

IRNetworking Summer 2011

IRN Key Contacts:

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IRN Partners with BU, the University of Central Missouri, and Staples to Send Relief Supplies to Joplin Tornado Victims

When we heard about the Joplin tornado, our first reaction was shock and sadness. Our second was to ask what IRN could do to help. The morning after the tornado, we reached out and found that Feed the Children was already on the ground in Joplin. FTC identified urgent needs including beds and mattresses, bedding, and kitchen appliances.

We saw two projects coming up right away that matched FTC's request: BU had mattresses and fridge-microwave units, and the University of Central Missouri had beds, cots and bedding. Both schools gave their OK to direct these items to Joplin. For trucking, we reached out to Staples, who immediately agreed to provide trucking to Joplin with just two days notice.

On June 1, a crew of BU students loaded 133 fridge-microwaves and 75 mattresses onto a Staples box truck. On June 2 and 3, UCM loaded 500 bedspreads and blankets, 75 camp beds, and 50 military cots. The loads were delivered to Joplin on June 6, and are making a difference to families who are trying to put their lives back together.

IRN started as a cooperative, and that's still how we work: combining the strength of many organizations in the interest of all. When the pieces all come together like this, it's the best and most rewarding of what we do.

There's a case study with photos from BU, Central Missouri, and Joplin at <http://www.ir-network.com/documents/Joplin%20Response%202011-06-07.pdf>.

IRN's Busiest Spring Season and a Request for Summer Projects

In May IRN packed 105 trailers and shipping containers containing over 1.5 million pounds of surplus from some 25 projects in twelve states. These shipments were provided to relief organizations in seven countries and a half dozen U.S. states. And in mid-month we passed a major milestone: 30 million pounds provided for relief and development since IRN started managing surplus in 2002.

Every year at this time IRN asks clients to start thinking about surplus projects later in the summer, when there's typically a surge as renovation and replacement projects wrap up. This summer we are making a special request on behalf of tornado and flood victims in Missouri, Alabama, North Carolina, Massachusetts, and elsewhere. Many of IRN's charitable partners are key players in relief and reconstruction, and although IRN cannot guarantee in advance the destination for any specific project, a very large fraction of 2011 surplus will go to tornado or flood relief in the U.S. This request goes not only for late summer projects, but ANY surplus that is due to be removed or replaced.

Electronics Recycling Price Reduction

Another benefit of the cooperative model is that we create a lot of market clout for our members and clients, and this translates into really good prices for really good service. Electronics recycling is a great example. Earlier this year we dropped our electronics recycling price to \$0.195 per pound – for computers, laptops, monitors, TVs, and all other e-waste. That's the lowest price we know in the Northeast. Meanwhile we continue, as we always have, to offer the highest level of environmental security in the industry: 100% local recycling, a strict no-export policy, and an open invitation to audit our recycling facility.

Electronics Amnesty: Summer's a Good Time

Things slow down a bit in the summer, which makes it a good time to clean out materials that build up over the year. Like electronics. The dust mites of the 21st Century, they collect behind closet doors, in hallways, in storage areas, under desks. A few years ago MIT scheduled an electronics amnesty with

IRN, asking students, faculty and staff to sweep out their accumulated e-debris, and they came up with 40 tons. Twice a year we work with Northeast Delta Dental, who open their collection to the stuff their employees collect at home as well as corporate surplus, and they do two to five tons every time. If you'd like to schedule an electronics collection, we can set you up with pallets, Gaylord boxes, and whatever else you need.

The Next Time Someone Offers to Recycle Your Electronics for “Free” . . .

. . . Ask them to take a look at http://www.ir-network.com/prog_elec_ewaste-recycling-articles.html, and then ask what they have to say.

Commodity Prices Remain Strong

Good news is that prices for all the major recycled commodities – paper, plastics, and metals – have remained strong and stable despite the global recession. Plastics track oil prices, so the strength of recycled plastics is no surprise. But the continuing strength in fibers and metals is something of a surprise. With the exception of Mixed Paper and Number 6 News (low grade newsprint), all paper and cardboard grades are at or near their five-year highs and trends are either stable or rising. Metals are below their 2008 bubble prices, but not far below. And prices are solid; no evidence of a downward move.

“With the Exception of Mixed Paper and Number 6 News”

If you didn't catch that you should. Mixed Paper and Number 6 News are Single Stream grades, and they're going nowhere. The current (5/11) difference between Mixed Paper and Sorted Office Paper is \$200/ton. So if you can separate white office paper you should do it; otherwise you're throwing money away. Almost every office can separate white office paper, whether in health care, education, or a corporate environment. It is the largest single “waste” stream in any office, and it's easy to keep it separate. If you'd like help setting up a recycling program to optimize your budget at the same time you maximize what you recover, please call. That's what we do.

IRN Partners with Conservation Law Foundation to Recycle Hospital Sterilization Wrap

CLF Ventures (CLFV), part of the Conservation Law Foundation, shares IRN's passion to reduce the solid waste stream. IRN is partnering with CLFV to handle one of the most visible hospital wastes – polypropylene “sterilization wrap”, which is used to protect operating room instruments when they come out of the autoclave and before they're used in the OR. It's a classic single use material: manufactured from high quality plastic, used once, then discarded. IRN and CLFV have a program that recycles sterilization wrap for less than the cost to throw it away. We can also handle other common healthcare plastics: shrink and stretch wrap, irrigation bottles, and others, with similar favorable costs.

IRN's Warehouse Cranks Up

IRN is pushing more and more material through our Cambridge warehouse. If you haven't been there, the warehouse is really convenient, a couple hundred yards from the Lechmere T station off the McGrath and O'Brien Highway. In a typical week we're loading two or three outbound containers with

surplus property for relief organizations, and as many again shipments of electronics, Universal Wastes, paper, plastic, and other commodities. For all but a few client locations, the warehouse is also cutting down our trucking times and costs. A number of IRN members and clients are bringing materials directly to the warehouse, and we encourage that – anything that makes recycling easier and more cost effective is a good thing. Please call IRN Operations – Bill, Tracey, or Megan – if you'd like to take advantage of this option.