



RECYCLING CONNECTIONS



2016 ANNUAL REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Background	1
Programming	2
Municipal Outreach Support Services	2
Solid Waste / Recycling Conference & Event Coordination Services	3
Organizational Leadership and/or Program Support	3
Zero Waste & Sustainability Education / Outreach	4
Large Scale Composting Education / Outreach	5
Home Composting Education / Outreach	5
Partnerships / Collaborations	5
Research & Development / Fundraising	6
Administration	7
Board of Directors and Staff	7

BACKGROUND



Recycling Connections Corporation is nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with the mission to connect people, resources and communities to promote waste reduction, reuse, recycling and resource conservation. Our corporate office is located at 1100 Main Street, Suite 120 in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. In addition we have a satellite office in Viroqua, Wisconsin.

This year we celebrated 35 years as an organization and received special proclamations from the City of Stevens Point and Portage County declaring the month of May 2016 as Recycling Connections Month.

PROGRAMMING

During 2016 Recycling Connections provided programming through a combination of contracted* and in-kind services to further our mission. Below is a summary of key activities for each program area. * *Services provided via contracted agreement(s).*

Municipal Outreach Support Services

Marathon County Solid Waste Department* *(since 2010)*

We provided waste reduction / recycling education and program assistance to Marathon County's residents, businesses and municipalities on behalf of the Marathon County Solid Waste Department (MCSWD). Main services for 2016 included;



Continued / Ongoing

- Staffed telephone information line to address questions related to solid waste, waste reduction, recycling, and household hazardous materials
- Maintained and updated as necessary website and brochures (www.marathoncountysolidwaste.org)
 - Developed template for fliers and brochures that was used to update and create numerous items
- Conducted municipal survey to gather updated waste & recycling collection program details, and to provide outreach regarding the MCSWD and its services
- Promoted Wisconsin's Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP):
 - Verified details for current collection sites and encouraged more sites to join the program.
 - Created a designated page on the website with detailed information
 - Developed mini display and staffed information tables at numerous locations (mostly grocery stores) over a 2-day weekend
- Agricultural Plastics Film Recycling:
 - Development, distribution and promotions of an online survey to assess volume, location and potential interest in recycling agricultural plastic film (i.e. silage bags, bunker covers), in partnership with numerous other organizations and/or agencies
 - Yet shortly thereafter, the company Revolution Plastics began expanding its free collection services for farmers throughout the state, thus establishing the services without the County's direct involvement
- Home Composting Outreach and Education
 - Conducted Home / Backyard Composting Workshops at the Village of Kronenwetter, the Community Garden-Bridge Street-Wausau, and the Village of Stratford

Group Purchase of Home Compost Bins* *(since 2011 with formal signed agreements)*

Wisconsin's municipalities and/or organizations are encouraged to join Recycling Connections' annual group purchase of the Home Composter™ bins. The service allows groups to offer a quality and affordable compost bin to the public as a method to encourage more composting at home and/or to use the sales as a fundraising opportunity. We coordinated communications between the final participants related to their individual orders while monitoring the status of total group order to encourage additional orders (if possible) to benefit the whole group with a lower rate. Recycling Connections placed the final order with the manufacturer and provide details for each delivery location. Each participant received their own invoice and was responsible for the onsite logistics at their drop site.



The participants with our 2016 group purchase of 396 bins (22 pallets) included: Eau Claire County, Marathon County, St. Croix Count, Sauk County Land Conservation and Recycling Connections Corporation (with deliveries to both Stevens Point and Viroqua).

Unfortunately this year we had a very unusual situation with some of the bins getting warped during shipment from being wrapped too tightly, which made them more difficult to set up. RCC handled the ongoing communications and negotiations between the groups and the manufacturer to work out a suitable agreement for compensation.

We also investigated possibility of groups from Montana, Iowa and Illinois joining the 2016 or 2017 purchase events.

Solid Waste / Recycling Conference and Event Planning Services

Wisconsin Integrated Resource Management Conference (WIRMC)* *(since 2010)*

WIRMC is Wisconsin's premier solid waste and recycling conference, hosted by the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW), Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association (WCSWMA), and the Solid Waste Association of North America-Wisconsin Badger Chapter (SWANA). The three organizations form a Planning Committee to host the annual conference and contracted with Recycling Connections for conference planning, coordination, promotion, and providing fiscal agent services. Additional details:



- Completed services for the 2016 conference, February 24-26, at the Olympia Resort and Conference Center, Oconomowoc. Total Attendance: 278. Opening Keynote Speaker: Ann Kerian, Consultant & Coaching. Closing Keynote: Joe Van Rossum, Industry Expert and formerly with UW-Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center
- Prepared Request for Proposals for 2019 venue and signed agreement
- Began preparations for the 2017 WIRMC, scheduled for March 1 – 3, 2017 to be held again at The Osthoff Resort and Conference Center in Elkhart Lake.
- Continually updated and maintained information about the annual conferences at www.wirmc.org.
- Completed Request for Proposals (RFP) process to evaluate and determine venue for the 2019 event.

Organizational Leadership and/or Program Support

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW)* *(since 2003)*

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and membership-based organization, contracted with Recycling Connections to serve as AROW's executive director, programming, administrative and fiscal management staff. A few key activities we assisted with and/or coordinated on behalf of AROW included:

- Programming:
 - Initial development of their new Emerging Leaders program
 - Celebration of their 25th anniversary
 - Sharing results of the Glass Task Force's final Report & Recommendations





- Recycle More Wisconsin (RMW) program
 - Completed website redesign using a new content-management platform. (www.recyclemorewisconsin.org). Official launch occurred in early 2017
 - Consistent updates on RMW Facebook page, as well as daily posts throughout the months of April for Earth Week and November for America Recycles Day (November 15th)
- Roll Out the Recycling Barrel Program; a partnership with Wisconsin Beverage Association. Continued work for reusing and/or retrofitting beverage syrup containers as recycling barrels for use at county fairground locations, however due to lack of funding and logistics issues, the program was discontinued.
- Member Services
 - Quarterly electronic newsletter
 - Committee support (Committees included: Community Education, Organics & Food Residual Management, Product Stewardship, and Government Affairs)
- Executive Director and Administration:
 - Facilitated and attended Board of Directors meetings (quarterly) and board communications
 - Attended Monthly executive committee meetings (via conference calls)
 - Provided Accounts Payable/Receivable, Bookkeeping, Reporting

Solid Waste Association of North America – WI Badger Chapter (SWANA)* (since 2014)

- Maintained chapter's website (www.swana-wi.org). Services also included initial discussions and planning for a complete website redesign to be completed in 2016. Following completion of redesign, in the fall responsibilities for future maintenance were transferred to SWANA's new administrative assistant.



Zero Waste / Sustainability Education and Outreach

- Presented to the Following Groups (*topic in parenthesis*):
 - UW-Stevens Point's WSTE 380 class: *Recycling: Issues, Opportunities and Markets*
- Posted resource links and information on our website and Facebook page on an ongoing basis
- Exhibited at Organic Valley's Sustainability Fair (LaFarge, WI)
- Exhibited at Stevens Point's Farmers Market on three different dates
- Ordered and began selling reusable organic cotton produce bags with imprint promoting local foods and waste reduction (fall of 2016)
- Developed and provided a Home Waste Reduction workshop at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's (MREA) Energy Fair and at the Mother Earth News (MEN) Sustainability Fair. Developed a home waste reductions display for booths at these events as well
- Developed new section on Recycling Connections' website with wide variety of waste reduction tips



Large Scale Composting Outreach (Municipal, Institutional, Agricultural, etc.)

- Participated with numerous meetings and discussions with City of Stevens Point elected officials and UW-SP faculty regarding the development of a community organics diversion program
- Submitted (2) different presentation proposals to WIRMC, in preparation for their 2017 conference. Both proposals were accepted.
- Presented at the Green & Healthy School Institute, along with Dr. Becca Franzen (UW-SP), in Middleton, WI regarding the partnership between UW-SP and Recycling Connections to organize a school organics diversion and recycling day at Washington Elementary School in Stevens Point.
- Conducted a half-day *Composting in Schools* workshop* for Green & Healthy Schools-Wisconsin under grant from the Meemic Foundation.
- Staff member Karin Sieg continued as Chair of AROW's Organics and Food Residual Advisory Committee through October. During 2016 the committee helped nurture and publicize a webinar about community composting sites and programs, and hosted another webinar regarding the Natural Resource Defense Council's Save The Food educational and outreach campaign.
 - In the fall Sieg was invited to participate on an organics-related subcommittee of the WI Department of Natural Resources Waste & Materials Management Study Group. In consideration of this invitation, she resigned from the AROW organics committee to serve on the WDNR committee instead.

Home Composting Education and Outreach

- Contracted by Organic Valley to provide (2) Vermicomposting Workshops* for their employees
- Provided two workshops at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association's Energy Fair;
 - (1) Composting Basics and (1) Advanced Composting
- Made regular availability of home composting information on Resources page of our website.
- Conducted 5 mini composting sessions for middle school students at Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development and Waupaca County's Sustainability Day event at Hartman Creek State Park
- Ordered (4) pallets of the Home Composter bin; (2) delivered to Stevens Point, (2) to Viroqua
 - Developed a partnership with UWSP maintenance and Waste Education Center building for use of their loading dock, forklift and short-term storage space.
 - Developed partnership with the Flower Basket Greenhouse in Viroqua for the storage and some sales of compost bins
 - Items Sold: *Home Composter Bins: 30 Kitchen Katcher Pails: 21*

Partnerships / Collaborations

- Provided guidance and assistance to Central Rivers Farmshed to develop their new Compost Crew program that will help maintain their compost site
- Sponsored the Central WI Children's Museum's monthly theme during May that involved planning children's activities and providing informational exhibits, all in celebration of our 35th anniversary
- Provided supplies to Golden Sands Research, Conservation & Development to improve the functionality of compost bins at their Stevens Point-area Community Gardens
- Collaborated with UW-SP College of Natural Resources' faculty and students
 - Served as a resource for class projects and to be interviewed by students related to careers.
 - Presented to WSTE 380 students on Basics of Recycling

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT / FUNDRAISING

- Attended WI Green & Healthy School Provider Training and became an official Provider
- Purchased an 'event tent' and developed expanding display banners to market our organization and services
- Redesigned our website using a new open-source website platform
- Exhibited at the following events: Midwest Renewable Energy Association's (MREA) Energy Fair in Custer, WI; Mother Earth News Sustainability Fair in West Bend, WI; and the National Association of Environmental Educators in Madison, WI
- Conducted discussions with the Carton Council about grant opportunities to improve milk carton recycling at schools throughout Wisconsin. Unfortunately funds were not available.
- Wisconsin Legislative Strategies, LLC contacted Recycling Connections about a possible partnership for services to other organizations or municipalities. After consideration, we felt this particular project was not aligned well with our mission.
- Investigating options for Stevens Point organics program (including meetings & correspondence with Mayor Mike Wiza, Alderperson Meleesa Johnson, and UW-SP's Sustainability Coordinator Dave Barbier
- Conducted a Strategic Planning and Visioning meeting in November
- Continued to monitor the solid waste / recycling industry through reading professional journals (online and in print). Staff also attended the 2016 Wisconsin Integrated Resources Management Conference (WIRMC).
- Submitted proposals and/or negotiated contracts:
 - Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (*for 2017 services*)
 - Marathon County Solid Waste Dept. (*for 2017 services*)



ADMINISTRATION

- Submitted request to City of Stevens Point for exemption of Personal Property Taxes. Request was denied, stating we did not qualify.
- Continued to update / develop internal written Standard Operating Procedures for organization’s activities
- Board approved a Document Retention and Destruction Policy
 - Completed the organizing, recycling and/or shredding of Recycling Connections’ records from 1981 to present, in accordance to new Policy.
- Held memberships to:
 - Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin
 - National Recycling Coalition
 - Wisconsin Nonprofit Association
- Board of Directors met in January, March, August, and November

Board of Directors

Jennifer McNelly (President)
Portage County Planning & Zoning –

Dennis Kaster (Secretary / Treasurer)
Saint Michael’s Hospital Rehabilitation Services

Dave Barbier
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Kristy SeBlonka (*resigned in November*)
Golden Sands RC&D (and) Literacy Council

New board member,

Joel Kuehnhold
Lonely Oak Farm (*joined in December*)

Randy Slagg (Vice President)
Portage County Planning & Zoning –

Tom Baldischwiler
Goodwill Store



(left to right) **Tom Baldischwiler**, **Randy Slagg**, **Dennis Kaster**, **Dave Barbier**, **Jen McNelly**
(*missing from group photo: Kristy SeBlonka and Joel Kuehnhold*)

Staff

Karin Sieg, Executive Director

Angie Lemar, Program Director

Kelly Adlington, Program and Administrative Assistant



Karin Sieg



Angie Lemar



Kelly Adlington

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