

NEWS

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Reading Terminal Market's efforts to prevent food waste get the attention of the EPA

The market has managed to keep more than 1 million pounds of organic waste from the trash fields over two years.

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Jamie Green (left) director of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Eastern Region, and EPA regional administrator Amy Van Blarcom-Lackey (center) talk with Adham Albarouki (right), owner of Karr ... [Read more](#)
Tom Gralish / Staff Photographer



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The [Reading Terminal Market](#) is often bustling with voices, crowded aisles, and populated hallways. But on Monday, the real motion was behind the scenes, among the trash cans and scraps.

After two years of diverting as much food waste from landfills as possible, the market has managed to keep 1,045,931 pounds of organic waste from the trash fields.

A pilot program began in April 2024, through a partnership with the composting service Mother Compost, and 10 of the [market's sellers](#). Now, as part of the celebrations for the nation's 250th, the Environmental Protection Agency's [Feed it Onward](#) program is highlighting initiatives that ensure food resources are redistributed instead of wasted.

EPA officials toured the market's facilities on Monday, getting a behind-the-scenes look at how the composting and other recycling and reuse programs work.

"We are not just one organization championing for change, but more than 80 small, family-owned businesses under one roof who have the potential to make a difference," said Annie Allman, Reading Terminal Market CEO and general manager.

Kamal's Middle Eastern Specialties is one of them. Its owner Adham Albarouki, has been in the market for 45 years and sees in the composting program a way for his juice bar to give back.

something to give back to mother nature.”

The process is easy, Albarouki said. He or his workers run the vegetables and fruits through juicers. The juice goes to the customers, while the peels, fiber, and leftover organics are taken to a merchants-only area.

Behind closed doors, 20 Mother Compost green trash cans are lined up, waiting to be fed scraps.

Miguel Servellon, the market’s assistant general manager, runs a tight machine to ensure the compost doesn’t get contaminated.

On Monday morning the cement room smelled like orange peels, as one trash can had already been loaded with the citrusy scraps ahead of an early pick up, Servellon said.

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Fruit and vegetable peels, meat, eggs, cheese, milk, coffee grinds, and even fish all go inside the green containers.

“The smell is not so inviting; occasionally it can be a challenge,” Servellon said.

The organic waste is layered on top of each other.

Mother Compost takes as much as 1,300 pounds of composting per pickup, which happen three times a week, Servellon said. The waste then goes to be repurposed at Linvilla Orchards, in [Delaware County](#).

But organic waste is not the only thing being recycled.

At the other end of the room, two big gray containers sat full of vegetable oil waiting to be picked up by LifeCycle Renewables.



And since 2023, the nonprofit Sharing Excess has been working with the market's sellers to redistribute surplus food.

Earlier this year, Sharing Excess got its own fridge inside the market where sellers can deposit their donations to be redistributed in places with food insecurity.

"We come by five days a week, and our driver weights them and tracks who donated each so we can give them their proper tax credit," said Braden Walper, Sharing Excess retail rescue manager.

The food goes to stock food pantries and provides as much as 100 meals a day for people experiencing food insecurity, Walper said.

These Reading Terminal Market programs are crucial to inspire businesses across the region to reuse and recycle their food, said EPA Mid-Atlantic regional administrator Amy Van Blarcom-Lackey.

"More than one million pounds diverted from landfills is an impressive milestone, but what really stands out to me is how the merchants made these practices part of their everyday operations," Van Blarcom-Lackey said. "It's

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I cover breaking news and find answers to your Curious Philly questions. Ask away, Philadelphia!

TRENDING IN PHILLY

Five years after Big Daddy Graham's death, his work, personality endure

OPINION Landon Dickerson revealed the cold reality of the NFL. Does anyone care? | Opinion

A federal judge said he believes DA Larry Krasner may have broken the law, and he referred the case to the U.S. Attorney's Office

PHL ranked worst large airport by J.D. Power survey

Rose Bridge Farm in Montgomery County is going viral for its cow cuddling sessions

EDUCATION

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Penn scrubs diversity initiatives from its website to comply with Trump order

“The bottom line is this is not a time for anticipatory obedience when it comes to the university’s commitment to antiracism and non-discrimination,” said Amy Offner, Penn’s AAUP chapter president

Susan Snyder

CORONAVIRUS

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How to thank your cashier during the coronavirus

Here are some ideas of how to show some gratitude to frontline workers like cashiers, pharmacists and delivery people.

Grace Dickinson

NEWS



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home for free or at a low cost

Repairs can add up, but there are organization that can help you cover the cost.

Michelle Myers

EAGLES



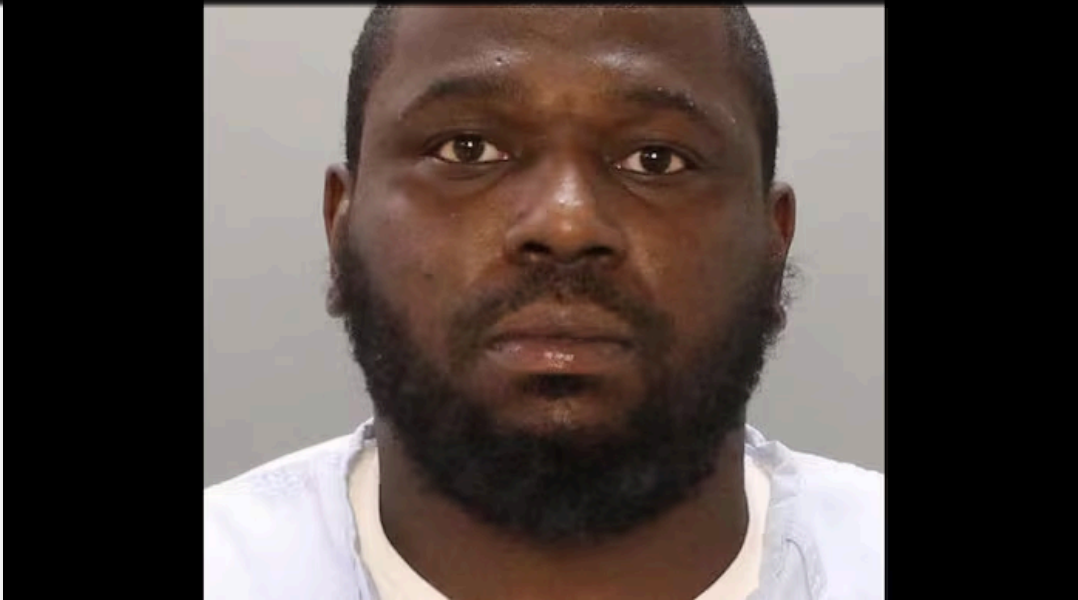
Vic Fangio expects to have safety Reed Blankenship available on Friday vs. the Bears

Blankenship suffered a thigh injury in the third quarter of Sunday's loss to Dallas and did not return. Sydney Brown will start in place of the injured Drew Mukuba at the other safety spot.

Olivia Reiner

PHILADELPHIA

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Nicetown man, already awaiting trial for a 2011 murder, is charged in 5 other Philly killings

Sources familiar with the investigation said Michael Blackston, 29, was believed to have been a member of a violent drug organization operating in North and Northwest Philadelphia. At least one of his new cases is connected to his open murder case scheduled for trial in February.

Chris Palmer

OBITUARIES



Frances M. Maguire, artist, mother, and philanthropist, dies at 84

Mrs. Maguire didn't just right write checks to support her various philanthropic causes. She also showed up to talk with the recipients and hear about their lives.

Bonnie L. Cook

NATION & WORLD

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UN-backed experts cite possible US war crimes in Iran strikes

U.N.-commissioned human rights experts say they have found “reasonable grounds” to believe the United States committed war crimes in two strikes in Iran.

Jamey Keaten, Associated Press

NATION & WORLD

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House approves sweeping Russia sanctions bill, sending it to Trump

The bill is named after the late Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who spent more than a year negotiating it.

Kevin Freking, Associated Press

NATION & WORLD



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to become the European Union's first associate member

The remarks came after U.S. President Donald Trump suggested the proposed arrangement could be a “hostile act” and threatened heavy tariffs on Europe if he judged its intentions to be unfriendly.

Rob Gillies, Associated Press

NATIONAL POLITICS



House passes bill taking aim at data center electricity costs

The bill would direct state utility regulators to consider adopting federal rules requiring data centers to cover any higher costs associated with their large-scale power use.

Michael Gold, New York Times

SOUTH JERSEY NEWS

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Our most fatal highway stretches | Inquirer South Jersey

And Washington Township parts ways with its schools superintendent.

Taylor Allen

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Plus, police are looking to add a new "first responder" drone.

Lisa Dukart

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Pulling back on classroom tech | Inquirer Greater Media

Plus, your guide to local leaf peeping.

Lisa Dukart

NEWS

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Anti-ICE activists question why Philly police showed up at their meeting. The department is investigating.

“I don’t know a reason that would have justified the officer walking into the premises,” a police staff inspector said.

Jeff Gammage and Jillian Kramer

PENNSYLVANIA



Bucks County DA demands business records from alleged slumlords

In April, the property on the 100 block of South Main Street in Dublin Borough was condemned because of alleged life-threatening conditions.

Robert Moran

POLITICS

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Speaker Johnson recesses the House early as Rep. Thomas Massie pushes Hegseth impeachment

“Why would we be canceling days when the country is burning?” Massie said in an hourlong floor speech. “We should stay here for every day that’s on the calendar and we should debate.”

Lisa Mascaro, Associated Press

CRIME & JUSTICE

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A Philly woman who shot her boyfriend and left his body in a suitcase admitted to the killing, prosecutors say

Liza Ridley, 54, appeared in court Wednesday, where prosecutors played video of her abandoning a suitcase containing the body of Vincent Good in Kensington in May.

Jesse Bunch

PHILADELPHIA

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A contentious Philly library renovation is starting soon, and residents are confused and frustrated

Jeffery Young Jr. and representatives from the city's Capital Program Office gave further details about the renovations at a community meeting.

Nate File

OBITUARIES

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Annie Dillard, Pulitzer-winning author of ‘Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,’ dies at 81

She was viewed as a bard of the environment, a 20th century Henry David Thoreau.

Matt Schudel, Washington Post

POLITICS



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as Democrats push back on Trump investments

While some Democrats are friendly toward the industry and support regulation, they have been adamant that the bill include strong ethics safeguards to prevent the president from enriching himself.

Mary Clare Jalonick, Associated Press

OBITUARIES



William Johnson Jr., community-minded dentist and lifelong elite runner, has died at 95

His mother, Mary, wanted him to be a doctor. So, after she died when he was six, he went on to earn a dental degree at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn.

Gary Miles

NATION & WORLD

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Trump bars some South Africans over claims of anti-white discrimination

South Africa's foreign minister, Ronald Lamola, said Washington's unilateral action "once again aligns with the misrepresentation of South Africa's domestic policy by fringe groups."

John Eligon, New York Times

CRIME & JUSTICE

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Philly DA Larry Krasner faces legal and political uncertainty after a judge said he may have committed crimes

The fallout for Krasner is likely just beginning, and the legal and political ramifications could take months to play out.

Chris Palmer, Anna Orso, and Ellie Rushing

NATION & WORLD



Charlie Kirk's family accuses university of 'stunning' security failures

In a legal notice filed this month, lawyers for Kirk's wife, parents, and children said Utah Valley University did not monitor access to rooftops during Kirk's outdoor event.

Jack Healy, New York Times

CRIME & JUSTICE

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Eugene Horsch and the Olney house: A timeline of the investigation into the missing women

Mountains of bizarre evidence have turned up since police began investigating a Chew Avenue home in Olney belonging to Eugene Horsch.

Nick Vadala

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