



Preserving Resources,  
Preventing Waste

# The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Summer, 2016  
WasteWise...improving your bottom line and the environment  
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.

## The Circular Economy

While the term “the circular economy” has been around for more than twenty-five years, this concept is once again gaining traction in the business world. But, what exactly is meant by the circular economy? Definitions vary and include many familiar ideas such as sustainability, reuse, recycling, product stewardship, cradle-to-cradle resource management and zero waste initiatives. In brief, it is a philosophical shift away from the old manufacturing “take-make-dispose” business model (a linear approach) to a more circular model that recognizes that resources are finite and that products and packaging need to be designed to maximize their utility and value while still allowing their reintroduction into the supply chain or safe reentry into the biosphere rather than being disposed as waste.

Advocates of the circular economy recognize that there is great uncertainty with interconnected global supply chains and so promote waste minimization, reuse and recycling strategies, among other things. Manufacturers that embrace this approach have realized significant economic benefits from the production phase through the waste management phase of operations. For more information and case studies, visit <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/>.

### *Recycling Apps Aplenty!*

*Consumers have plenty of choices when it comes to recycling apps for their phone. They are easy to locate and have been found to be quite helpful. Some of the more well-known apps are:*

*1800Recycling.com  
iRecycle (by Earth 911)  
My Waste  
RecycleBank  
recyclecoach  
RecycleNation*

## Paper Recycling Rates On the Rise, but Contamination Remains a Major Concern

The American Forest & Paper Association recently reported that over 52 million tons of waste paper was recycled in the United States in 2015, which equates to a record-high 66.8% recycling rate. This recycling rate has nearly doubled since the Association first starting tracking this rate in 1990. The organization has set a goal of recycling 70% of the waste paper generated in the United States by 2020. While this trend is promising, there are challenges facing the recycling industry, especially the increasing amount of contamination found in curbside loads of recyclable materials. This issue is the topic of a workshop being offered by the Association of New Jersey Recyclers. The workshop - **“Working Together to Clean up the Curbside Mix”** - will be held on three separate dates throughout New Jersey over the upcoming months. For further information, visit [http://www.anjr.com/news\\_front/2016/ANJR%202016%20workshops.pdf](http://www.anjr.com/news_front/2016/ANJR%202016%20workshops.pdf).

## Don't Forget About the Avoided Cost of Disposal

The avoided cost of disposal is the amount of money that is saved by not having to send waste to a landfill, incinerator or transfer station for disposal. It will vary depending upon the fee charged for garbage disposal at the facility in your area, but in New Jersey with such disposal fees averaging over \$80 per ton, the avoided cost of disposal can be significant. A successful recycling program will divert many tons of material away from disposal and thus the avoided cost of disposal must not be overlooked when considering the economic impact of your recycling program.

## Did You Know...

- Saltwater Brewery has developed a biodegradable and edible six pack ring that is strong enough to hold six cans of beer, but can also be eaten safely by marine wildlife should it find its way into the ocean environment. Check it out at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YG9gUJMGyw>.
- The design partnership Elvis & Kresse makes bags, belts and wallets from decommissioned fire hoses generated in the United Kingdom. The company has utilized over 200 tons of fire hose material in its products since 2005. For additional information, visit online at [www.elvisandkresse.com](http://www.elvisandkresse.com).
- Levi Strauss & Co. is working together with Aquafil, a company that produces nylon yarn from recycled fishing nets and used carpets, to produce eco-friendly jeans made from this recycled material. Initially, the jeans will only be available online and in the 522 men's jeans model.
- Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, is the first capital in Europe to declare a Zero Waste goal and today recycles 61% of its trash. For further information, visit <https://www.zerowasteurope.eu/2015/05/new-case-study-the-story-of-ljubljana-first-zero-waste-capital-in-europe/>.
- The most recent per capita data on electronics recycling shows that 5.18 pounds per person of the electronic devices covered by the state's electronic waste recycling law were recycled in New Jersey in 2014.
- Almost 71% of the items collected from Clean Ocean Action beach cleanups in 2015 were made of plastic, which once again made plastic items the #1 type of litter found at the Jersey shore.
- Recycled plastic bottles will be used as a residential building insulation material in 120 homes being constructed in Panama. Up to 25,000 plastic bottles will be used in each home. Visit <http://greenbuildingelements.com/2016/05/03/panama-jungle-features-plastic-bottle-village/> for more details.
- Raritan Valley Community College was one of five New Jersey schools named as a "Green Ribbon School" by the U.S. Department of Education for its various environmental initiatives!

## GM Cruising Along Recycling Boulevard

The General Motors Company has embraced recycling and reuse at its many plants and is seeing significant monetary savings as a result. In fact, the company announced that besides saving money, its recycling and reuse initiatives now result in \$1 billion in annual revenue. General Motors now has 131 landfill-free facilities worldwide that reuse, recycle or convert to energy all waste materials from daily operations. Almost 90% of the waste materials generated at these sites are either reused or recycled. General Motors has developed a guide called "**The Business Case for Zero Waste,**" which details strategies and best practices that companies of all sizes can use to become more sustainable. It is online at [https://www.gm.com/content/dam/gm/en\\_us/english/Group3/sustainability/sustainability.pdf/GMs\\_Landfill-free\\_Blueprint.pdf](https://www.gm.com/content/dam/gm/en_us/english/Group3/sustainability/sustainability.pdf/GMs_Landfill-free_Blueprint.pdf).

## WasteWise Opportunities Beyond the Mainstream

### **Polystyrene (aka Styrofoam™) recycling** –

To the surprise of many, polystyrene can be recycled. For more information, visit online at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/recycling/polysty.list.htm>.

**Recycled Office Furniture** – Purchasing remanufactured, refurbished and reused office furniture is an excellent cost-cutting opportunity, generally offering savings of up to 50% off the cost of new furniture. For more information, visit <https://www.greenbiz.com/sites/default/files/document/O16F3340.pdf>.

**Cut It and Leave It** – Make sure that your company's landscaper is leaving the grass clippings on the lawn after mowing. This will greatly reduce the amount of waste generated at your site, and it is good for your lawn too!

**Book Exchanges/Swaps** – Start a book exchange in your office where staff can both donate books and get books free. Consider expanding on the idea to allow for the exchange of other small items of interest.

### ***New Jersey WasteWise Business Network***

*Steven Rinaldi, Chair, NJDEP, Bureau of Energy and*

*Sustainability [Steven.Rinaldi@dep.nj.gov](mailto:Steven.Rinaldi@dep.nj.gov)*

*<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/wastewise/brbn03.htm>*

*[www.epa.gov/wastewise](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise)*

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