



Preserving Resources,
Preventing Waste

The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Winter, 2015
WasteWise...improving your bottom line and the environment
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.

Obstacles to Recycling Must Be Removed

While New Jersey's municipal solid waste recycling rate for 2012 was a commendable 44%, which is well above the national average, it still shows that over half of the waste generated each year by residences, businesses and institutions in the Garden State is disposed in the trash. With recycling making both environmental and economic sense and required by law, why is so much recyclable material ending up in landfills and incinerators? There is no one answer to this question, however, there are a number of obstacles that have been identified as factors that lower recycling participation rates whether at the home, school, or office.

One obstacle that has been identified is lack of convenience. In an office setting, staff should be given desk side recycling containers whenever possible to make it as easy as possible to recycle rather than to toss recyclable materials in the trash can. In addition, there must be a sufficient number of recycling bins throughout the office's hallways and cafeterias so that it is convenient to recycle. Unfortunately, many people will dispose of items in the trash if there is no recycling container nearby. Therefore, it is highly recommended that recycling containers always be stationed next to garbage containers. Furthermore, it is a good idea to differentiate containers with color coding and have the containers clearly labeled.

Confusion about materials preparation and what can and cannot be recycled is another obstacle. Recycling guides, signs and other forms of educational and promotional materials must be made very clear. The use of visuals in conjunction with text is highly recommended in such materials. Photos of

real products in educational materials have also been found to be more effective than the use of clip art.

In addition, while staff may be participating in the office recycling program, they may be under the impression that the program's old rules are still in effect and so are not recycling as much as possible. For example, the program's original rules may have only required staff to recycle white office paper, whereas the program's newer rules call for the recycling of mixed paper grades. Or maybe staff does not know that drink cartons can now be recycled in the program. In order to avoid such mistakes, updated recycling program rules should be made available periodically. Undoubtedly, educational and promotional efforts on behalf of the office recycling program must be an ongoing initiative.

The fact that many people do not understand the recycling process has also been identified as an obstacle to recycling. It has been found that most people generally want to understand how recycling works and that once educated about this they more often than not become dedicated participants in the recycling program. As such, educational materials should explain that recyclable materials are commodities, and not trash, that go through a sorting process and are ultimately sent to an end market that uses the recyclable materials as raw materials in the production of new products. Table top displays used at company events are another good way to get this message out, as are new employee orientation programs.

A final obstacle that must be addressed is the fact that many people simply find dealing with garbage to be unpleasant and so do not want any part of it. Again, by teaching people that recyclable materials are

(Continued on Page 2)

(Removing Obstacles – Continued from Page 1)

commodities with value and not trash, this obstacle can be overcome.

Thankfully, these obstacles are not insurmountable and can be effectively addressed so that more recyclable materials find their way into the recycling system rather than into the waste disposal system.

WasteWise Network Members Recognized for Environmental Excellence

Among the eleven winners honored at the recent 2014 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards ceremony were four members of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network. Monmouth University won in the Clean Air category and Georgian Court University won in the Healthy and Sustainable Communities category, while DSM Nutritional Products, LLC and Earth Friendly Products shared the top prize in the Healthy and Sustainable Business category. The Governor's Environmental Awards program has been in place for 15 years and recognizes New Jersey's environmental leaders for their commitment to protect and enhance the state's environment. For information on the award winners, visit http://www.nj.gov/dep/newsrel/2014/14_0133.htm.

Managing Waste at the Bottom of the World

As winter descends upon New Jersey and Garden State residents bemoan the cold temperatures and howling winds, one must keep in mind that the average mean temperature in Antarctica is -70 degrees Fahrenheit! Notwithstanding this harsh environment, there were 37 year-round scientific stations operated by 20 countries on Antarctica as of 2007. The United States' McMurdo Station is the most heavily populated station in Antarctica with more than 1,000 people in residence during the austral summer. With so many people living at McMurdo Station, waste management is a key consideration for all.

Every work center at the station is required to schedule a briefing regarding the waste management program, and all personnel are required to sort out the recyclables they generate. Marked receptacles are located in work centers and housing areas for separating recyclables (e.g., cardboard, paper, aluminum) and potentially hazardous wastes (e.g., dry-cell batteries, aerosol cans). Thanks to these efforts, the station has been able to achieve a 68% recycling rate. All of the program's refuse – except wastewater – is removed from the continent for proper disposal. The station takes the approach that whatever comes in must eventually go out.

Did You Know...

- A new Israeli recycling video that highlights the importance of recycling has gone viral on YouTube. The video features Israeli teens that combine their support for recycling with unusual and extreme tests of sporting skill. Visit <http://www.greenprophet.com/2014/11/israeli-recycling-video-goes-viral-on-youtube/>.
- Entertainer will.i.am and The Coca Cola Company have teamed up to launch EKOCYCLE™, which is a brand dedicated to promoting sustainability through products made in part with recycled content materials. Among other products, are men's suits made from recycled PET plastic bottles. Visit www.ekocycle.com for more details.
- TerraCycle, Inc. has announced the startup of a pilot recycling program in southern Ontario for single-serve coffee pods, discs, cups or cartridges. For additional information, check it out at <http://www.solidwastemag.com/recycling/terracycl-e-keurig-team-up-for-coffee-pod-recycling-pilot/1003225022>.
- ECOR is a non-structural building material made from recycled cardboard, wood scraps and agricultural byproducts. Whole Foods and Google have both used this product in various applications at their facilities. Visit www.ecorusa.com for more information.

New Jersey WasteWise Business Network

*Steven Rinaldi, Chair, NJDEP, Bureau of Recycling and Hazardous Waste Mgt. Steven.Rinaldi@dep.nj.gov
<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>
www.epa.gov/wastewise*

Editor: Steven Rinaldi - Printed on Recycled Paper