

# MRF of the Month

## City Carton Recycling – Cedar Rapids Recycling Facility

Conveniently located off Interstate 380, on a 12.5-acre plot of land situated next to the Hawkeye Downs Speedway, sits the most modern automated sorting system in the State of Iowa.



Operated by City Carton Recycling (CCR) – Iowa’s largest full-service paper recycling company and one of the Midwest’s largest full-service recycling businesses – the 45,000-square-foot Cedar Rapids Recycling Facility processes commingled material on behalf of roughly 56,000 households located throughout the Linn County

area (e.g., Cedar Rapids and Marion) and an estimated 10,000 additional households from other surrounding municipalities and rural county collections.

CCR recently began promoting a new commercial single-stream program as well, and company officials state that new customers are being added each month. Glass, however, is not accepted as part of the commercial program. In fact, according to CCR President Andy Ockenfels, the MRF doesn’t accept glass at all in its single-stream mix; but, the material is gathered up separately by the company’s hauling business partners and is handled elsewhere on site.

The facility operates two processing lines, producing an average monthly throughput of 4,100 to 5,000 tons. In 2009, the Cedar Rapids Recycling Facility processed approximately 51,000 tons of material, with fiber accounting for over 90 percent (46,000 tons) of all recyclables sorted at the plant. The MRF is currently producing a low residue rate ranging between 1.5 percent and two percent.

According to Ockenfels, increased contamination linked to the advent of CCR’s commercial single-stream program is presently the biggest issue being dealt with at the Cedar Rapids facility. “Basically anything that can be wrapped around a set of star wheels becomes our immediate problem,” says Ockenfels. “Unfortunately, each shift, our workers have to perform stripping of wheels and shafts to rid them of plastic bags, clothing, hangers, twine, wire, etc. It can be frustrating.”

The automated sorting system utilized by the Cedar Rapids MRF consists of a state-of-the-art Machinex processing system that incorporates the use of a Pellenc ST optical sorting unit for plastics. In addition, the MRF employs the use of two high-compression two-ram balers, manufactured by IPS Balers, Mfg. Running at an average of 14 hours per day, combined, the two baling units produce an average of 4,500 bales each month.

The Cedar Rapids Recycling Facility employs approximately 25 full-time workers; however, when production volumes demand it, that



### Technical Specifications\*

#### City Carton Recycling – Cedar Rapids Recycling Facility

**Location:**

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Start-up date:**

1987 (sort line went on-line in 1999)

**Number of processing lines:**

Two

**Throughput:**

Approximate tons per hour:  
10.5 to 13

**Approximate tons of material processed 2009:**

51,000

Fiber: 46,000

Commingled: 5,000

**Residue rate:**

Between 1.5 percent and two percent

#### 2007-2008 Materials Processing and Recycling in the United States: Yearbook and Directory

5th Edition — Print or CD-ROM

The 1,300 page Yearbook is the only comprehensive guide to Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) in the United States, providing information on 583 operating, planned and shut projects. A nationally recognized resource, it provides a strategic analysis of the post-consumer recycling industry and a database of U.S. Material Recovery Facilities. It is an invaluable reference tool for solid waste decision makers, planners, consultants, and organizations interested in the present and future of recycling.

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number can swell with the hiring of temporary workers. Workers at the plant operate under two shifts, five days per week.

Stated Ockenfels, “We take pride in being a self-sufficient facility that has its own shop, drivers, sales and administration, plus a competent core of floor employees dedicated to completing their tasks safely and efficiently.”

\*Know of a North American MRF that you feel *Resource Recycling* readers should know about? If so, e-mail your recommendation, with hi-resolution pictures, to [justin@resource-recycling.com](mailto:justin@resource-recycling.com), and your facility may just be highlighted in a future “MRF of the Month” column.

