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GREEN LIFE



Can this be recycled? How can I get to work without my car? What's the city doing about composting? Get tips on living a green life in this city and keep up to date on environmental news, trends and events from Montreal and around Planet Earth with Gazette reporters Michelle Lalonde (right) and Monique Beaudin.

Time to get rid of that old beater? Send it to Car Heaven

Here's an idea whose time has come for all kinds of reasons, including high gas prices, rising smog levels, and global warming. Old cars -- particularly those built before 1995 -- produce nineteen times more smog-forming emissions than newer models. The Clean Air Foundation has come up with a program to get these vehicles off the road a little sooner than might otherwise be the case. It's an early retirement program for cars.

They are calling it an "accelerated vehicle retirement program" but it's really just an offer of incentives to encourage Canadians to give up their old vehicles so they can stop polluting and be properly recycled. The program also generates money for charity.

When you donate your car to Car Heaven, it is recycled in a way that ensures not just the steel is recovered, but toxic materials like oil, gasoline, refrigerants, mercury and tires are removed before the car is scrapped. The recycling companies affiliated with the program pay a fee to purchase the cars from the program and that money is donated to a charity of the donor's choice.

The donor gets the car towed for free, a charitable receipt for at least \$50, and you may be eligible to receive other bonus incentives, like free transit passes, discounted membership in a car sharing program, rebates on bicycles, or a \$750 certificate towards a new General Motors vehicle.

The program has retired and recycled over 80,000 vehicles already.

They figure that has prevented over 4,300 tonnes of smog from forming, and avoided something like 41,000 tonnes of carbon monoxide emissions. The program has also raised over \$3 million for charities. To find out more, see www.carheaven.ca.

– Michelle Lalonde

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