2015 ANNUAL REPORT
Recycling Connections Corporation (RCC), is nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with the mission to connect people, resources and communities to promote waste reduction, reuse, recycling and resource conservation. Our corporate office is located at 1100 Main Street, Suite 120 in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. In addition we have a satellite office in Viroqua, Wisconsin.
PROGRAMMING

During 2015 RCC provided programming through a combination of contracted* and in-kind services to further our mission. Below is a summary of key activities for each program area. * Services provided via contracted agreement(s).

Municipal Outreach Support Services

Marathon County Solid Waste Department*  (since 2010)
RCC provided waste reduction / recycling education and program assistance to Marathon County’s residents, businesses and municipalities on behalf of the Marathon County Solid Waste Department (MCSWD). New services were added under the 2015 agreements.

NEW for 2015
- Redesigned and launched of MCSWD’s website (working in collaboration with FlapJack Creative)
- Promoted Wisconsin’s Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP):
  - Promotion and/or further development of program that recycles consumer plastic film materials
- Piloted Agricultural Plastics Film Recycling:
  - Development, distribution and promotions of an online survey to assess volume, location and potential interest in recycling agricultural plastic film (i.e. silage bags, bunker covers), in partnership with numerous other organizations and/or agencies
- Conducted Home / Backyard Composting Workshops:
  - Four (4) public composting workshops held in: City of Mosinee, City of Wausau, Village of Stratford, and Village of Weston

Continued / Ongoing
- Staffed telephone information line to address questions related to solid waste, waste reduction, recycling, and household hazardous materials
- Maintained and updated as necessary website and brochures (www.marathoncountysolidwaste.org)
- Conducted municipal survey to gather updated waste & recycling collection program details, and to provide outreach regarding the MCSWD and its services

Group Purchase of Home Compost Bins*  (since 2011 with formal signed agreements)
Wisconsin’s municipalities and/or organizations are encouraged to join RCC’s annual group purchase of the Home Composter™ bins. The service allows groups to offer a quality and affordable compost bin to the public as one method to encourage more composting at home or to use the sales as a fundraising opportunity.

RCC coordinated the communications between the participants and then placed the group order with the manufacturer. RCC also provided the manufacturer with details for each delivery location. Each participant received their own invoice and was responsible for the onsite logistics at their drop site. The participants with our 2015 group purchase of 378 bins (21 pallets) included: Eau Claire County, Outagamie County, and Waukesha County
Solid Waste / Recycling Conference and Event Planning Services

Wisconsin Integrated Resource Management Conference (WIRMC)* (since 2010)
WIRMC is Wisconsin’s premier solid waste and recycling conference, hosted by the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW), Wisconsin Counties Solid Waste Management Association (WCSWMA), and the Solid Waste Association of North America-Wisconsin Badger Chapter (SWANA). The three organizations form a Planning Committee to host the annual conference and contracted with RCC for conference planning, coordination, promotion, and providing fiscal agent services. Additional details:

- Began preparations for the 2016 WIRMC, scheduled for February 24-26, 2016 to be held again at the Olympia Resort and Conference Center. This included additional time to address concerns with the venue from 2015.
- Redesigned the conference’s website for the 2016 event using an open-source software program (WIX.com). Continually updated and maintained information about the annual conferences at www.wirmc.org.
- Acquired onsite assistant (volunteer) for RCC: Alexandra Nett, UW-SP solid waste student. RCC paid for her Student registration plus (1) hotel night, in return for her time commitment to help at the registration area during specific times.
- Completed Request for Proposals (RFP) process to evaluate and determine venue for 2017 and 2018 events.

SWANA and WCSWMA*
- Provided event coordination for the Young Professionals social event sponsored by these two organizations, and held at 2015 WIRMC.

Organizational Leadership and/or Program Support

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW)* (since 2003)
Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and membership-based organization, contracted with RCC to serve as AROW’s executive director, programming, administrative and fiscal management staff. A few key activities RCC assisted with and/or coordinated on behalf of AROW included:

- Programming:
  - Highlights of 2015:
    - Numerous news releases and media contacts / interviews (with WI and national entities) re: numerous attacks on recycling published in national media sources
    - AROW received the National Recycling Coalition’s 2015 Outstanding Recycling Organization Award. Sieg accepted it on behalf of AROW during a ceremony in Indianapolis, IN.
  - Recycle More Wisconsin (RMW) program
    - RMW website refocus: from community-specific recycling information to general state-wide resource for recycling and waste reduction information. (www.recyclemorewisconsin.org)
    - RMW sponsor solicitation and support (in cooperation with AROW board)
    - Consistent updates on RMW Facebook page, as well as daily posts throughout the months of April for Earth Week and November for America Recycles Day (November 15th)
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- Roll Out the Recycling Barrel Program: partnership with Wisconsin Beverage Association
  - Continued work and/or research on the costs and logistics for reusing/retrofitting beverage syrup containers as recycling barrels for use at county fairground locations. Included seeking sponsors to help offset some of the expenses. Due to funding concerns, program postponed until spring of 2016.

- Member Services
  - Quarterly electronic newsletter
  - Committee support (Committees included: Community Education, Organics, Product Stewardship, and Government Affairs)

- Executive Director and Administration:
  - Facilitated and attended Board of Directors meetings (quarterly) and board communications
  - Attended Monthly executive committee meetings (via conference calls)
  - Provided Accounts Payable/Receivable, Bookkeeping, Reporting

**Solid Waste Association of North America – WI Badger Chapter (SWANA)** (since 2014)
- Maintained chapter’s website (www.swana-wi.org). Services also included initial discussions and planning for a complete website redesign to be completed in 2016.

**Zero Waste / Sustainability Education and Outreach**

- Presented to the Following Groups (*topic in parenthesis*):
  - UW-Stevens Point’s WSTE 380 class: Recycling: Issues, Opportunities and Markets
  - Greater Portage County Rotary: Recycling Potpourri (Legislation & Funding, Markets, Opportunities)
  - Noon Optimists: Recycling Potpourri (Legislation & Funding, Markets, Opportunities)
  - Noon Rotary: Recycling Potpourri (Legislation & Funding, Markets, Opportunities)

- Purchased and donated a garbage / recycling container system for the newly developed public Green Space area, located by the north entrance to the Children’s Museum’s building.

- Submitted Letter to the Editor (by staff member Kelly Adlington) “America Recycles Day and its Potential for Positive Impact” to local newspapers. Published in the:
  - Portage County Gazette
  - Stevens Point Journal
  - City Times-Stevens Point

- Attempted to find source to use or recycle a semi-load of unused #1 plastic clam shell containers, in response to a caller’s request. Sources were identified, however when we attempted to share details with the caller, we were not able to leave a message and did not receive any response to information sent via email.

- Wrote Public Service Announcement (PSA); ready to be recorded and played at regular intervals on 89.9 90FM (UWSP’s campus run radio station).

- Reevaluated menu items and serving strategies to minimize food waste at WIRMC 2016

- Continually posted resource links and information on RCC’s website and on RCC’s Facebook page.
Large Scale Composting Outreach (Municipal, Institutional, Agricultural, etc.)

- Investigated feasibility of composting food residuals throughout the 3-day event of 2016 WIRMC with Compost Crusader, LLC. Developed a proposal consisting of services and costs. Due to a scheduling conflict, plans fell through for this partnership. Compost Crusader indicated interest in being involved in 2017.
- UW-Extension’s Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)* (agreement began in 2014)
  - Assisted with planning and development for a Food Waste Resource website. Included the organization of extensive resource materials researched and recorded by Jonathan Rivin, SHWEC.
  - NOTE: status of website became unclear following the elimination of the SHWEC program as a result of Wisconsin’s 2015-2017 budget.
- Staff member Karin Sieg continued as Chair of AROW’s Organics and Food Residual Advisory Committee. The committee met quarterly and during 2015 concentrated on sharing member updates, looking into the barriers for large-scale composting, and identifying methods to educate municipalities and small compost operations about new regulations affecting source-separated organics (SSO) as a potential feedstock.

Home Composting Education and Outreach

- Staff member Angie Lemar conducted (2) Home Composting sessions and/or full workshops at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association’s Energy Fair;
  - (1) Composting Basics and (1) Advanced Composting
- Lent out educational materials (presentation, props, activity board, etc.) to Tomorrow River Community Charter School for use at a family fun event.
- Had presence at Golden Sands Research Conservation & Development’s Boomin’ Bash Event held at Central Waters Brewery; included informational display and demo bin.
- Made regular availability of home composting information on Resources page of our website.
- Sold home compost bins and kitchen-katcher pails from our office as method to promote home composting.
  - Items sold:
    - Home Composter bins: 17
    - Presto bins: 2
    - Kitchen Katcher Pails: 20

Partnerships / Collaborations

- Reserved the month of May 2016 as an RCC sponsored-month at the Central WI Children’s Museum and began brainstorming projects and programs for the month.
- Reviewed and provided comments on The Center for Land Use Education’s (CLUE) draft report on conducting a Community Food Assessment Study for central Wisconsin (located at UW-Stevens Point).
- Collaborated with University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point’s Natural Resources faculty and students
  - Available as a resource for class projects and to be interviewed by students related to careers.
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT / FUNDRAISING

- **New Initiative!** Midwest Group Purchase of Home Compost Bins
  - Researched and began development of expanding our successful Wisconsin-based group purchase of the Home Composter™ bin to other Midwest states (MN, IA, IL, MO). Included negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the bin manufacturer.
  - Promoted this new service via:
    - Exhibit booths at MREA’s Energy Fair (June - Custer, WI) and Midwest Environmental Education Conference (September - Madison, WI)
    - Emailing information and promotional fliers to developing list of potential contacts
- Purchased retractable signs to promote RCC and our new Midwest Group Compost Bin Purchase services.

- Attended the Resource Recycling Conference and the Recycling Organizations Council meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana. AROW secured partial funding to send a representative and the RCC board approved providing the additional funds necessary in order to send staff member Sieg to represent RCC and WIRMC as well.

- Placed advertisement for RCC’s services in 2015 WIRMC’s printed Conference Program.
- Continued to monitor the solid waste / recycling industry through reading professional journals (online and in print). Staff also attended the 2015 Wisconsin Integrated Resources Management Conference (WIRMC).
- Submitted proposals and/or negotiated contracts:
  - Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin *(for 2016 services)*
  - Marathon County Solid Waste Dept. *(for 2016 services)*
  - Organic Valley *(for potential 2016 services to assist with their onsite composting program and/or to offer home composting workshops for their employees)*
- Provided grant writing services in partnership with AROW, who was invited by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 to submit a grant proposal for projects related to Food Waste Prevention in Public Schools.
  - The AROW board supported submitting a proposal for a project idea based on AROW members’ experiences and input. The proposed project would be a partnership between AROW and RCC.
  - RCC board approved funding for RCC staff to serve as the primary grant writer for the proposal.
  - Outcome: As per a conversation with an EPA staff member, the proposal was well written and contained good ideas but was not strong enough to receive any of the limited available funds.
ADMINISTRATION

- Continued to update / develop internal written Standard Operating Procedures for organization’s activities
- Began storing program documents via a Cloud-Based (Internet) storage system for increased safe keeping and efficiency of sharing between staff and board.
- Held memberships to:
  - Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin
  - National Recycling Coalition
  - Wisconsin Nonprofit Association
  - Association of Downtown Businesses – Stevens Point

Board of Directors

Jennifer McNelly (President)
Portage County Planning & Zoning – Water Specialist

Dennis Kaster (Secretary / Treasurer)
Saint Michael’s Hospital Rehabilitation Services

Tom Baldischwiler
Goodwill Store-Plover

Randy Slagg (Vice-President)
Portage County Planning & Zoning – Land Conservation

Dave Barbier  Joined the Board March 25, 2015
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Sustainability Coordinator

Kristy SeBlonka  Joined the Board March 25, 2015
Golden Sands RC&D

(left to right) Tom Baldischwiler, Randy Slagg, Dennis Kaster, Dave Barbier, Jen McNelly
(missing from group photo: Kristy SeBlonka)

Staff Members

Karin Sieg, Executive Director

Angie Lemar, Program Director

Juanita Keller, Program & Administrative Manager
~Juanita retired in September, after working nearly 10 years for RCC.

Kelly Adlington, Program and Administrative Assistant (Hired September 3, 2015)
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