



RECYCLING ADVOCATES

October 2002

Involving people in creating a sustainable future through local efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle

WEPSI and NEPSI Updates

Initiatives make progress in e-waste recommendations

The Western Electronic Product Stewardship Initiative (WEPSI) and the National Electronic Product Stewardship Initiative (NEPSI) have gone through many changes since the previous articles in the Recycling Advocates' newsletter.

NEPSI nears final meeting

NEPSI has not yet reached the end of its road, though the plan had been for the final meeting to occur in September. A June meeting in Minnesota did not make the progress that participants expected, and it was decided that a smaller group should meet first in place of the September meeting to develop some compromise options. If the small group is successful, then a next full NEPSI meeting will be scheduled. Wayne Rifer has been participating in this smaller "group of 12."

The toughest issue is the financing system with the debate between front-end financing through an Advanced Recovery Fee (ARF) – in which the consumer pays or cost-internalization (i.e., "producer pays") – and back-end financing through end-of-life fees in which the last user covers the recycling costs. This "Who Pays" issue has plagued the negotiations from the start.

The group has examined a new Belgian model. European countries are developing their approaches to electronic producer responsibility in response to the European Union's directive on Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE), which is expected to go into effect soon. Belgium has the most recent and evolved system, as each new program

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Stewards of the Beverage Industry

By Lori Stole

There is a lot of discussion these days about Oregon's bottle bill and whether it's time to modernize it. Ours was the first in the country. It's now 30 years old and does not apply to many of the containers now on the market. The nickel deposit has not been adjusted since it was established, but it would be 22 cents today if adjusted for inflation. At the recent Association of Oregon Recyclers fall conference there was a session at which several folks from Canada presented their updated programs.

British Columbia passed the first North American bottle bill in 1970, one year before Oregon's. It was updated in 1998 to include wine bottles, juice boxes and many of the other newer containers. Malcolm Harvey told us about his company, Encorp Pacific Inc., which was set up voluntarily by industry in 1994. They developed a depot system that now consists of 159 licensed depots, and also provide a common collection system for grocers. Encorp Pacific took over collection and payment of fees. They are now the product stewardship agency for all non-alcohol beverage containers, dealing with over 250 brand owners and 7000 SKUs. Two other separate agencies handle alcoholic beverage containers.

Harvey explained that their governance model was a key to their success. They are a not-for-profit private corporation. The board includes brand owners, grocers and "non-related" directors. Advisory committees have power to place issues on the board agenda. There is a high degree of public disclosure. Depots are operated by third party contract, so Encorp Pacific has no capital investment of its own.

Their revenue comes from unredeemed deposits, commodity value, and a container-recycling fee (CRF). The CRF is a cost to the brand owner and is generally passed on by retailers as a separate fee. Expenses include handling fees (over 50%), transportation from depots and grocers to processors, processing, consumer awareness and administration. To learn more about Encorp Pacific Inc. visit their web site at www.encorp.ca.

Jeff Linton from the Alberta Bottle Depot Association talked about Alberta's program. Like Oregon, their initial program was designed to control litter and as a waste minimization tool. The province updated its container recycling regulation in 1997. This established a Beverage Container Management Board, the program became industry funded and managed, return to retail was eliminated and aseptic juice boxes were added. Their 214 depots handle 40,000 SKUs with 35 sorts. They accept all containers except milk, which, he stated, may be coming this year. Their program has no hidden costs and no subsidies. They are now looking into other opportunities for recycling such as oil filters, paint, batteries, electronics, and more. For more, visit www.geocities.com/abdasep.

The final presenter was Dennis Kinsey of Common Ground Solutions from British Columbia. He described a collection system he helped design for the Overwaitea Foods grocery chain. This retailer's solution to handling deposits on a retail level was to create "Changes Recycling Centers" within their retail facilities. The first was established in 1997 and there are now 22 in B.C. They are located in the front of the store and are designed to meet the retail

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Updates, continued

learns from earlier efforts. Wayne has continued to lead the NEPSI infrastructure group, which has been making excellent progress in defining local infrastructure needs. This will be valuable with or without a NEPSI agreement. For example, Sego Jackson of Snohomish County, WA is working with a technical group in New Jersey to develop the "Seattle Assessment." This study, being done for the Snohomish County and Seattle area, will provide a model for how any community can evaluate their existing infrastructure and future needs, including costs.

WEPSI moves to second phase

WEPSI I is complete. Please see the WEPSI Action Plan at www.wepsi.org. We definitely recommend reading the reviewers' comments in the Appendix.

A couple activities are coming directly out of WEPSI I. A WEPSI II grant to Recycling Advocates is in the approval process by EPA Region 10. It will continue outreach to stakeholders – including continued development of the web site – and will monitor ongoing activities. Activities to be monitored include several infrastructure studies being conducted by agencies for different regions in the Northwest. Also there are some groups working on legislative concepts.

A second EPA grant that is in approval stages will continue the work of the WEPSI Market Drivers and Design subgroups. This will include several interrelated projects: A grant to Zero Waste Alliance to carry out the Action Elements of Key Issue VI in the WEPSI Action Plan through developing a DfE (Design for Environment) rating system for electronic products. An EPA contract with Full Circle Environmental will explore applications of this rating system in public procurement activities. Also a grant to the non-profit arm of William McDonough's firm (Green/Blue Institute) in Virginia will explore sustainable design for electronic products.

WEPSI in California will also be continuing under an EPA Region 9 grant to Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition and Materials for the Future

Foundation with projects to research aspects of electronic DfE, to conduct a forum on e-waste exports, and to develop model policies for local governments. Global Futures is also pursuing regional funding for infrastructure assessment and small business development and support in Alameda county.

It is clear that interest in electronic product stewardship continues to be strong. In fact, it is growing substantially as more people come to understand the growing need and the potential benefits of this new approach. WEPSI and Recycling Advocates will continue to work in the multi-stakeholder mode to help develop understanding and consensus about the most effective solutions to the e-waste crisis.

Source: Wayne Rifer, WEPSI project manager and a member of the RA Board.

Meet RA's New Administrator

Tanya Schaefer now serves on RA Board

RA Board members were busy in August reviewing applications and interviewing independent contractors, who wanted to become RA's next administrator. The Board chose Jeffrey White to replace Tanya Schaefer, who has been elected to the Board and now works full time at OHSU.

Jeffrey brings a wealth of experience to RA. He has directed two non-profit organizations since 1997. From 1999 until the birth of his daughter in 2001, he directed the Alliance for Community Traffic Safety in Oregon. There he led a strategic planning process for the organization's Child Safety Seat Resource Center. Additionally, he increased the organization's fundraising and promotions. From 1997 through 1999, Jeffrey was the executive director of the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council in Oxford, Mississippi. During his tenure at the YAC, he increased membership from under 200 to over 450 and more than doubled the local arts organization's budget. His work included a community arts and cultural planning process that was funded by the National Endowment

for the Arts and the initial steps of transforming an old electric power station into a community arts facility.

Jeffrey moved to Oregon with his wife, Laurie, when she accepted a position at the University of Portland as a professor of German in 1999. When he is not supporting the activities of RA and other clients on a part-time basis, Jeffrey is taking care of his daughter, Fiona, who will turn two this coming January.

Welcome aboard, Jeffrey!

RA members and newsletter readers can reach Jeffrey at (503) 777-0909 or by e-mail at info@recyclingadvocates.org with questions regarding RA membership and volunteering.

"Exporting Harm" Video Available on Loan

RA now has its own copy of the video "Exporting Harm: A High-Tech Trashing of Asia" which documents the environmental devastation that was found in a Chinese village due to unsafe electronics recycling practices. The Basel Action Network (BAN) undertook the visit in an effort to move past the rumors and find out first hand what the situation in China was. RA is happy to share this video with others. For large groups, we will make every effort to provide a volunteer upon request along with the video, who can speak on electronics manufacturing and recycling. There is also a written report of the study, which we detailed in last April's newsletter

(www.recyclingadvocates.org/newsletter/april2002.htm#harm) and which is available at www.ban.org.

Thank You, Tanya!

The RA board wishes to extend a huge THANK YOU to Tanya Schaefer for all that she has given to our organization during her two years as our contracted staff person. She has helped in so many ways to improve what we do and how we do it. She came to us already knowledgeable about the field of recycling, yet dedicated time to learn more. While we are sorry to see her leave this position, we are thrilled that she has chosen to join us as a board member!

The RA Board

New Opportunities to Recycle

By Tanya Schaefer

Last year, RA supported legislation to begin elimination of the release of mercury in Oregon. At the AOR conference, Laura Weiss of the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC), the successful legislation’s primary sponsor, discussed what has happened since the bill’s passage.

The Oregon Mercury Reduction Act of 2001 targeted “low hanging fruit,” or products with viable alternatives such as mercury thermometers; digital thermometers are an easy replacement. OEC has now partnered with several organizations in the Switch OUT campaign, designed to replace mercury light switches in automobiles. To date, the program has replaced 1,500 out of a hoped for 10,000 switches. OEC also is working with building owners to increase the number of fluorescent light tubes recycled in Oregon; currently only 20% are properly recycled.

Future steps to eliminate mercury releases include tightening the regulation of point source mercury pollution, continuing to phase out, label and promote product stewardship of mercury-containing products, and targeting abandoned mercury mines.

Next, John Bernardo of Albertson’s talked about his grocery chain’s innovative approach to waste prevention. In his words, “Waste is anything that is not an asset and nothing but a lack of creativity.”

Half of a store’s waste typically

comes from the produce department, and 15% of that is corrugated cardboard, much of which is waxed. Waxed corrugated cannot be recycled, and only one waxed box in a bale of corrugated will cause the processor to reject the bale. Better education of a workforce with a 50% turnover rate wasn’t the answer. So, Bernardo used Albertson’s clout in the marketplace to demand a new, unwaxed box for certain types of produce. The new box is unwaxed, stacks better, doesn’t have to be unloaded at the store as the produce can be displayed in it, and stacks well with other standard boxes. In response to an audience question, Bernardo said that returnable plastic containers were not an option for Albertson’s due to transportation costs to return and the need for sanitization.

Bernardo also reported on an eight-week old pilot in a Boise store, where they are filtering their waste frying oil and burning it to heat the store’s hot water. Previously, the store paid a renderer to take the waste chicken frying oil. The process is working well and he hopes to expand the program.

Finally, Susan Hubbard of Eureka Recycling in St. Paul, Minnesota, reviewed her program’s curbside collection of textiles, small appliances and books. Ten years ago, Eureka Recycling surveyed city residents regarding the addition of several possible recyclables to the curbside system; as a result the above items were added. The program has had ups and downs, but continues to collect used clothing. Residents put donations in plastic bags with an

identifying sticker that also serves as a donation receipt. Rags were discontinued when Goodwill no longer was able to participate due to its own financial difficulties.

Hubbard recommended targeting “core recyclers” first when introducing new items at curbside. She also noted that, in contrast to some other recovery statistics, her program only counts items as recycled when they are truly recycled, not just when they are taken off the street.

Stewards, continued

customers’ needs. The consumer does the sorting right there; the clerk has the option of rejecting unacceptable containers. “Changes” also includes a voluntary stewardship program, makes charitable donations and conducts awareness programs.



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Upcoming Events and Training

Sustainability Now! 2002 Workshops

The workshop series lasts through November 7 and includes far more sessions than our newsletter has room for. A sampling includes: “Building Strong Communities: The Oregon Solutions Model,” “Green Building:

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PO Box 6736
Portland, OR 97228-6736
(503) 777-0909
info@recyclingadvocates.org
www.recyclingadvocates.org

Rob Guttridge, President
Lori Stole, Vice President
Wayne Rifer, Secretary
Kate Wells, Treasurer
Tanya Schaefer, At Large

Jeffrey White, Newsletter Editor



RECYCLING ADVOCATES

Membership Application

\$25 Regular \$10-24 Living Lightly \$50 Sustainer \$_____ Other
Please enclose a check and mail to: PO Box 6736, Portland, OR 97228-6736

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Day _____ Evening _____

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*Your membership contribution to RA is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

The Natural Capital Center Experience,” and “Zero Waste Production: Design the System, Not the Product”
 Time of all workshops: 6:00pm - 9:00pm
 Location: Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center, 721 NW Ninth Avenue, Portland. For the complete schedule and more information go to www.ecotrust.org/SustainabilityNow or call (503) 467-0773.

Forum for Business and the Environment

Oregon’s “Green Power” Boom

Presenters: Heather Clark (Kinko’s), Mark Fleiner (Idatech), and KC Golden (Climate Solutions)
 Dates: October 9, 2002 (Portland); October 10, 2002 (Bend)
 Time: 7:00am - 9:00am
 Location: Multnomah Athletic Club (Portland); River House (Bend)
 For more details go to www.orcouncil.org or call (503) 222-1963. Admission charged.

Environmental Design II: A Two Day Workshop

Dr. Ab Stevels, a world authority on environmental design, will instruct the two-day program. On the first day Mr. Stevels will lead a session titled

“Ecodesign for Electronic Products.”
 The second day’s workshop will cover the environment and business.
 Dates and Times: October 10 from 8:00am – 5:00pm (Ecodesign)
 October 11 from 8:00am – 3:00pm (Business and the Environment)
 Location: Oregon Center for Advanced Technology Education (OCATE), 18640 NW Walker Road, Suite 1010, Beaverton. For more details, registration and costs, go to www.zerowaste.org/events.htm or call (503) 725-4618.

Natural Step Framework & Its Application In Organizations

This one-day program is designed to introduce business, government, and community leaders to Natural Step framework for sustainability.
 Date: October 24, 2002
 Time: 8:30am – 4:30pm
 Location: World Forestry Center
 For more details go to www.ortns.org/events or call (503) 241-1140. Admission charged.

Oregon Green Schools Summit

The annual summit provides schools with information needed to set up and maintain successful waste reduction programs.
 Date: November 1, 2002
 Time: 8:45am – 2:30pm

Location: Centennial Middle School, 17650 SE Brooklyn St., Gresham
 For more details go to www.oregongreenschools.org or call (503) 223-8633. Registration deadline is October 15. Admission charged.

Waste Reduction Action Information Network (WRAIN) Talk and Tour

Date: November 7, 2002
 Time: 9:00am - 12:00pm
 Location: Gresham
 Host facility: Honda
 For more details go to www.WRAIN.org.

September’s Mailing Label Errors

By Tanya Schaefer

On behalf of Recycling Advocates, I apologize for the September newsletter mailing label errors. Luckily, the membership database itself was not corrupted; the mistakes were a result of my own human error. Those members whose newsletters were returned to RA as undeliverable have a replacement copy inserted in this issue. Thanks to those of you who contacted us about the problem, and my apologies to all.

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PO Box 6736
 Portland, OR 97228-6736

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