



Preserving Resources,  
Preventing Waste

# The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Autumn 2021  
WasteWise ... improving your bottom line and the environment  
through waste reduction, recycling, and recycled product procurement.

## Avoid the Spark

Recycling contamination not only reduces the marketability of recyclable materials and increases processing costs, but it can also be hazardous. Rechargeable batteries – like the ones that power cellphones, laptops, power tools and other portable devices – are especially dangerous when placed in a recycling bucket (or trash can) as they sometimes contain a residual charge that can spark and ignite should they come into contact with other metals. These batteries have caused numerous fires at recycling and waste facilities, and in collection trucks.

To address this very serious problem, a new educational campaign called “Avoid the Spark...Be Battery Safety Smart” was recently launched in New Jersey. The goal of the campaign is to reduce battery-ignited fires by helping residents identify and recycle household batteries. The campaign is a collaborative effort between the Association of New Jersey Recyclers, the Association of New Jersey Household Hazardous Waste Coordinators, Call2Recycle and Recycle Coach. A new website with numerous resources, including a helpful guide to battery recycling and a weblink that will help residents find battery recycling drop-off locations, is available at <https://www.call2recycle.org/avoid-the-spark-nj/>.



## DEP Recycling Awards Program Honors Excellence in Recycling

While 2020 was a year unlike any other in recent memory, there were still many impressive achievements occurring in recycling and waste reduction in New Jersey. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection recognizes these achievements through its annual recycling awards program. The 2021 recycling award winners are not only high achievers, but also models for others to emulate. The award winners are as follows:

### **Business – Earth Friendly Products (ECOS)**

Through numerous recycling and waste reduction initiatives, Earth Friendly Products (ECOS), located in Parsippany, was able to keep 98 percent of the waste it generates out of the waste disposal stream in 2020.

### **Government - Town of Westfield Department of Public Works**

The Town of Westfield Department of Public Works operates an innovative recycling drop-off center that accepts a wide range of both traditional and non-traditional recyclable materials, including corks, food waste, tennis balls and polystyrene.

### **Leadership - Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory**

The Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory recycled 52 percent of its municipal solid waste and 82 percent of its construction and demolition waste. The facility also runs several successful reuse programs.

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### **Rising Star - Matthew A. Karmel**

Matthew Karmel, an attorney at Morristown-based Riker Danzig Scherer Hyland & Perretti LLP, has worked diligently to support organic waste recycling efforts in New Jersey. He has provided pro bono legal representation directed at expanding community composting efforts and played a key role in forming the New Jersey Composting Council.

### **Outstanding Educator/Educational Program - Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management**

The Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management provides recycling education to residents, as well as to the millions of summertime visitors that vacation in the county. Among other things, the county created a Vacationer's Guide to Recycling, Boater's Guide to Recycling, and Be Shore to Recycle Right igloo system.

### **Recycling Industry - Mazza Recycling Services Ltd.**

Mazza Recycling recycles glass bottles, metal cans, plastic containers, mixed paper, corrugated cardboard and more. In 2020, the Tinton Falls company opened a state-of-the-art processing center for commingled curbside recyclable materials and initiated its own recycling education program.

### **Source Reduction, Resource Management/Sustainability - Matriark Foods**

Matriark Foods worked with a partner during the 2020 pandemic to rescue, upcycle, and donate 620,000 pounds of food that would have otherwise gone to waste. Matriark Foods used surplus vegetables from farmers, which were then made into a vegetable stew that was distributed to the hungry in northern New Jersey.

### **Source Reduction, Resource Management/Sustainability - Goodwill Home Medical Equipment**

Goodwill Home Medical Equipment, in Bellmawr, reduces medical equipment waste by accepting donations of gently used medical equipment at all Goodwill donation

sites. In serving over 5,400 customers in 2020, the organization kept thousands of pieces of medical equipment out of landfills and helped those in need.

### **Volunteer Citizen - Matthias Choi**

Matthias Choi is a 16-year-old from Norwood, New Jersey whose passion for the environment led him to create the "e-Salvage" organization and website to help inform the public about the importance of electronics recycling.

## **Did You Know...**

- Wegmans-brand egg cartons are now made from 100 percent post-consumer recycled paper rather than from polystyrene foam. The company estimates that this packaging change will eliminate 625,000 pounds of foam from its stores annually.
- The Lego Company announced that its toy bricks will be made from recycled or renewable materials by 2030.
- The United States Environmental Protection Agency has a webpage devoted to solar panel recycling. Visit <https://www.epa.gov/hw/solar-panel-recycling> to learn more about this topic.
- According to The Recycling Partnership's 2020 State of Curbside Recycling report, some limited data from capture studies suggest there may be as much as 17 pounds of polypropylene available per year from a single-family household.
- Americans throw in the trash more than \$700 million worth of aluminum cans every year.
- Check out the environmental documentaries "Wasted! The Story of Food Waste" and "A Plastic Ocean" both of which are available on mainstream media outlets. With food waste and plastics in the environment being such hot topics, these are must-see films!



### **New Jersey WasteWise Business Network**

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