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By Luke Money
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Technician Jacob Clavesilla, right, stacks small cans of paint into a box as workers load one of four metal storage containers during a paint recycling event on Saturday at the Via Princessa Metrolink Station parking lot in Canyon Country. Signal photo by Dan Watson.



Did you know the old, half-empty cans of paint in your garage are good for more than collecting



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dust?

Outdated or unwanted paints, primers, stains, sealers and other similar materials can be recycled for use elsewhere or even re-purposed as fuel.

Hundreds of people contributed to that cause Saturday, dropping off thousands of gallons of paint and other substances during a free event held at the Via Princessa Metrolink Station.

"The whole point of it is to do something better than putting the paint in a landfill, whenever possible," said Jeremy Jones, west coast program manager for PaintCare, which put on the event in cooperation with the city of Santa Clarita.

PaintCare is a nonprofit organization that provides paint recycling and waste reduction services in California and a number of other states.

The organization is charged with implementing California's paint stewardship program, which then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law in 2010.

Since the state stewardship program launched in October 2012, PaintCare has collected and processed more than 5.3 million gallons of paint, according to an annual report released last month.

Most of that paint has been recycled or re-purposed in some way, according to PaintCare.

Saturday's event was the first the organization has staged in Santa Clarita. But with turnout Jones described as "phenomenal," it's unlikely to be the last.

Jones estimated 500 people attended the event during its four-hour run.

A crowd of that size "would be the largest event we've run in the state so far," he said.

Events like Saturday's are important, Jones said, because in many cases you can't simply dump paint or similar substances into your garbage bin.

"I think a lot of people know that they're not supposed to do certain things with paint," he said, "They just don't know what they should do in most cases."

PaintCare manages more than 700 collection sites statewide.

Three such sites are in the Santa Clarita Valley — Dunn-Edwards on The Old Road in Stevenson Ranch, Sherwin-Williams on Soledad Canyon Road in Canyon Country, and Vista Paint on Golden Triangle Road in Santa Clarita.

Though those sites are open throughout the year, higher-visibility events like Saturday's provide an opportunity to get the word out on other available options to dispose of paint, Jones said.

"It's a win-win on these types of events," he said. "It's a huge outreach opportunity and a chance to get a good bunch of paint cleaned up."

For more information on PaintCare, visit paintcare.org.

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