

National Recycling Coalition Announces 2014's "Best of the Best" for Recycling

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The National Recycling Coalition announced seven winners of their National Awards – honoring counties, companies, organizations, and individuals that led recycling across the US. In a special luncheon at the National Conference put on the week in New Orleans by Resource Recycling Magazine, the NRC announced the following slate of winners for 2014.

- Outstanding Recycling Community or Government Program: Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency in New York, accepted by Andrew Radin.
- Outstanding Business Leadership - For-Profit Business: Emerge Knowledge - Re-TRAC Connect, accepted by CEO Rick Penner.
- Outstanding Business Leadership - Non-Profit Business: Call2Recycle, Inc.
- Outstanding Recycling Organization: Indiana Recycling Coalition, accepted by Executive Director Carey Hamilton.
- Outstanding Higher Education Award: The Pennsylvania State University, accepted by Alex Novak
- Bill Heenan Emerging Leader Award: Brandie Sebastian, Steel Recycling Institute.
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Gregory L. Crawford, Steel Recycling Institute.

The awards program, long a staple of NRC's annual conferences, were reinvigorated with the addition of a new award, the Bill Heenan Emerging Leader Award. The award's namesake, who passed away in the last year, was a long-term NRC board leader, and had worked for 20 years for Steel Recycling Institute (SRI), and 19 for US Steel. Bill was nationally known for his leadership in growing recycling in industry, and championed the "next generation" in recycling. It was fitting both that his name was affixed to the emerging leader award, and that the awardee was actually from SRI.

Meg Morris, a Vice President of the NRC, officiated at the ceremony. She celebrated the return of the national awards program, and the popularity of the program with the membership. She noted "...the awards program celebrates the winners and their performance, but also serves as a valuable resource for members on successful programs to use as models at the community and state level". Lisa Skumatz, Chair of the Awards committee, noted that the seven awardees were highly deserving, but "there were extremely strong other candidates among the seventy-plus nominees. The committee noted it was hard to have to reject some, and I expect a really strong pack of candidates next year as well!" The awards committee also included Fran McPoland, Arley Owens, John Fredericks, and Jack DeBell. The ceremony also awarded five "Murray Fox Scholarships" to students from local Tulane University. More detail on the NRC winners is provided below.

Outstanding Higher Education - exceptional program in recycling or in connecting higher education and the industry (in degrees, tech transfer, career services / links, etc.)

The Pennsylvania State University, Alex Novak

Before 1990, the University recycled less than a ton of its waste. Today, the University recycles more than 100 types of waste and diverts almost 10,000 tons from the landfill—65 percent of its solid waste. The University-wide commitment and branding campaign includes partners such as Residence Life, Office of Physical Plant, and Intercollegiate Athletics. Each year classes in Environmental Resource Management, Horticulture, Agro Ecology and Ag Engineering visit Penn State's Organic Materials Processing and Education Center (OMPEC) to learn about environmental design, production and equipment. The program is a collaboration between the College of Agricultural Sciences, Housing and Food Services, Hospitality Services and the Office of Physical Plant. The project has parallel goals of responding to the needs of handling organic residuals generated from within the University and enhancing teaching, research and extension/outreach programs of a land-grant university.

Outstanding Not-for-profit Business Leadership - for a non-profit company showing leadership, innovation, success as model in recycling / diversion

Call2Recycle, Inc.

Founded in 1994, Call2Recycle—North America's first and largest consumer battery stewardship program—is a non-profit organization that collects and recycles batteries at no cost for municipalities, businesses and consumers. By collecting batteries for recycling, Call2Recycle reduces landfill waste and removes potentially harmful heavy metals from the waste stream. 2014 commemorates Call2Recycle's 20th anniversary of product stewardship excellence. Since 1996, Call2Recycle has diverted more than 85 million pounds of batteries and cellphones from the solid waste stream and established over 34,000 collection sites throughout the U.S. and Canada. More than 200 battery and product manufacturers trust Call2Recycle to be their turnkey battery management solution and have united to ensure that the batteries they introduce in to the marketplace are responsibly recycled. Through the support of these stewards, Call2Recycle is able to offer a no-cost recycling solution for collection sites and consumers. Battery recycling isn't just our business. It's our mission.

Outstanding Business Leadership - for-profit company - awarded to a company showing leadership, innovation, success as model in recycling / diversion
Emerge Knowledge Design/Re-TRAC Connect, Rick Penner

Emerge Knowledge Design Inc. (Emerge) launched a proprietary web-based data tracking and reporting system called Re-TRAC™ in 2004. Since that time, Re-TRAC has been adopted by many leading recycling and waste management agencies throughout the United States at the local, state, and national levels. The wide scale adoption of this affordable and easy-to-use software platform is making data collection more cost-effective, efficient, standardized, and accessible for recycling professionals across the country. Re-TRAC is designed to help recycling and waste management professionals collect, manage, analyze, and publish recycling and other waste reduction related information. Re-TRAC accommodates the full spectrum of recycling information collection and management needs which helps users achieve their waste reduction goals. As we all know, what isn't getting measured can't be properly managed. Re-TRAC makes efficient and cost-effective data management available to the recycling sector in a way that has never been possible before.

Outstanding Community or Government Program - for program showing innovation, progress, success as model for other public programs
Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA), Andrew Radin

In 2013, the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA), a not-for-profit public benefit corporation, helped the 450,000 residents of Onondaga County, NY, recycle over 230,000 tons of material; nearly 50% of the total waste stream (excludes yard waste). In addition, over the past few years, OCRRA has helped the community recycle over four million pounds of electronic waste, over one million pounds of batteries, over 30,000 pounds of fluorescent lamps, and over 80,000 pounds of confidential (shredded) documents from residents. OCRRA is now processing over 50,000 pounds of institutional and commercial food scraps weekly into high-quality, STA-certified compost at its food scrap composting facility, the largest such municipal operation in NY State. This has all been achieved through an innovative public education campaign ("Save the World a Little Each Day"), and a commitment to invest in environmental programs that maximize waste reduction and material recovery for recycling and reuse.

Outstanding Recycling Organization - State or other recycling organization with outstanding growth, programs, leadership, or contribution / impact in the field
Indiana Recycling Coalition, Carey Hamilton

The Indiana Recycling Coalition has been an effective voice for recycling in Indiana since its formation in 1989. We are submitting this self-nomination due to our successful evolution in recent years from a grassroots organization to a professional, staffed organization, taking our cause to the next level. The IRC has experienced normal growing pains, but we have worked through those challenges and today, we are better able to serve our mission to advance waste reduction, reuse, composting and recycling than ever before. In this nomination, we will highlight four recent and significant areas of impact: 1) passage of Indiana's highly effective e-waste law 2) development of countless partnerships that creatively leverage new resources to serve our mission 3) creation of an industry policy stakeholder group that has helped us grow our credibility and effectiveness at the statehouse 4) funding growth and diversification.

Bill Heenan Emerging Leader Award - outstanding individual under 35 who has emerged as leader in field
Brandie Sebastian, Steel Recycling Institute

Brandie Sebastian joined the Steel Recycling Institute as Manager, Life Cycle Assessment in 2013, serving as the North American steel industry's technical expert on life cycle assessment, modeling and practices. In this capacity she investigates and promotes the life cycle advantages of steel vs. competing materials. In less than a year, Brandie has worked on the development of a North American life cycle data set, engaged international and domestic standardization and regulatory organizations and integrated new,

North American data into key databases. Brandie's role and participation in North American life cycle assessment for steel is key to advancing steel as the environmental material of choice.

Lifetime Achievement in Recycling - outstanding individual with lifetime of leadership / dedication to the field
Gregory L. Crawford, Steel Recycling Institute

Greg Crawford has spent his career working to maximize the recycling of post-consumer materials. He spent seven years managing over 100 employees at five buyback locations for Reynolds Aluminum. Beginning in 1989, Greg became the Vice President of Operations for the Steel Can Recycling Institute (renamed as The Steel Recycling Institute in 1993). His plan for the steel can recycling infrastructure has resulted in the recycling rate of steel cans to grow from 15% (1989) to its current recycling rate of 71% (2012). Since becoming the Executive Director in 2010, Greg has guided the SRI's efforts to collect and disseminate Life Cycle Inventory data for various steel products. From day one, he stated that all steel cans; food, beverage, aerosol and paint cans should be included in every community's recycling program. With his assistance and guidance, the seven regional recycling managers completed 18 months of "infrastructure development" which involved meeting with municipal, county, and state recycling official, haulers, MRF operators, and scrap dealers, as well as each of the steel mills and iron foundries across the country to discuss the homogenous chemistry of "today's" steel can and get them to aggressively purchase and melt steel can scrap. Greg worked with various government agencies and the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries to increase the recycling of automobiles and appliances to astounding levels. In addition to serving on possibly hundreds of recycling and construction related committees, Greg has served the recycling industry as the Chair of the National Recycling Coalition and Chair of the Buy Recycled Business Alliance, and serves on the KAB board. Greg is retiring in January 2015.

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