 per pound in store credit or .20 per pound in cash when you recycle one.

It is important for you to remember a few tips, before bringing your batteries to the store, says Lance Barthel, Sales Manager. 1. Sort the batteries. 2. The terminals of any battery over 9 volts must be taped with clear packing or duct tape. 3. All lithium batteries should also be taped for safety reasons. 4. Handle all batteries with care, using gloves or washing your hands well after handling. **Questions? Call Barthel at 320.240.2332 (St. Cloud) or 320.230.2332 (Sauk Rapids).**

Steve Blommer of **Red's Auto Electric**, St. Cloud and Sauk Rapids, encourages consumers to recycle auto batteries. "The industry has changed quite a bit," he says. In fact, federal and state regulations mandate that he collects your old battery when you come to him for a new one. If you don't have one to recycle, he'll charge you an additional \$15 on your battery purchase because that's what his manufacturer-provider will charge him. The regulations are in place all along the distribution chain to ensure consumers recycle automotive batteries. There is no charge if you bring in an old battery, and by law, Blommer has to accept up to five lead-acid batteries from you free of charge. Blommer estimates he returns around 500 old batteries to the manufacturer each year.

Note: Red's Auto Electric does not recycle hybrid car batteries.

Ninety-six percent of all lead acid batteries can be recycled, says the MPCA, and a typical lead-acid battery is made of from 60 to 80% recycled lead and plastic.² Retailers make this very easy for you to do.

ILLUMINATING INFORMATION ABOUT BULB RECYCLING

Got a bag of bulbs to dispose of? Here are options you might want to consider for drop-off.

- **Ace Hardware stores** take fluorescent tubes for a fee at local locations. Call for details.
- **Batteries Plus** St. Cloud and Sauk Rapids locations *now takes light bulbs, tubes for a fee, depending on size, and CFLs for .99 each.* Individuals may bring in a box or a sleeve. Businesses with large quantities may call for truck pickup *at no charge.* **320.230.2332** Sauk Rapids, and **320.240.2332** St. Cloud.
- **Central Appliance Recyclers**, 3107 Hwy. 10 SE, St. Cloud, 320.252.3221, all sizes of fluorescent bulbs, fee based on size/type.
- **Czarnetzki Hardware Hank**, 8 N. Benton Dr., Sauk Rapids, 320.251.5383, charges for tubes, CFLs at no charge.
- **Denny & Kathy's Ace Hardware**, 2006 8th St. N., St. Cloud, 320.253.0370, takes them for a fee of \$2.50 per CFL, but happily redirects your efforts toward the HHW Facility in Waite Park.
- **Home Depot** at 320.252.3262 takes CFLs only.
- **Household Hazardous Waste** event, Foley September 14th.
- **Menards St. Cloud store** takes CFLs only. Call 320.240.0075.
- **Tri-County Household Hazardous Waste Facility**, located at 3601 Fifth Street South, Waite Park, takes any kind of bulb for no charge, according to Ross Detert, Stearns County Environmental Services. Residential customers may drop them off. Businesses should make an appointment. Once collected, spent bulbs are packaged and shipped to Green Lights Recycling in Minneapolis. **Questions? Call Detert at: 800.450.6140, or 320.255.6140, or email: ross.detert@co.stearns.mn.us.**

NEW HOURS

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
3601 Fifth Street S., Waite Park
NOW ACCEPTING
FLUORESCENT BULBS
Monday through Friday
9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.
Third Saturday of the month
8:00a.m. to noon

For additional information about battery recycling, go to the MPCA website at: <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/materials/battery.htm#batteryrecycle>

1. Camelon Battery, "Types of Batteries and Their Uses," <http://camelonblogs.wordpress.com/2013/03/12/types-of-batteries-and-their-uses>
2. MPCA <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/materials/battery.htm#batteryrecycle>

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CLIP 'N' SAVE THIS BENTON RECYCLING DIRECTORY

Recycling Facility	Address/City/Town	Phone	Materials accepted
Batteries Plus.....	2710 2 nd St. S St. Cloud	240.2332.....	batteries: auto, button, rechargeable. <i>Also bulbs.</i>
BFI Waste Systems.....	27 N Benton Dr. Sauk Rapids.....	230.2332.....	
BFI Waste Systems.....	700 40 th Ave. Sauk Rapids.....	252.9608.....	curbside pick up as part of garbage service
Central Appliance.....	3107 Hwy 10 SE St. Cloud	252.3221	appliances, air conditioners, household batteries
Czarnetzki Hardware.....	8 Benton Drive N.....	251.5383.....	fluorescent bulbs
East Side Oil	625 Lincoln Ave. SE St. Cloud	252.9711	used oil & filters, antifreeze
Foley Hardware.....	160 4 th Ave. N Foley	968.7262.....	fluorescent bulbs
Henkemeyer	5045 Lark Rd NW.....	252.6487.....	grass, leaves, garden waste, dirt, tree brush, shrubs, treated and non-treated wood, insulation, shingles, sheet rock, tile, ceramics, metal, drywall, concrete, asphalt, bricks, masonry
Light Bulb Recycling.....	1101 River Ave. S.....	492.5443.....	commercial collection of fluorescent bulbs, ballasts, light bulbs
Midway Iron.....	648 Lincoln Ave. St. Cloud	252.4002.....	aluminum cans, various metals
Minden Transfer	3490 2 nd St. SE St. Cloud.....	252.0711	aluminum cans, glass plastic, paper, cardboard, tin
Northern Metals*	119 6 th Ave. NE St. Cloud.....	251.5980.....	brick, block, wood, concrete, dirt, plaster, plastic pipe, conduit, tin, iron, rock, glass, tile, shingles, insulation, sheet rock, fiberboard, siding, non-CFC containing appliances
Pythons**	550 4-1/2 St. NE St. Cloud.....	253.2054.....	aluminum cans, glass, plastic, paper, cardboard, magazines, newsprint, phone books, tin, paper milk cartons, drink boxes
Rice Hardware Hank	2333 125 th St. NW Rice	393.3117.....	fluorescent bulbs
Advanced Disposal	2355 12 th St. SE St. Cloud.....	251.8919	curbside pick-up as part of garbage service
Total Disposal	1741 SE 3 rd St. St. Cloud	255.0425.....	curbside pick-up as part of garbage service
Tri-County Hazardous.....	3601 5th St. S Waite Park.....	800.450.6140	paint, solvents, pesticides, cleaning chemicals
Waste Management	650 NE Hwy 10 St. Cloud.....	253.6491	curbside pick-up as part of garbage service

* Unacceptable materials include: appliances, asbestos, batteries, brush, cardboard, carpet, fuel tanks, hay, leaves, paper, plastics, straw, tires, trees, whole containers.

** Unacceptable materials include: burnt cans, clay, dirty-wet/icy cans or tin, caps, ceramics, dishes, food containers, glassware, hard plastic, hose, light bulbs, mirrors, pipes, plastic bags, porcelain, safety glass, scrap metal, toys, windshields, windows.

REMEMBER TO PUMP YOUR SEPTIC TANK



Sometimes, sewage is "out-of-sight, out-of-mind"... until the septic tank backs up during your family reunion at the lake home or cabin, that is! Remember your tank. Have it pumped regularly and properly.

Your septic tank is an SSTS, a "subsurface sewage treatment system," according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Typically, it consists of a 1,000 gal. tank into which wastewater from your home flows in at one end and out at the other, into a drain field. Meanwhile, floating waste develops a scum layer at the top of the tank; solid waste collects in the sludge layer at the bottom. Bacteria in the tank do their best to break down the waste. The system is called a "passive system" because it uses gravity to create the flow. (Visit "How Stuff Works" on the Internet; see footnote #1 below for the link.)

Now, should anything impede the flow in the septic tank—like tree roots, a rupture to the tank, or solid waste congregate—then, sewage could back up into the home or you may need a repair, which could cost from \$2,000 to \$10,000, according to the University of Minnesota.

The University of Minnesota is a great resource for Minnesota's homeowners, notes the MPCA. It recommends your septic tank be pumped and inspected every one to three years to remove the sludge and scum. It provides information about "How Often to Pump Your Septic Tank," (See link #2 below.) and a "Septic System Pumping Guidelines" form to help you gauge how often you should have your system inspected and/or pumped. (See link #3 below.) Remember, Minnesota codes say you must use a licensed professional who pumps the tank through one or two manholes that are usually found below the surface. So, expect to do some digging.

Do you close up the cabin for the winter? The University of Minnesota also suggests that you pump the septic tank if you close the cabin for the winter or visit it rarely during that time. Problems can arise if the sewage freezes in the tank. Also, if you stop cutting the grass over the tank in mid-September, growth will help form an extra layer of insulation over your system.

Yes, pumping and maintaining the septic system is a dirty, but necessary job. Just remember, your job can be even more difficult, and possibly more expensive, if you wait overly long before you schedule a pumping.

Questions? Visit the **University of Minnesota Onsite Sewage Treatment Program** at <http://septic.umn.edu/owners/index.htm> or call **800.322.8642** for homeowner information. Or, **contact the Benton County Department of Development at 320.968.5065** or visit its website at http://www.co.benton.mn.us/Dept_of_Development to access consumer educational resources.

Resources:

1. "How Stuff Works" – <http://home.howstuffworks.com/home-improvement/plumbing/sewer2.htm>
2. "How Often to Pump Your Septic Tank" – <http://septic.umn.edu/factsheets/tankpumpingfrequency/index.htm>
3. "Septic Tank Pumping Frequency Guidelines" – http://septic.umn.edu/prod/groups/cfans/@publ/@cfans/@ostp/documents/asset/cfans_asset_126408.pdf

RECYCLE - RECYCLE - RECYCLE!



www.co.benton.mn.us



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For additional information about this publication, please contact Mark McNamara, Program Lead, Benton County Department of Development, 320.968.5074, mark.mcnamara@co.benton.mn.us

Coordination/copy: mary macdonell belisle - wording for you www.wordingforyou.com
Design: Jill Lucas Design

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