

# Recycle for Good, Milwaukee!

Campaign overview 2008 – 2014



LET'S MAKE MILWAUKEE CLEAN & GREEN.

MilwaukeeRecycles.com

# Increasing Recycling in Milwaukee through the Recycle for Good, Milwaukee! Campaign 9/25/15

# **Summary**

After months of research and development, the *Recycle for Good* campaign was unveiled to the public on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The event was highlighted by comments from Mayor Tom Barrett as well as 20 neighborhood 4<sup>th</sup> graders who donned *Recycle For Good* t-shirts and helped to hand out recycled PET tote bags imprinted with the campaign's logo. The first city recycling truck to have campaign imagery mounted on its side was also unveiled.

The *Recycle for Good* campaign's development was based upon the results from months of social marketing research in order to facilitate creation of the most effective messaging, tools, and strategies. Focus groups and phone surveys were utilized to help reveal common perceptions of and barriers to recycling. All participants expressed a need to know more about recycling. Another key finding was that the information most desired included the basics of which items are recyclable as well as the knowledge of what is lost when one does not recycle or gained when one does.

Recycle for Good multi-media campaign (See examples in Appendix B) efforts have included a new website (www.MilwaukeeRecycles.com), targeted neighborhood campaigns, print ads, radio ads, recycling truck image boards, geo-targeted online banner ads, radio contests, TV commercials and interviews, placement of posters and transit shelter ads through Clear Channel, mailers and magnets, and more.

In addition to ongoing messaging encouraging increased recycling and reduced waste, the *Recycle for Good* campaign provides a platform for educating and informing residents about changes to the recycling program, such as DPW's introduction of guaranteed recycling collection schedules in 2010, and the launch of the Single-Sort Recycling program in September of 2011.

Together, improved collection services and the *Recycle for Good* education and awareness campaign have worked hand-in-hand to produce positive results. In 2010 recycling increased by 30% in the targeted inner city area, meeting a major *Recycle for Good* campaign goal. Also in 2010, the first year-over-year increase in the amount of recyclables collected curbside since 1997 was achieved. Annual tons of collected recyclables have been on the rise ever since, up 20% from 2009 to 2014 on a pounds per household basis.

#### **Background**

For ten years prior to *Recycle for Good*, no major coordinated recycling promotional campaign had been conducted and most of the educational materials were outdated. Tonnage of recyclables collected by DPW had been declining on an annual basis. The decline reflected a common phenomenon among mature municipal recycling programs, mostly attributable to falling newspaper circulation as more people began to favor receiving their news digitally. Despite this factor, there was great potential for recovery of more materials from City residents and DPW recognized the environmental and economic benefits of doing so. DPW's revenue sharing and strong demand and pricing for recyclable commodities further supported the development of fresh efforts to increase recycling. The City decided to invest in a campaign to promote greater recovery of materials through its curbside recycling program.

In 2007, the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for professional services to help the City increase recycling levels among residents and develop a comprehensive social marketing initiative, including messages and strategies to facilitate this effort. In October Staples Marketing of Pewaukee, Wisconsin was awarded the project, and Mosaic Communications, a certified EBE with the City of Milwaukee, was selected as prime subcontractor to partner with Staples on the project. Planning for 2008 began immediately.

Social marketing research including focus groups and phone surveys began in January of 2008. A campaign timeline can be found in Appendix A.

# **Research and Campaign Development**

The Recycle for Good campaign was developed based on the results of research conducted among City of Milwaukee residents to help determine what motivates people to recycle, as well as identify the barriers to recycling. It was also informed by other statistical data and qualitative research by the Wisconsin Be SMART Coalition and the Department of Public Works. The campaign was designed not only to increase awareness of the need to recycle, but to actually effect behavior change toward increased recycling using the following strategies:

- Provide assistance for neighborhood campaigns that link recycling with cleaner, more attractive neighborhoods
- Institute city-wide education and public outreach communicating that:
  - recycling is the norm in the City of Milwaukee;
  - recycling makes a positive impact on our neighborhoods and quality of life; and
  - > recycling conserves natural resources and saves the City money
- Educate residents on what items can be recycled, including lesser-known items such as junk mail, paperboard, paper egg cartons and more.
- Study collection system changes that make recycling easier and more reliable.

# Focus Groups

Five (5) focus groups were conducted among self-reported "low," "medium" and "high" recyclers from several different neighborhoods throughout the City in late January 2008 to gather information and get resident feedback on reasons why they do or do not recycle, problems they incur with recycling, and identify messages that resonate with them to recycle more.

# Key findings:

- All recyclers need more information about what is recyclable
- People are interested in learning more about the impacts if they recycle versus if they don't
- Medium to high recyclers feel that recycling means "doing the right thing" for neighborhood cleanliness and the environment
- Low recyclers are primarily motivated by the benefits of recycling for the individual

#### Phone Surveys

In follow-up to the focus groups, phone surveys were conducted of 400 City of Milwaukee residents (355 of the 400 participate in the City of Milwaukee curbside collection program) to further gauge people's feelings on recycling and to confirm the findings of the focus groups.

# Key findings:

- 89% of respondents indicated they recycle in the City's curbside program
- 71% of respondents who said they recycle at medium-to-high levels are more than 36 years of age
- 78% of those serviced with large recycling carts would be willing to roll their carts to the curb rather than the City retrieving them if it meant they would have a set recycling schedule of every other week
- 82% of those same respondents said they would not be willing to pay more to have recyclables picked up every other week on a set schedule
- When asked what would motivate them to recycle more, respondents just as commonly indicated "better understanding the benefits of recycling" as they did a "financial incentive."

# **Campaign Elements**

Based on results from the focus group and phone survey research, DPW and the Staples Marketing team designed a campaign to increase recycling participation in the City of Milwaukee with one overarching theme, RECYCLE FOR GOOD.

# Campaign Theme Rationale:

The RECYCLE FOR GOOD theme is based on the fact that people want to do what is right for their community, their children, and for the earth. Messaging for the campaign has supported the many benefits of recycling and has provided a call to action to increase participation in the curbside program. RFG messaging conveys positive, action-oriented goals that people can easily understand and relate to.

Focus group research involving Milwaukee citizens showed that people want to do the "right thing" in helping to improve the quality of life in their Milwaukee neighborhoods. While there's concern for "the greater good" in recycling efforts, participants are interested in how they might personally benefit through some form of "reward" or "incentive." Messaging for the campaign will support the personal and community benefits of recycling as well as the long-term message or permanence that doing something "for good" helps to convey. The tagline, LET'S MAKE MILWAUKEE CLEAN & GREEN, is a call to action that brings people together in the effort and also recalls the pre-existing "Clean & Green" slogan used by DPW.

# Main Campaign Components:

Taking a community based social marketing approach, the campaign design consisted of two main components:

- Neighborhood beautification campaigns that link recycling with cleaner, more attractive neighborhoods and offer grants for achieving success
- A city-wide advertising and public relations effort communicating that recycling is the norm in the City; that recycling makes a positive difference and that lesser-known material such as junk mail and paperboard are recyclable

# Messaging Strategies:

In order to get the message out and encourage behavior change, the Recycle for Good Campaign will communicate and educate residents through:

- Consistent campaign theme and brand that is memorable and recognizable
- Development of a campaign-specific web site: www.MilwaukeeRecycles.com
- Educational pieces that inform residents on what can and cannot be recycled; how to recycle; what
  happens to recyclables once they are collected by the City; how the City benefits from increased
  recycling; and more
- Print, online and radio messages that educate and persuade residents to recycle more
- Outdoor graphics, such as recycling truck billboards that will increase awareness of the campaign at the street level
- Outreach and assistance to neighborhood organizations and associations initiating recycling campaigns.

Examples of campaign pieces including print ads, online banners, truck image boards and radio scripts can be found in Appendix B.

### Campaign Goal:

The overall goal of Recycle for Good is to increase the tonnage of recyclables collected in the City of Milwaukee by 15 percent on a pounds per household basis. The City also had a goal of increasing tons of recyclables collected in the special emphasis area by 30% or more. The campaign specifically aims to increase recycling in

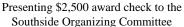
neighborhoods where recycling rates are low, as well as to get residents who are already recyclers to recycle even more.

Campaign results over the years have been tracked through the measurement in collected recycling weights per household, and monitoring the effectiveness of messaging through other means, such as achieving reductions in landfill tons, requests from neighborhood organizations to initiate campaigns, recycling increases among our segmented target audiences, traffic to milwaukeerecycles.com and more.

# Campaign Launch

The City of Milwaukee unveiled its new recycling public education and outreach campaign on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. The campaign aimed at increasing recycling participation throughout the City. As part of the campaign kick-off, the Sherman Park Community Association and the Southside Organizing Committee each received grants for recycling initiatives targeting increased participation in those neighborhoods. The campaign included







Sherman Park Community Association Event featuring *Recycle for Good* 

broad-based media components along with the neighborhood campaigns, all designed to increase recycling awareness and participation throughout the City of Milwaukee.

# Recycle for Good Showcase Campaign: Guaranteed Recycling Collection Schedules

In 2010, DPW introduced the first guaranteed recycling collection date season. From April through November, all residents throughout the city received a schedule with guaranteed dates of collection. This customer service improvement resulted in drastically reduced workload on call center employees.

# Recycle for Good Showcase Campaign: Single-Sort Recycling

DPW utilized the *Recycle for Good* theme to launch a public awareness campaign to inform residents on the City's new Single-Sort recycling program which launched on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Educational pieces included messaging that this convenient recycling system requires only one sort of recyclables from trash, allowing papers to be mixed together with cans and bottles. Additionally, some new items were added to the program:

- Plastics numbered 4 & 5, such as such as tubs and lids from margarine, cottage cheese and yogurt, as well as pill bottles (be sure to remove any labels to protect your privacy)
- Bulky number 2 plastics, like five-gallon buckets, old laundry baskets and crates (place large items inside or alongside the recycling container)



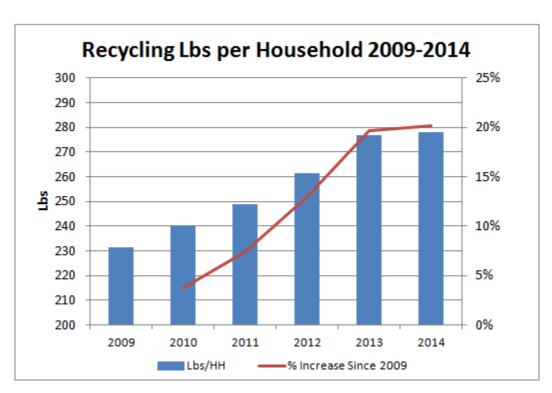
Commissioner Ghassan Korban, Recycling Specialist Rick Meyers and Mayor Tom Barrett explain the new Single-Sort recycling program.

- Food and beverage cartons, including milk, cream, juice, soup, broth, egg substitute and other types of cartons
- Aluminum foil and pans, including pie pans and roasting pans
- Pots and pans

The Single-Sort educational campaign elements included radio commercials, print and online ads, a four-color mailer with refrigerator magnet, recycling truck graphics, updated information on MilwaukeeRecycles.com and a recycling pledge all City residents were encouraged to take. All who pledged to be a better recycler at MilwaukeeRecycles.com will be entered into a drawing for a compost bin.

### **Recycling Program Highlights**

Enhanced collection services and educational efforts carried out under the *Recycle for Good* campaign have worked in synergy to yield positive results. The graph below illustrates the increases in recycling pounds per household that have been achieved each year since 2010. Previously, annual increases had not occurred since 1997.



#### 2009

- As of November 23, 2009, there was an increase in recycling pounds per household, even while waste generation declined, resulting in a 9.7% positive change in the percent of the total waste stream recycled in the Special Emphasis Area.
- Recycling of all materials except for newspaper increased in 2009, with targeted lower participation areas experiencing highest improvement.

# 2010

• In 2010, the citywide implementation of guaranteed and increased recycling service schedules helped facilitate the first year-over-year increase in recycling since 1997.

- Over the eight months of the mostly every-third week schedule, recycling pounds per household increased 7.4% over the same period a year before.
- o The winter's non-guaranteed collection months were considerably lower than in 2009, diluting the effect of the other months' gains, but still resulting in a full year-over-year increase of 3.6% on a pounds per household basis.
- In 2010, collection improvements provided residents city wide with guaranteed collection dates every three weeks rather than roughly once per month. Thanks to the increased capacity afforded by this strategy, DPW experienced the first year-over-year rise in residential recycling tons since 1997. The increased customer service resulted in a dramatic 96% reduction of total "pickup day request" calls from 2,377 to 103 during the guaranteed collection season of April through November.
- In 2010, the *Recycle for Good* campaign goal of increasing recycling by 30% in a targeted inner city area (on a pounds per household basis) was met.
- Improved customer service and reduced workload on call center employees: during the guaranteed collection season of April through November 2010, total "pickup day request" calls decreased by 96% from 2,377 to 103 when compared with the same period in 2009.

#### 2011

- From April through November (guaranteed collection schedule season) 2011, recycled tons were 6.3% higher and over 10% higher on a pounds per household basis versus the same months of 2009 when collections were unscheduled and occurred roughly once per month.
- Citywide in 2011, DPW collected 22,837 tons of residential recyclables, an increase of 2.5% over 2010 or 3.5% on a pounds per household basis. This was the second consecutive annual increase in household recyclables, a feat previously not accomplished in Milwaukee since 1997.

#### 2012

- Recycling pounds per household increased 13% from 2009 to 2012.
- Citywide in 2012, DPW collected 24,147 tons of residential recyclables, an increase of nearly 6% over 2011 or 5% on a pounds per household basis.

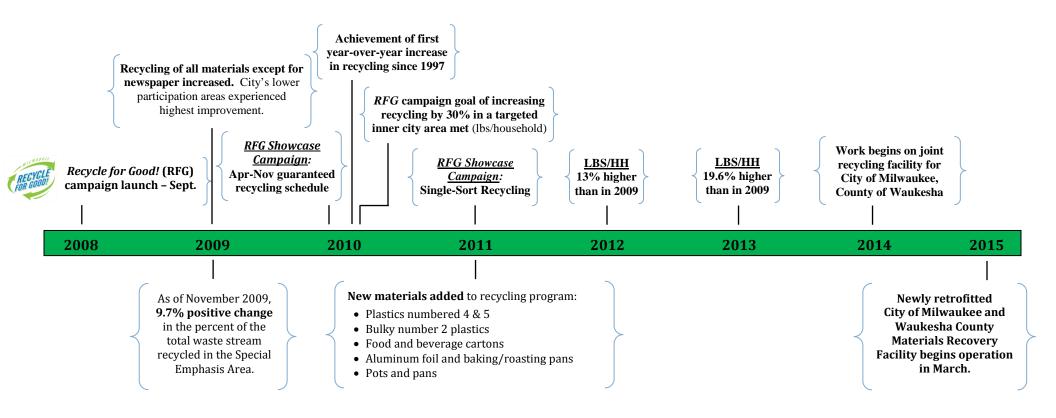
# 2013

- Recycling pounds per household in 2013 were 19.6% higher than in 2009.
- The number of recycling pick up day inquiries from the 2013 guaranteed collection schedule season (Apr. through Nov.) was less than 2% of the number in 2009 during that same time period.
  - o Missed collection complaints were down 39%.
- Citywide in 2013, DPW collected 25,052 tons of residential recyclables, an increase of 3.7% over 2012 or 5.9% on a pounds per household basis.

#### 2014

- Citywide in 2014, DPW collected 25,273 tons of residential recyclable materials.
- From 2009-2014, recycling pounds per household increased 20% on a pounds per household basis!
- Comparing guaranteed collection schedule seasons (Apr.-Nov.) from 2009-2014, missed collection complaints decreased by 36%.

# Appendix A - Recycle for Good Timeline



# Appendix B - Recycle for Good Campaign Elements









**2008:** Clockwise, from top left: Recycling guidelines print ad, truck image board samples including one bilingual, English-Spanish example that includes the Spanish translation of: "Recycle for Good! Let's Make Milwaukee Clean & Green" and a print advertisement highlighting a possible end-use of for recycled glass.









**2009:** Clockwise, from top left: Online banner ad examples from Express Milwaukee and WISN.com, additional truck image board example, and a still-frame from a *Recycle for Good* commercial shown on WISN and Fox Sports Wisconsin.



Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (414) 286-2025

VISIT: MilwaukeeRecycles.com



# Yard Waste & Composting

Yard waste is banned from landfills in Wisconsin, Leaves, grass clippings, garden debris and brush must not be placed in garbage carts. Instead, leave them on the lawn, compost them, or take them to a Self-Help Center!

Leaf collection Rake leaves into the street at the curb during the city wide fall leaf collection. Garden debris may be of ed on too for collection by city crews.

Leave it on the lawn Shred leaves with your lawn mower. and leave them on your lawn alone with grazz clooiner. This will help nourish your lawn by returning crucial nutrients to the soil.

Compost Recycle organic material indo a nutrient-rich soil amendment that you can use to beautify your lawn and sarden. Along with organic material from your yard and parden, you can also compost kitchen waste such as fruit and vesetable scraps.



Through composting, ood scraps become resource - rich soil rather than waste rotting in a landfill.



# Reduce Waste & Save!

Reducing waste is great for the environment and can often help you to save money!

- Buy durable, refillable and reusable rather than disposable products
- · Select products with minimal packaging, like concentrated products
- Bring your own bags to the store
- · Rouse bags and containers that can't be recycled
- . Use cloth towels and napkins instead of pape

Sell or donate used goods such as clothing furniture and toys instead of throwing them out.



2010: New Recycle for Good educational display featuring information on recycling guidelines, yard waste and composting, general waste reduction and more.

After recyclables are sorted and baled at a materials recovery facility, they are sent to

domestic and international markets for processing into new recycled-content products.

Where Do Milwaukee's Recyclables Go?













HOW? Simply place empty cartons in your recycling cart after rinsing food and beverage residue.

WOW! The recycled paper

Carton Council

fibers are a valuable resource for making recycled paper products and building materials.

2011: Select panels and refrigerator magnet from 2011 fall mailer. The mailer featured Single-Sort and carton recycling FAQs along with other sanitation related information. A Spanish language version of the magnet was designed and made available for viewing and download from MilwaukeeRecycles.com.



ENTER TO WIN

2011: Print ad featuring information on the City's new Single-Sort recycling program and newly accepted materials ran in some of Milwaukee's most popular and far-reaching publications including The Shepherd Express, The Milwaukee Courier, and The Onion.

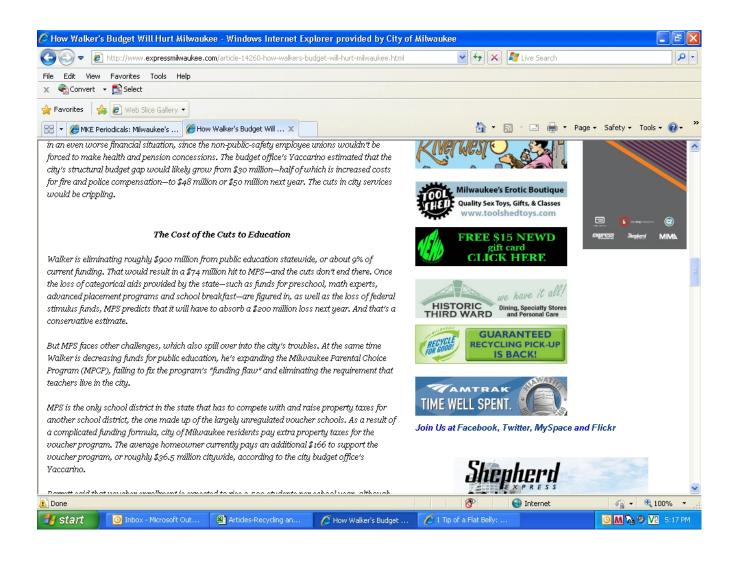


2011: Banner ads featured on JSOnline.com were targeted towards web visitors from City of Milwaukee zip codes.



2011: New recycling truck panels were designed, including bilingual versions. Newly accepted items were featured on the panels installed on 5 recycling trucks. In all, Recycle For Good graphics are now installed on 17 of DPW's recycling trucks.





**2011:** Online banner ad reminding residents that guaranteed recycling collection schedules was returning from April through November of 2011.



Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 4:45 PM.

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RECICLE SIEMPRE!
HAGAMOS DE MILWAUKEE UN
LUGAR MÁS LIMPIO Y VERDE

Recicle estos artículos:
ciclaje de un solo flujo - SE ACEPTAN MAS MATERIALES)

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apel. Las bolsas deben estar atadas o grapadas cerrada.

sobre reciclaje de un solo flujo y lo que no se puede reciclar?

Llame al (414) 286-CITY (2489) de lunes a viernes de 8:00 AM a 4:45 PM. Dispositivo de telecomunicación para sordos (414) 286-2025

MilwaukeeRecycles.com

**2011:** Left: Recycling guidelines in English and Spanish, updated with newly accepted items as a part of the switch to a Single-Sort recycling program.



2012: Recycle For Good billboard posters and bus shelter advertisement.











**2013:** Jammin' 98.3 Recycler of the Month Contest, Display ad on Entercom (WMYX/WXSS) "1 THING" green website, and Big box ads and listing on WHQG "The Hog" Homegrown website.



**2013**: *Top and right*: JS Online geo-targeted banner ads. *Below*: Visuals designed in 2013 to educate the public on what products recyclables are made into.









