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A Day Without a Bag seeks to reduce 6 billion plastic bags used in L.A. each year

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What's colored and plastic and found all over L.A.? Plastic bags.

More than 6 billion of them are used by county residents each year, according to the 2007 report "[An Overview of Carryout Bags in Los Angeles County.](#)"

This Thursday, Dec. 17, shoppers at more than 50 locations in L.A. County will have the chance to reduce their plastic-bag use through a reusable-bag giveaway program known as A Day

Without a Bag. More than 20,000 reusable carryalls will be given away free at the third annual event, which is organized through a coalition of retailers, local government and environmental groups.

"It's our holiday gift to the environment and to shoppers to give them free bags and have them think about the choices they make during the holiday season," said Matthew King, communications director for the nonprofit environmental group Heal the Bay, one of the event's sponsors.

In 2007, when Heal the Bay launched the event, 20 of the county's 88 cities signed on to support the concept. This year 71 cities are involved, and the number of bags handed out has quadrupled, King said.

Albertsons, Ralphs, 99 Cents Only and Bed Bath & Beyond are among participating retailers who will hand out the reusable bags. Donated from a variety of participants, the bags come in different styles, are made from canvas or woven polypropylene and vary by location and retailer.

According to Heal the Bay, an average Californian uses 500 to 600 plastic bags each year. A reusable bag that lasts an average of two years, according to the group, holds the potential to save 1,000 plastic bags.

The California Integrated Waste Management Board reports that less than 5% of single-use plastic bags are recycled; the remaining bags cost the state \$25 million each year to collect and dispose of properly.

A Google map of A Day Without a Bag giveaway sites can be found [here](#).

-- Susan Carpenter

Photo: Heal the Bay

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