

IRNetworking

The Newsletter of the Institution Recycling Network

Volume 1, Number 4

February 2005

GENERAL IRN NEWS

Surplus Property Urgently Needed for Tsunami Relief
IRN Joins EPA and Mass DEP WasteWise
Beverage Containers: National Recycling Picture Is Bleak
Less Than Half of U.S. Consumers Recycle Inkjet Cartridges

CONSTRUCTION WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Armstrong Ceiling Recycling Program Expands
IRN Set Up To Strip and Recycle Lighting Systems
USGBC Asks For Comment on Report Exonerating PVC
Give Us Your Toilets One and All

STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UPDATE

Jaclyn Emig Departs Mass. Sustainability Program
Potential Purchasing Partnership for Degradable Food Service Items
New Hampshire Pollution Prevention Interns Available for Summer 2005
EPA New England Publishes "Reuse Resources of New England"
New Jersey Recycled Products Directory Available on CD-ROM
U.S. EPA Launches Environmental Management System Web Site
California Begins Collecting Electronics Advance Disposal Fees

CALENDAR

Green Design Solutions For Hospitals And Schools, Conference, May 4-6.
Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) Teleconference: Green Building. February 11, 1:00 pm.
Building Energy 2005. Conference and Trade Show, March 15-17.
New Hampshire Hospitals for a Healthy Environment Quarterly Meeting, March 10
5th Massachusetts Organics Recycling Summit, March 30

<<< CLICK ON HYPertext LINKS FOR FULL STORIES >>>

GENERAL IRN NEWS

Surplus Property Urgently Needed for Tsunami Relief

We're asking IRN members to take a look for surplus property that can be used for tsunami relief efforts in South Asia. As you can imagine, the need for usable furnishings is overwhelming.

The most serious need is for dormitory and lounge/reception furniture (beds, mattresses, chairs, dressers, tables, etc.) that can be used to help put homes back together. There's also demand for classroom and office furnishings to help reestablish schools and businesses, and pressing demand for medical equipment, furnishings, and supplies.

We know that many schools and hospitals have dorm and other furnishings set aside against the unlikely possibility that someone on campus will ever use them again. If your institution has storage areas that could stand to be cleaned out, and surplus property that could be of use to people and families whose lives have been shattered by this natural disaster, please let us know and we can help coordinate a cleanout.

We heard recently from one of our donation partners that furnishings provided last summer by the University of Massachusetts and Middlebury College were among the first loads shipped to South Asia after the tsunami. We'll hope that in coming months surplus from other IRN members will add to the stocks that are used rebuilding damaged South Asian communities.

[IRN Joins EPA and Mass DEP WasteWise](#)

The WasteWise program encourages, provides technical assistance, and recognizes organizations for their efforts to reduce environmental impacts through source reduction, recycling, and steps to address climate change. We hope that you'll join 11 IRN members and over 1,300 other organizations nationwide in the WasteWise program. If you're an IRN member, you're already doing all that's required to become a WasteWise partner.

Beverage Containers: National Recycling Picture Is Bleak

The Container Recycling Institute estimates that U.S. consumers threw out 131 billion plastic, glass, and aluminum beverage containers in 2004. The recycling rate for plastic beverage containers is particularly bleak, slipping from nearly 40% in 1992 to less than 20% in 2003. Even aluminum cans, recycled at over 65% in 1992, have slipped to a recycling rate just over 50%.

Part of the issue, clearly, is the broad substitution of plastic for aluminum in the past decade, coupled with the rapid growth in sales of bottled water, juices, and sports drinks. Overall sales of beverages in plastic containers have more than doubled in ten years, while the plastic container recycling rate has been cut in half. But the issue goes beyond plastic, with recycling rates for all containers on a slide.

Ironically, this recycling news comes as market development efforts for recycled plastic have really taken hold. There's no problem with markets for recycled containers; aluminum prices are high, and there is strong, reliable demand for recycled plastic containers.

The problem is to make recycling convenient. As more and more single-serve drinks are purchased away from the home, it's a serious challenge to make recycling available wherever beverages are consumed. In this regard, we believe that our new program with TOMRA, the supplier of reverse vending machines (RVMs), can have a real impact in education and health care. RVMs can be placed wherever beverages are consumed, and because they separate and crush containers as they are recycled, they reduce the cost of collection and processing. As this is written, we're placing our first machines with IRN members. If you're interested in exploring this option, please [contact the office](#) for more information.

Less Than Half of Americans Recycle Inkjet Cartridges

Recent poll results from Harris Interactive remind us both to encourage institutions to participate in IRN's laser/inkjet recycling program, and encourage those already participating to extend this no-cost, revenue-generating program to faculty, staff, and members of the general community. Cartridges from the 55+% of Americans who do not recycle amount to about 40 million pounds of waste a year, which lasts essentially forever in a landfill. When they are recovered, cartridges are 100% recyclable; most can be cleaned, re-filled, and re-used, while the balance are recyclable as mixed plastic. Contact [Noelle Pelillo](#) (603-229-1962) for information about IRN's cartridge recycling program.

CONSTRUCTION WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

[Armstrong Ceiling Recycling Program Expands](#)

Armstrong World Industries has expanded the options available to recycle ceiling tiles from renovation and demolition. In addition to the core option (palletize and call for pickup), additional recycling options now include setting an on-site storage trailer, collecting tiles in rolloff containers, obtaining direct assistance from Armstrong with removal of tiles and suspension systems, and consolidation of small lots of tiles through the IRN.

[IRN Set Up To Strip and Recycle Lighting Systems](#)

Call the IRN if you have a renovation or demolition job that requires removal of fluorescent or other high-intensity lighting. We can provide crews who will assure full environmental compliance and cost-effective removal and recycling of all industrial and commercial lighting, including removal/recycling of lamps; evaluation, proper handling and recycling of fixtures; stripping and recycling cabling, conduit, etc.

[USGBC Asks For Comment on Report Exonerating PVC](#)

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has issued a preliminary report concluding that, from an environmental perspective, Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) is not worse than alternative materials, and that no LEED credit should be awarded for the avoidance of PVC- and vinyl-based construction materials.

Give Us Your Toilets One and All

Current projects at Boston College and the Sheraton Commander Hotel in Cambridge, Mass. remind us that toilets and other porcelain fixtures (sinks, urinals, etc.) are among the most easily recyclable of all materials. They're typically removed by the dozens or hundreds at a time, they're pretty easy to tell from other items, they're easy to recycle, and it costs a lot less to recycle than to toss them in a landfill. If you have porcelain fixtures as part of a replacement job or any demolition or renovation, make sure you [get in touch](#) to ask about the recycling alternative.

STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UPDATE

Jaclyn Emig Departs Mass. Sustainability, Joins Harvard Sustainability

Bad news for the Massachusetts State Sustainability Program is good news for Harvard. In mid-January, Jaclyn Emig left her position as sustainability project manager in the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. She has taken on new responsibilities as Coordinator of Harvard's Green Campus Initiative for the university's Longwood Campus in Boston (Harvard Med School, School of Public Health, School of Dentistry, etc.).

The Mass. Sustainability Program is looking for candidates to assume Jaclyn's responsibilities. Applications are due by February 21. If you have interest in the position contact Eric Friedman, 617-626-1034 (or go to http://ceo.hrd.state.ma.us/ceo.nsf/ceo_homepage_frm?openform, type "ENV" in search, and click on the first "Planners" link that appears).

Potential Purchasing Partnership for Degradable Food Service Items

The City of Cambridge is initiating an effort to use biodegradable items in cafeterias. The intent is to allow the City to collect cafeteria waste for composting. The Mass. Department of Environmental Protection is helping this effort by surveying others for similar interest and researching product availability and pricing from vendors. If there is a significant level of interest beyond the City of Cambridge, the prices are likely to be more competitive. If your institution is interested in biodegradable cutlery, trays, and other food service items, please contact Carolyn Dann (Cdann681@aol.com or 781-273-5700x298) as soon as possible.

University of New Hampshire Pollution Prevention Interns Available

Interns are available to conduct waste audits, set up recycling programs, propose ways to eliminate the generation of wastes, or carry out other assignments related to waste reduction and recycling. Interested New Hampshire Institutions should contact Ihab Farag at UNH, 603-862-2313. Additional information is available at <http://www.des.nh.gov/nhppp/nh01006.htm>

EPA New England Publishes "Reuse Resources of New England"

The purpose of this guide is to promote reuse over traditional solid waste disposal of materials that still have useful life. The Guide is intended to be used by businesses, institutions, and governments who deal with off-spec production or asset management, and others who need to dispose of items that still may have "use" left in them. It contains listings for where to donate used goods or unwanted materials in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. This guide features organizations that are not-for-profit corporations unless stated otherwise. The guide is available at <http://www.epa.gov/ne/assistance/reuse/index.html>

New Jersey Recycled Products Directory Available on CD-ROM

The "New Jersey Recycled Products Directory" CD-ROM is now available. The CD-ROM contains a searchable recycled products directory as well as a FAQ document on recycled products in general. Although geared to New Jersey, the Directory should be a useful source of information for anyone in the Northeast. For more information, contact [Steve Rinaldi](#) at the NJ Department of Environmental Protection.

US EPA College and University Environmental Management System Website

On December 13th, the sector's EMS Workgroup launched a national website at <http://CampusEMS.org> designed to assist colleges and universities with the planning and implementation phases of EMS development. In conjunction with the new site, EPA and its university sector partners sent a letter to college presidents and chancellors nationwide, urging them to consider developing EMSs for their schools. Along with the letter, university leaders received a new, one-page business case document entitled: "Environmental Management Systems (EMS): Continually Improving Performance.". This plain language document presents a strong, straightforward case on the benefits of putting an EMS in place.

For more information on the current activities of the College & University Sector, contact Peggy Bagnoli at 202-566-2957, or by e-mail at bagnoli.peggy@epa.gov.

California Begins Collecting Electronics Advance Disposal Fees

On January 1 California became the first state in the country to collect an advance disposal fee (ADF) on computer monitors and televisions. Any entity that sells TVs, monitors, or laptop computers is required to collect a \$6 to \$10 fee at the time of sale. These fees will go into a fund that will finance a state-managed system to collect and recycle end-of-life electronics. It's an open question whether the California program will remain one-of-a-kind, or be the first of many (or perhaps a single nationwide system) that establishes a financial connection between the purchase of electronic equipment and its eventual disposition.

For now, no similar requirements are on the horizon in New England. All New England states require that used electronics from institutional and commercial generators be handled and recycled as universal wastes, but none has taken steps to fund recycling through an ADF or other dedicated financing.

Information on the California program can be had from the California Integrated Waste Management Board, www.ciwmb.ca.gov.

CALENDAR

New Hampshire Hospitals for a Healthy Environment Quarterly Meeting

Date and Time: March 10, 2005, 9:00-12:00

Location: NH Hospital Association Building, Concord

Contact Debbie Augustine at 603-225-0900

More Information: http://www.healthynh.com/nhha/state_law/environment/he_nh3e.php

Green Design Solutions for Hospitals and Schools (Sponsored by *Environmental Design and Construction*)

Dates: May 4-6

Location: Chicago

For more information: www.greendesignsolutions.com.

Building Energy 2005. Conference and Trade Show For Green Building and Renewable Energy Professionals (Sponsored by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, NESEA)

Dates: March 15-17

Location: Seaport World Trade Center, Boston.

For information: www.be05.org

Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) Teleconference: *Green Building*. February 11, 2005, 1,00 PM. How hospital planners and constructions managers can use the new Green Guide for Health Care tool to improve your facility's design, construction, and daily operations. Register to participate at www.h2e-online/events/teleconf.

5th Massachusetts Organics Recycling Summit, "Getting to Yes: Strategies for Organics Recycling Success"

Date and Time: Wednesday, March 30, 2005

Location: Holiday Inn, Boxborough, MA

For information: www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/compost.htm#organics or contact Steve Long (617-292-5734) or Sumner Martinson (617-292-5969)