



IRN

The RECYCLING NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

Mark Lennon
The Institution Recycling Network
603.229.1962 / mlennon@ir-network.com

IRN Celebrates Ten Years in Business

Thousands of projects, millions of pounds recycled, and still having fun

(Concord, NH. April 12, 2010) IRN is celebrating its tenth birthday.

Starting with a bare half dozen Massachusetts colleges in 2000, IRN has grown to be a nationwide presence in recycling. IRN is the most experienced and successful manager of construction and demolition recycling in the U.S., with more than 100 projects completed and an average reuse and recycling rate over 95%. IRN has shipped more than 20 million pounds of surplus furniture and equipment from schools, hospitals, and businesses to disaster relief and economic development projects on five continents and 20 U.S. states. IRN's OneStop program makes it possible to maximize the economic and environmental benefits of recycling while offering the convenience of recycling a half dozen or more materials on a single truck.

According to Dana Draper, IRN's co-founder and Chief Operating Officer, IRN "started with a not very unique but very dumb idea: Be all things to all people. If you're starting from scratch without many resources, the smart approach is to focus on one thing that you do very well, get that dialed in, and expand from there. We took a different tack. We started with two dozen things that no one had ever tried before, and almost immediately expanded that to five dozen."

IRN was founded at the suggestion of a small group of college recyclers including Bob Dombkowski from Smith College, Mike Lyons from Boston University, Terry Pellerin from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and the late Butch Michitson of Northeastern. Responding to a series of education conferences organized by IRN founders Dana Draper and Mark Lennon, this group suggested the idea of a college recycling cooperative. Draper and Lennon founded IRN as a small pilot operation under the wing of their larger consultancy. By 2004 the offspring had nearly eclipsed the parent. Today IRN colleges and universities include most of the student population in Massachusetts, and IRN has completed projects of one sort or another in 32 states.

According to BU's Mike Lyons, "IRN's strength is its willingness to say 'Yes' – to try and solve just about any recycling problem that comes up." IRN said yes when clients asked if it could recycle construction wastes, even though there was hardly any precedent for recycling construction wastes on any scale. That was the beginning of IRN's nationally influential WasteMiser construction recycling program. IRN said yes when clients asked if it could find a better way to handle surplus property. That was the beginning of a program that has now handled more than a thousand projects.

"In the beginning, it was almost like a game," says Smith College's Bob Dombkowski. "I would call up IRN and say, 'Okay, I've got 500 cases' - it must have been a million plastic lids for coffee cups. I'd try to catch them in a situation where they wouldn't know what to do with it. But I never really could catch them. If there's a market for it, they'll find it."

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7 South State Street, Suite 2 • Concord, New Hampshire 03301
Telephone: **603-229-1962** • Fax: **603-229-1960** • web site: **www.ir-network.com**



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“It’s been a great ten years,” says IRN COO Draper. “If it’s true that variety is the spice of life, then that would make IRN an Indian hot sauce. There’s always something new and different, always a new challenge, always a new problem. It keeps us fresh and on our toes.”

“But what really makes IRN click is a great bunch of clients who are really committed to waste reduction and recycling,” Draper continues. “All of our inspiration and many of the good ideas we get credit for come from them. When you can do some good, save people some money, pay the bills, and get to work with a really great bunch of people – who can ask for more than that?”

About IRN

The Institution Recycling Network (www.ir-network.com) is a cooperative recycling organization headquartered in Concord, NH that works with over 200 colleges and universities, hospitals, K-12 schools, and private companies to improve the performance and economics of recycling. IRN negotiates transportation, processing, and marketing of recycled commodities, provides a single point of contact to recycle dozens of different materials, and manages the logistics to get materials to market efficiently and cost effectively. IRN handles over 75 commodities: everything from cardboard and fluorescent lamps to concrete and Astroturf. IRN is known particularly as the most experienced manager of construction and demolition recycling in the U.S. (www.WasteMiser.com), and as a major channel that matches surplus furniture, equipment, and other property with U.S. and international relief organizations (www.irnsurplus.com).

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