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For more information, contact Kate Worley link to kworley@mnchamber.com or visit www.mnwastewise.org for more information.

RECYCLING AT WORK

Waste prevention and reuse are always the first steps in any waste management program. Once disposal is inevitable, recycling as much as possible is smart business, as well as the best environmental choice prior to the landfill. Recycling reduces the amount of virgin materials needed to produce the same items, and it is overall more energy efficient if considering total energy input from raw material to finished product. In addition, recycling provides revenue and jobs.

Although most companies today have some sort of recycling program in place, many recyclable materials still end up in the trash. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, over 50% of paper is now recovered for recycling, while 34% of plastic soda bottles are recycled. These are just two of many waste streams where businesses have the opportunity to ramp up recycling.

TIPS FOR RAMPING UP YOUR RECYCLING PROGRAM

The presence of “recycling” is not the only factor needed for an at-work recycling program. Consider including the following components to build a long-lasting, successful recycling program at your workplace:

- It is crucial to have management support “from the top down.” Placing recycling and other environmental sustainability initiatives as a visible part of your company’s mission is necessary to get employees’ buy-in and provide the means to create and enforce such programs and initiatives.
- Make the program easy and accessible by providing visible, well-labeled containers for trash and recycling. It is important to provide all container options for the most common recyclables— trash, paper, beverage containers, and food waste (if applicable) – in stations together to most successfully capture properly sorted trash and recycling.

- Provide ongoing education and communications with employees regarding the most up-to-date procedures for disposal at your workplace. Include additional information, such as “fun facts” to keep employees engaged and your environmental sustainability program visible.
- Involve employees in the creation and ongoing facilitation of your solid waste reduction and recycling program. Employees often have great ideas and can influence fellow employees to positively modify behaviors.
- Develop a relationship with your waste and recycling service(s). A service who is willing to work with you to reach your goals can provide the means to create new recycling programs and is a valuable resource.
- Schedule an annual environmental sustainability assessment with Minnesota Waste Wise staff to provide a second set of eyes in identifying new opportunities for recycling and improving your overall environmental sustainability program.

IT'S IN THE BAG

Despite programs to recycle stretch wrap and plastic bags, significant amounts of these materials still end up in the trash, or even worse they end up in the environment where they are harmful to wildlife. It's In the Bag is a partnership between Minnesota Waste Wise, Merrick, Inc., which employs adults with disabilities, and Trex Company, an American company which manufactures composite decking. If your business or organization would like to participate in the It's In the Bag program, contact Lori Golightly at (651) 292-4675 or lgolightly@mnchamber.com.

IN THE NEWS

Star Tribune. March 9, 2009

“Taking Out the Tech Trash”

<http://www.startribune.com/business/40881297.html?elr=KArksUUUU>

GreenBiz.com. March 9, 2009

“Corporate Boards Taking Larger Role in Pushing Sustainability Agenda”

<http://www.greenbiz.com/news/2009/03/09/corporate-boards-pushing-sustainability-agenda>

EVENTS

“Business Sustainability: It's Not Perception, It's Profitability”

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce & Minnesota Waste Wise

Thursday, April 23, 2009

7:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Saint Paul

Learn how you can implement sustainability practices in your organization regardless of the size of your business. In today's rocky economy, there is no better time to begin implementing measures that will save costs, improve productivity, and attract customers and future employees. If you would like information about being an event sponsor, exhibitor, or attendee contact Kate Worley at (651) 292-4662 or kworley@mnchamber.com. Register online at www.mnchamber.com

WASTE SORTS OFFERED AS NEW MEMBER SERVICE

Minnesota Waste Wise is now offering waste sorts to Minnesota Waste Wise members. Earn a credit for your LEED-EB certification with a waste sort done by Minnesota Waste Wise staff. Learn more about your waste streams to effectively reduce and recycle more. The waste sort includes a waste assessment of your facility prior to the waste sort; a safe, employee-free on-site waste sort, and a report complete with photos, spreadsheets, charts, recommendations, and resources. Waste sorts are a sliding fee-based service. For more information on waste sorts, contact Minnesota Waste Wise at (651) 292-4675.

MATERIALS EXCHANGE

Minnesota Materials Exchange program is a free service that links organizations that have reusable goods they no longer need to those who can use them. Inform Minnesota Waste Wise of any unwanted items, such as office furniture or equipment, you would like to sell or donate. Minnesota Waste Wise will post the materials in our monthly electronic newsletter and/or on the Minnesota Materials Exchange website operated by the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP).

For the complete list of available and wanted materials, visit the Minnesota Materials Exchange web site at www.mnexchange.org. To list an item with Minnesota Waste Wise, e-mail lgolightly@mnchamber.com.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Elden's Food Center (Alexandria)
Harmony Foods (Harmony)
Multi-Clean (Shoreview)
Preston Foods (Preston)
Rushford Foods (Rushford)
Wien's Food Center (Lewiston)

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Not a member but would like to join? Are you a current member wanting to take full advantage of your member benefits? Contact Kate Worley at (651) 292-4662 or kworley@mnchamber.com.

Disclosure: Wise Mail is a tool to inform our members of current events or waste issues. The content of Wise Mail is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Minnesota Waste Wise does not endorse any of the following waste services, organizations or events. Any such portrayal is unintentional by Minnesota Waste Wise. If you would like to be taken off the Wise Mail list, contact Waste Wise at (651) 292-4663 or mnwastewise@mnchamber.com.