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Solid Waste Management District of St. Joseph County Case Study

Organization: **Solid Waste Management District of St. Joseph County**

Organization Type: local government

Type of Program: On-going/Permanent

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Program Start-up

St. Joseph County's on-going electronics recycling program was conceived in 2000 after a year- and-a-half of successful one-day collections. The foundation of the ongoing collection program was a grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to support the development of a permanent collection facility.

Program Operation

Participants of the program (residents, businesses, schools, etc.) can drop off material at the solid waste management district's household hazardous waste (HHW) collection center, located at 1151 East 5th Street in Mishawaka, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

The City of Mishawaka staff (under contract with the solid waste management district, which pays half of their salary) accepts the material from the vehicle. They then palletize, shrink-wrap, and store materials in preparation for pick-up. Smaller items, such as cell phones and radios, are put into a cardboard container and picked up by the recycler as well.

Larger, commercial generators that are CESQGs are encouraged to make pre-arranged appointments to bring in large quantities of material. On occasion, the solid waste management district will allow companies to make arrangements for billing the costs for the services instead of having to pay the fees when dropping off materials. Sometimes the solid waste management district will even facilitate a direct pickup by the recycler based on logistics or a large amount of material.

Currently, the collected items are picked up and processed under a contract with Chesapeake Electronic Recycling of Winamac, Indiana. The contract requires the collected materials be recycled or demanufactured. Landfill disposal of the collected items is not permitted through the contract with Chesapeake.

Management

The Board of Directors of the Solid Waste Management District of St. Joseph County oversees all activities of the solid waste management district, including the decision to implement the electronics collection and recycling program. The solid waste management district executive director is charged by the board to implement the program. The solid waste management district entered into a contract with the City of Mishawaka to share city staff costs for the e.Scrap program as part of the solid waste management district's household hazardous waste collection program.

Partnerships

Since St. Joseph County was one of the first on-going e.Scrap collections in Indiana, the success of the program relied on the help and cooperation of several important partners.

- The Indiana Department of Environmental Management was important as it provided some of the initial start-up funding.
- The District Board's buy-in to the program was critical.
- City of Mishawaka, Indiana entered into a contractual arrangement with the district to operate the facility and program.
- United Recycling Technologies of West Chicago, Illinois, (the original recycler for the on-going collection program) was also important in getting the effort going.

Electronics

The Solid Waste Management District of St. Joseph County collects the following items in their e.Scrap collection program:

- **Large Items** - arcade size video games, camcorders, desk top PCs and accessories, fax machines, pinball machines, power tools, scales (electronic), scanners, sewing machines, speakers, TVs, typewriters/word processors, video game players (examples: VCR/laser disc players, Nintendo, Sony play station); and
- **Small Items** – adding machines, ballasts, calculators, cameras (film and digital), Gameboys, joy sticks/game controls, palm organizers, portable CD players, postage machines, radios, telephones answering machines, and uninterrupted power supplies.

Program Costs and User Fees

The solid waste management district has set a fee schedule for the materials collected in their program by material size. Large items cost \$12 each to drop off and small items are free of charge.

The solid waste management district charges these fees in order to ensure a sustainable program: one that generates revenue to cover the true costs of hiring a responsible recycler to manage the materials. The solid waste management district pays its recycler approximately \$13,000 per year for recycling services. Should the solid waste management district require additional funds to cover the costs, they could use funds from the landfill tipping fee which generates revenue for the solid waste management district's general operating budget.

The program is maintained through the user fees and as a part of the operations at the solid waste management district's HHW site, staffed by City of Mishawaka employees through a contract with the solid waste management district.

Outreach

The solid waste management district promotes its e.Scrap collection program primarily through its web site at <www.swmd.org> and through a specialized brochure. The program is open to all interested parties in St. Joseph County, which has a population of 265,559.

Measurable Success

The on-going program collects and recycles approximately 15,000 pounds per year of e.Scrap material. The program benefits all residents, businesses and others in St. Joseph County who have e.Scrap to manage.

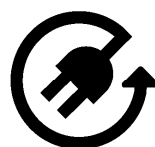
Challenges and Solutions

The greatest challenge experienced by the solid waste management district is promotion of the program to businesses, industry and institutions who would qualify as a CESQG. The solid waste management district is working to overcome this challenge through expanded outreach efforts.

An additional challenge was getting the general public to use the program despite the fee. The solid waste management district made special efforts to explain the need for the fee to cover costs and this effort has proven successful in getting more people to participate.

Lessons Learned

To address some of the challenges faced in the past, the solid waste management district is offering limited, free electronics amnesty days for residents. In addition, the solid waste management district realizes the need for a greater, targeted outreach to businesses, industry and institutions and others that qualify as CESQGs to increase knowledge about responsible e.Scrap management and the availability of a program for e.Scrap recycling through the solid waste management district.



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A program of the Indiana Recycling Coalition