

# ***IRNetworking***

## ***The Newsletter of the Institution Recycling Network***

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## **IRN AND THE HAITI EARTHQUAKE**

Since the Haiti earthquake on January 12, we've received many calls asking "What can we do? How can our surplus benefit the Haiti relief effort?" The answer, basically, is "Look forward three to four months."

In the immediate future, nearly everything flowing into Haiti will be survival and stabilization supplies: food and water, medicines and basic medical supplies, tents, generators, clothing and linens. There will be little room in shipping containers for durable items like furniture and building materials.

They will come later. Starting in April and May, and continuing for many months (and years), Haitians will be in desperate need of furnishings, building materials, doors, windows and other durable items to rebuild shattered homes, schools, and businesses. This is when surplus from IRN members and clients will be most needed.

So if you have a project that will be generating surplus in the spring/summer, or stored surplus that can be repurposed for relief efforts, please let us know. We've set up a [Haiti page on our website](#), which also contains links to several of our partner organizations and their Haiti relief efforts.

Thanks to you, our members and clients, IRN is one of the largest suppliers of usable furniture and other durable assets to the nonprofit relief community. Since we started the surplus program in 2004, we've shipped more than 20 million pounds of furnishings and supplies for disaster relief and economic development. Our nonprofit partners look to IRN – and through IRN to you – for the rebuilding materials that are needed desperately not only in Haiti, but throughout the Caribbean and worldwide.

As always, but particularly in response to this truly desperate situation, we look forward to working with you.

## **GENERAL IRN NEWS**

### **The Pup: A Better Option for Managing Surplus Furniture and Equipment**

Six years of experience make a solid financial case for using a 28-foot "Pup" trailer to collect surplus property for reuse by nonprofit organizations. It's less expensive than throwing surplus in dumpsters, and at the same time it fulfills important social and environmental goals.

The Pup is a small, 28-foot trailer. It can be placed anywhere on your campus. It takes up just a couple of parking places, or it can be set on any paved or gravel surface. Using the Pup is really simple. You fill it as full as you can with surplus. When it's full, you call IRN. We come and take it away, and we leave you a new empty trailer to fill.

Back at IRN's warehouse, we'll combine your surplus with items from other IRN members and clients, and ship them to our network of nonprofit partners, who place surplus for disaster relief and development projects.

IRN members have been using surplus Pups for more than six years. They work like a charm.

Environmentally they're a no brainer. Reuse is the top of the environmental hierarchy.

Socially they're a no brainer. Your surplus will be used by some of the most needy people in the world.

Financially - that's the question mark. In the current budget climate there's no money for feel-good programs. The Pup makes sense only if it makes financial sense.

And that's the best news: The Pup makes a lot of financial sense. We've run numbers for a variety of surplus management options, and the Pup comes out on top. There's some variation depending on locality, but across most of New England the cost per ton to manage surplus through an IRN Pup is \$25 to \$175 less than the cost to send it to a landfill.

We've got a really good spreadsheet model that can compare costs for just about any surplus management scenario. We'll be happy to sit down and help you evaluate the numbers. Please call or [email the IRN office](mailto:info@irn.org) (866-229-1962). We'll crank the model with your site-specific information, and if it makes sense, we can get you into a Pup right away.

## Don't Forget Techno Trash

What is it? It's all of the electronic stuff that some of us can remember living without, and the rest of us can't imagine living without. It's diskettes, zip disks, CDs, CD-Rs, CD-RWs, DVDs, VHS tapes, audio tape, game cartridges, DAT, DLT, Beta or Digibeta. It's hard drives, Zip drives, Jazz drives, jump drives. It's printer and toner cartridges. It's cell phones, pagers, Blackberries, Blue Teeth, and Palms, along with their chargers, cables, headsets and other accessories. It's MP3 players, iPods, digital cameras, handheld scanners, handheld games and other connected devices. It's all that electronic stuff that's great and new and fast and powerful today, dingy and old and slow and outdated in a year or 18 months.

A lot of it has data on it, data that should be destroyed. A lot of it has batteries, batteries that by law have to be recycled.

It can all be recycled through IRN's electronics program, along with computers, monitors, laptops, printers, mice and keyboards, wire, cable and related equipment. It will be recycled to the same high environmental standards, with the same assurance of data destruction, and at the same cost.

If you're recycling using gaylord boxes or hampers, Techno Trash can be tossed in with your other electronics. Alternatively, you can ship them in just about any container – cardboard boxes or plastic pails are most common. Because of the batteries (and LCD screens on some devices) they need to be stored and handled as Universal Wastes (the same, that is, as batteries and fluorescents).

Let us know if you have any questions. Otherwise, find that techno trash and send it in.

## [IRN on YouTube](#)

We have made it. There's nothing more to do. No more mountains to climb. No more rivers to cross. No more puzzles to solve. No more chasms to bridge. No more rows to hoe. No more furrows to plow. No more windows to wash. No more chimneys to sweep. No more tires to change. No more snow to shovel. No more cookies to bake. No more underwear to wash. No more tubas to honk. No more flounders to catch. [Click here to see](#). Sixty-six views and counting!!!!

## Batteries In the Regulatory Gunsights

There are rumblings that transportation of batteries may be subject to more stringent regulation in the not-distant future. The U.S. Dep't of Transportation states that there have been instances of live terminals touching, overheating, and causing truck fires. If you've carried batteries loose in your pockets, you may have painful evidence that this can really happen. So far DOT hasn't taken any action toward small generators and transporters (like IRN and our clients), but they have already come down on truckload generators and haulers, with requirements to tape battery terminals or place batteries in individual plastic bags. Please let us know if you hear of any specific instances of DOT action regarding batteries, and we'll do the same on our end.

## **Weird Waste Collections and Electronics Amnesty: Simple & Successful**

Electronics Amnesties are a different take on Weird Waste. Used electronics are a liability. They contain information you don't want to escape. They contain hazardous substances. Many of them, particularly CRT and flat-screen monitors, TVs, laptops, and anything with a rechargeable battery, are regulated wastes. And like dust mites or cockroaches, they're everywhere – you just can't see them. Hiding in closets, behind desks, under work tables, stashed in storage rooms.

An Amnesty is a way to get rid of the junk and the liability. It's like when the library lets you bring back your way overdue books without a fine. Tell your staff that for a period of days or weeks they can bring their old electronics to be recycled, and you'll turn a blind eye to the fact that they've been sitting on these things for years.

We did this a few years ago with MIT, and the results were staggering – over 40 tons in two weeks. Granted, that was MIT, but the basic story is the same at almost every organization: electronics are a hidden liability. An Amnesty is a way to make it go away.

### **[IRN Up On Facebook](#)**

Yeah, yeah, us too. [Click to take a look](#). We'll be using it to post photos and such, and hopefully start some interesting reuse/recycling discussions.

## **EPA Launches Online Communications Forum**

From Waste & Recycling News, Dec. 4 -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is launching a new online forum to enhance communications with the public.

[The new forum](#) will address a variety of environmental topics and ask for feedback from the public.

The first four discussion topics on the new forum pertain to community involvement, Superfund metrics, toxic material reduction and land revitalization. Future topics could include recycling, waste management, brownfields, leaking underground storage tanks and emergency response. EPA plans to post new topics monthly.

## **NRC: Rising from the Dead?**

Reports last September of the National Recycling Coalition's demise may have been premature. NRC's Board subsequently voted to rescind their resolution to file for bankruptcy and have been working on a plan to reorganize and continue operations. Stay tuned – Waste & Recycling News has been covering the story consistently.

## **[Octopuses: Reuse on the Sea Bottom](#)**

In case you missed it on Fox News, we always thought we had something in common with octopuses. Now it's for sure. Octopuses are recyclers! Even better than that, octopuses are reusers – they are picking up sunken coconuts, carrying them around, and using them to hide in. If it sounds too weird to be true, it probably is, but in this case it isn't. [Click here](#) for a link to the story from National Geographic.

And an IRN coffee mug for the first person who responds with the most correct of the correct plurals of octopus.

## **CONSTRUCTION WASTE MANAGEMENT**

### **AVA Gallery Renovation Wins Multiple Awards**

Congratulations to New Hampshire's AVA Gallery for the multiple awards recognizing its beautiful LEED Gold renovation of the former Carter overall factory in Lebanon, NH. AVA's honors include the 2008 Merit Award for Excellence in Planning, Design, and Development from PlanNH, the 2008 Citation Award in Historic Preservation/Restoration from the American Institute of Architects Vermont Chapter, and the 2009 Excellence in Construction – Historical Renovation award from the Associated Builders & Contractors of VT/NH (with contractor Trumbull-Nelson). IRN is really happy to have made our small contribution to the project in a 97% reuse/recycling rate. But as waste people our favorite part of the project was AVA's inspired Waste-to-Art exhibit. Instead of planning a fancy opening gala with fancy art, AVA invited regional artists to muck through the piles of junk left behind from 125 years of making overalls – bits of sewing machines, time clocks, parts of old scales, a 1910 freight elevator, painted and repainted siding – and then go make art. The results were assembled into stunning opening exhibition that tied together the history of the old building, AVA's commitment to sustainability, and their role as a leader in the New Hampshire-Vermont arts community. The exhibit also sold out, putting \$20,000 into AVA's coffers, and garnered a LEED innovation credit. You can see photos of the AVA Gallery restoration and Waste-to-Art exhibit at <http://picasaweb.google.com/nhmlennon/AVAWasteToArtExhibition2008#>.

### **Case Study: Deconstruction, Reuse, and Recycling Achieve 97% Diversion at Smith College Ford Hall**

Smith College's Ford Hall is a 140,000 sq ft, \$73 million structure built to house Smith's engineering, chemistry, and computer science programs. A LEED Silver project, Ford Hall incorporates and uses sustainable design, construction, and operating elements as teaching tools for Smith students. In this light, Smith sought to maximize and document the financial costs and benefits of jobsite recycling as a demonstration for Smith students, faculty, and staff – and for the broader academic community. Ford Hall was built on the site of a mixed residential and commercial area near the heart of Smith's campus, offering unique opportunities to highlight deconstruction as a waste and cost minimizing practice.

IRN and contractor William A. Berry achieved a 97% reuse/recycling rate on the project, in spite of numerous obstacles (congested site, multiple activities and trades happening simultaneously, inexperienced contractor and crews). Critical to success were the commitment of Berry's and Smith's management team, excellent communications, and timely reporting that monitored progress and helped generate enthusiasm and support on the project site.

Including the cost of waste management planning and documentation, contractor William A. Berry calculated savings of about 25% against their budgeted waste disposal cost. There was an increase in labor for site cleanup, but this was more than offset by the savings. At the end of the day, Berry achieved three LEED points and saved money at the same time.

See [www.WasteMiser.com](http://www.WasteMiser.com) for a complete case study and documentation of reuse and recycling results.

## **Columbia Reality House Puts All the Pieces Together**

In case you missed IRN's fall newsletter, Columbia University's Reality House project put all the IRN pieces together like we've never seen before: deconstruction, building materials reuse, surplus property management, construction/demolition recycling, recycling fibers and other common commodities, confidential information destruction, job training. With a final 90% reuse/recycling rate in a difficult urban setting, Reality House demonstrates the good things that happen when partnerships and imagination are set free. See a [case study on IRN's website](#).

## **Study: Green Building Tenants More Productive, Sick Less**

From *Waste & Recycling News*, Nov. 16 -- Tenants in green buildings are more productive and use fewer sick days, a new study by the University of San Diego and CB Richard Ellis Group Inc. reports

Green buildings also have lower vacancy and higher rental rates, according to the report, "Do Green Buildings Make Dollars and Sense?"

Environmentally friendly, or green buildings, have vacancy rates that are 3.5% lower and rental rates that are 13% higher than the market, the study indicated.

"The results of this project are beginning to demonstrate the very real and positive impact of sustainable buildings for both our owners and tenant occupants. We have been seeking ways to make an empirical case for the economic benefits of sustainable practices and the results of this study exceeded our expectations," said Dave Pogue, national director of sustainability at CBRE, a commercial real estate services firm.

Those responding to the survey reported an average decrease of 2.88 sick days in their green offices compared to their previous non-green offices. And 55% of the respondents said that employee productivity improved.

The report can be downloaded [here](#).

## **Study Says Managing Waste Important in Green Building**

From *Waste & Recycling News*, Nov. 20 -- A new study shows that waste management is the second most important aspect green building, behind energy efficiency.

The report by the McGraw-Hill Companies indicates waste diversion activities are increasing despite the recession. Client demand, government regulations, competitive advantage and increases in education and awareness are all major factors driving the increase.

Some 61% of contractors said waste management plans are the second most important aspect of green building.

The report was released at the Greenbuild International Conference and Expo in Phoenix. It is titled "Sustainable Construction Waste Management: Creating Value in the Built Environment."

## **SURPLUS PROPERTY**

### **First Call for Spring-Summer Projects**

The Haiti earthquake reinforces this year’s call for spring and summer surplus projects. These are the months when materials for reconstruction will start to flow into Haiti in large quantities, and our nonprofit partners are letting us know the need will be huge. Meanwhile the needs of other impoverished communities, in the Americas and beyond, will continue, and our nonprofit partners will be trying to meet these needs as well. If you have spring-summer projects in the wind please let us know. Email [Mark Berry](mailto:Mark.Berry@irn.org) or [Laura Ireland](mailto:Laura.Ireland@irn.org), send us a note through [the website](http://www.ir-network.com), or give us a call (603.229.1962).

### **IRN Passes 20 Million Pounds for Relief and Development**

IRN passed a major milestone in 2009: 20 million pounds of surplus furnishings, equipment, supplies, and fixed assets dispatched for U.S. and worldwide disaster relief and development. From about 2,000 projects in 31 states, to destinations on five continents and twenty U.S. states. But it’s not IRN who deserves credit – it’s those of you who first pointed out the waste inherent in disposing or recycling these assets, and who continue to make the decision that reuse is the best and highest use for usable surplus. We facilitate; you all are the champions.

### **Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center: Saving Time, Space, and Money**

When Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center in Brockton, MA called IRN for a simple mattress replacement, Facilities director Scott Kenyan asked if IRN could handle “some other stuff” too. He led us to a warehouse packed with enough “other stuff” to outfit a clinic. It was a classic scene: stuff that was “too good to throw away”, but once it hit the warehouse it was out of sight, out of mind, and gone. The warehouse was a dead-end one-way street.

Over two days in early December, IRN filled three trailers with Good Samaritan’s dead-end stuff. There was something of everything: hospital beds, stretcher pads, IV poles, wheelchairs, trash barrels, tables and chairs, desks and file cabinets and storage cabinets. And there was usable equipment: TVs, an incubator, wheeled stretchers, a sterilizer. The goods were shipped to IRN partner Food for the Poor in Jamaica; they will be distributed to hospitals and clinics throughout the Caribbean.

There will be more. Reviewing his costs, Scott determined that reuse through IRN is his most cost effective option to manage Good Samaritan’s day-to-day buildup of surplus. That way he eliminates his need for storage space, minimizes handling, and pays about as much as if he just tossed stuff in a dumpster. And he can fulfill the mission embedded in Good Samaritan’s name, providing invaluable supplies and equipment where it’s desperately needed.

### **IRN Launches Surplus Website**

If you missed our note earlier this fall, IRN has launched a website devoted specifically to our surplus program: [www.irnsurplus.com](http://www.irnsurplus.com). There’s so much information about surplus, so many photos, so many stories to tell, that it didn’t all fit under the umbrella of the IRN site. The new site is also more direct for people in residential life, asset management, or purchasing who are involved in surplus management but not in other recycling programs. Please take a look at the site (which can also be reached through [www.ir-network.com](http://www.ir-network.com) – Click on “Surplus Property”), and refer folks to it who might want a direct route to our surplus program.

**SPOTLIGHT:****COMPANY C AND ONESTOP: 88% WASTE REDUCTION, 59% SAVINGS**

**Company C** in Concord, NH is the kind of business OneStop was designed for. Company C makes and sells high-quality bedding, furniture, accessories and fabrics. Its products are manufactured in more than 20 countries, and sold to customers in twice that many.

Company C's warehouse is a buzzsaw of activity. Trailers and shipping containers from U.S. and international manufacturing plants are unloaded daily. Merchandise is unpacked and repacked. Trailers and less-than-truckload carriers are loaded and dispatched.

Before they found IRN, Company C's waste program was as simple as a hauler could make it. They had a 10-cubic-yard open top container for trash and another 10-yard container for loose cardboard. Each container took up a loading dock space. Their hauler wouldn't take their bottles and cans and office paper. And their hauler didn't track quantities, so Company C had no idea how much they were throwing away.

In late 2008 Company C heard about IRN and asked us to come take a look. What we saw was opportunity. Most of their wastes were three recyclable materials: cardboard, plastic sheeting, and woven polypropylene "burlap." Quantities were large enough that we ran numbers and suggested a downstroke baler. The rest of their wastes were divided between bottles and cans, office paper, and periodic quantities of electronics, metals, batteries, excess furniture, and other miscellaneous materials. All recyclable, and all could go on IRN's OneStop truck, along with bales of cardboard and plastic.

The pieces came together in mid-2009, and since then Company C's recycling program has been hugely successful. In the first six months Company C reduced waste disposal by nearly 90%, recycled more than 11 tons of baled cardboard and plastics, plus about half a ton of office commodities, and reduced waste management costs by nearly 60%. The baler cost about \$16,000. Over a 20-year life, Company C's return on this investment is close to 60%.

No small achievement. An environmental success story, and in these tough economic times a meaningful addition to Company C's bottom line.