



MAY 2023 MATERIAL MATTERS NEWSLETTER

Member Spotlight: ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER



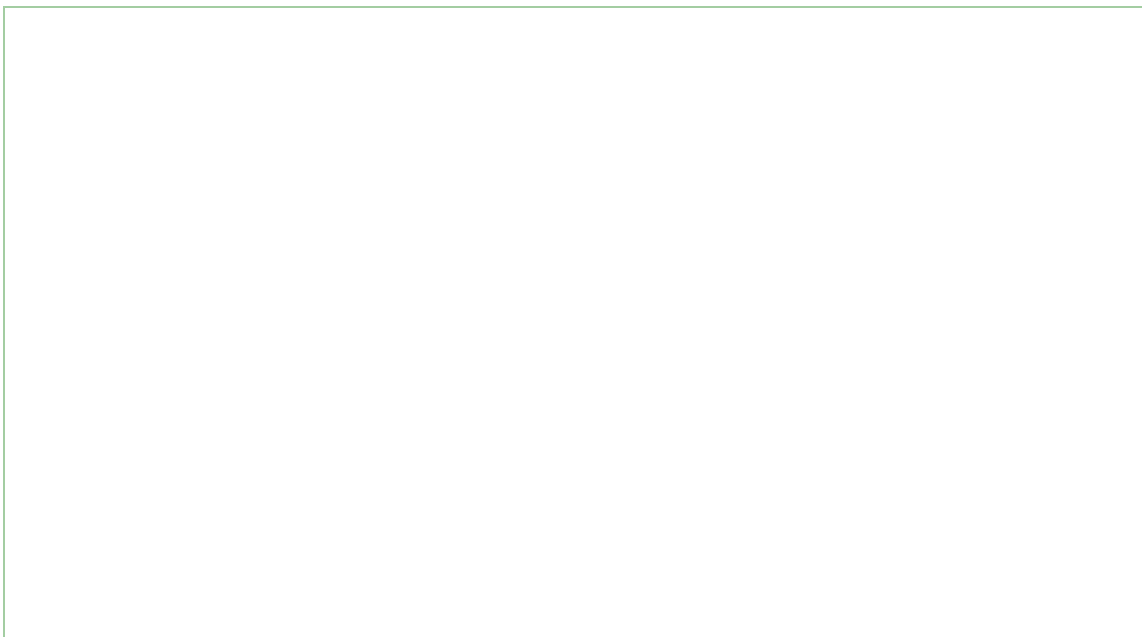
Ecology Action Center

Since the 1971 origin of Operation Recycle, the non-profit Ecology Action Center (EAC) has grown into a major resource for numerous environmental and educational programs, events, workshops and classes. EAC programs on solid waste and recycling, storm water education, online communication through the website and newsletters are just some of the programs the EAC provides to the community. This growth has been made possible by the hundreds of members, friends and community leaders throughout McLean County who regularly volunteer their time and make financial contributions.

In the early years recycling drives were held every four to seven weeks at three locations in Bloomington-Normal and staffed by volunteers from area churches and scout groups. EAC recycling drives have grown to now include compact fluorescent tube and lamp bulbs, motor oil and antifreeze, pharmaceuticals, and residential electronics. In addition, oil-based paints, paint thinner, herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers, drain cleaners, cleaning chemicals, pool chemicals and mercury-containing items like thermostats and thermometers are taken at their household hazardous waste collection events.

Ecology Action Center is a sponsor of the 2023 IRF Annual Conference. Stop by their exhibit booth to learn more about their many other projects.

JOIN US JUNE 12-14, 2023





Tired of Zoom? Meet experts in-person, grab a seat beside some peers on the bus tours or at a meal. Don't just read about or listen in while writing emails - be in the moment to learn about the latest innovations at our sessions or the Exhibit Hall. Don't miss 16 educational sessions, 3 Tours, cutting edge ideas and legislative strides in one place. [Register now!](#)

[Register Here](#)

MEET THREE OF OUR CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Alec Cooley, Busch Systems

Alec Cooley has over 30 years of experience in the recycling field, most recently as a senior advisor with Busch Systems. Even before Alec was the recycling and waste reduction manager for Humboldt State University in Northern California, he drove a forklift at a recycling center when he was in high school. More recently, he served as director of recycling programs with the national office of Keep America Beautiful between 2009 and 2018. In this role, Alec oversaw all public space recycling and college and university programs for the organization, including the research and development of best practices to influence recycling behavior. Alec is incapable of walking past a recycling bin without peaking inside to see what's being collected? If only you knew...

Alec is a certified TRUE Advisor and current board member of the National Recycling Coalition. He has previously served on the boards of the California Resource Recovery Association and Carolina Recycling Association. Alec lives outside of Charleston, SC.

Garth Hickle, RRS' SignalFire Group



Garth Hickle is a Managing Director at Signalfire Group, a consultancy with an emphasis on environmental product policy and the circular economy. Previously, he led the product stewardship program for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and oversaw the implementation of EPR programs for rechargeable batteries, electronics, and architectural paint. In his consulting practice, he has worked with a variety of public and private clients on EPR and circular economy policy development for waste electric and electronic equipment (WEEE), packaging, carpet, mattresses, and more.

He is currently serving as the managing director of the International Electronics Management Network and has been a board member of the Sustainable Electronics Recycling International (SERI) and Conservation Minnesota. Garth is also a senior lecturer and visiting scholar at the University of Minnesota. He holds a MA in Public Administration from Hamline University, a Master of Studies in Environmental Law (MSEL) from Vermont Law School, and a PhD in Industrial Ecology and Sustainability from Erasmus University in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.



Michelle Metzler, The Recycling Partnership

Michelle has 15 years of experience supporting communities, municipalities, and businesses in improving recycling practices. She spent over a decade working for Waste Management, supporting cities in solid waste management, conducting research, and implementing data-driven best practices to increase recycling. As a Director of

Community Programs at The Recycling Partnership, she oversees recycling optimization and multifamily technical assistance programs.

When asked why she cares about recycling, she says, “As we work to be better stewards of our planet and transition to a more sustainable economy, we need to responsibly manage resources that have already been extracted. Recycling helps to ensure that we’re maximizing the use and value of our shared resources.” In her free time, you’ll find Michelle cooking, woodworking, and wandering the outdoors with her wife and children. In 2017 she received the Solid Waste Association of North America Excellence Award – Schools Education Program; in 2018 she received the National Waste and Recycling Association – Best Recycling Public Education Program Award, and the Washington State Recycling Association Recycler of the Year – Multicultural Engagement Award.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Monday, June 12

9:00 AM

Bus Tour to GDB International Paint Recycling Facility

6:00 PM

Early Welcome Reception

Tuesday, June 13

9:00 AM

Registration Opens

10:00 – 11:15 AM

Welcome & Plenary Session

11:15 AM

Exhibit Hall Opens

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Curbside Material Markets & Glass

Sustainability Efforts for Corporations & Colleges

Bans & Fees

12:45 – 1:45 PM

Awards Luncheon and Annual Meeting

2:00 – 3:00 PM

Packaging EPR Efforts

Electronics Update

PFAS: Latest Update

3:15 – 4:15 PM

Curbside Education

Composting

Recycling Difficult Items - Batteries

5:30 PM

Silent Auction and Social Event at Medici Restaurant

Wednesday, June 14

8:00 AM

Registration Opens

Hot Breakfast Buffet Opens

Exhibit Hall Opens

9:15 – 10:15 AM

Items Lurking in Your Basement

Hard to Recycle Plastics

Textiles & Mattress Recycling

10:45 – 11:00 AM

Break – Visit Exhibits

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Meds and Sharps

C & D and Carpet Markets

What to Expect When You Get Inspected

Noon

Box Lunch

12:30 – 4:00 PM

Bus Tour to Midwest Fiber and Rose Rock Industries

Walking Campus Sustainability Tour

BE A CONFERENCE SPONSOR OR EXHIBITOR

As a sponsor or exhibitor, your support will assist in ensuring a highly successful conference, while enabling you to market your company or organization to 200 anticipated attendees throughout Illinois and the Midwest.

Each sponsorship level provides a multitude of benefits that allow you to showcase your organization, products and services, with great opportunities to interact with attendees. Sponsor and Exhibitor information can be found in our Conference Registration packet. For additional information, please contact our Executive Director, Sue Steilen.

Thank you to our early conference sponsors:



12TH JUNE 2023

Join us for a tour of **GDB INTERNATIONAL INC.,** the largest paint recycler in North America

Lunch and Refreshments Included

Bloomington Normal, Illinois

GDB International Inc., Nashville, Illinois

Sign up for the bus tour with your [conference registration](#).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Legislative Update from IRA

The Spring session has gone into extra innings but will be over shortly. Most of the bills we have been watching failed to pass. We are most excited with the success of the Paint Stewardship Act which is headed to the Governor's Desk with unanimous approve of both the House and the Senate!

- SB58- Single-Use Plastic must be replaced with compostable at state agencies and schools. Passed
- SB683 - Paint Stewardship Act. Passed Unanimously
- HB2874 - Packaging EPR bill. Undergoing changes.



A Note from the IRF President, Marta Keane

Looking forward to seeing you at the Conference in Bloomington/Normal, just a few weeks away. The Conference Committee has really worked diligently to make sure every member has new information in their area of



interest to explore. Our sponsorships and exhibit spots are filling in and our keynote plenary session is truly going to offer everyone some expert insights that can be used regardless of your connection to reuse, recycling and composting!

With the passage of the Paint Stewardship Act, the tour of GDB's paint recycling manufacturing facility on June 12 should bring an added touch of exuberance to kick off the conference! We look forward to presentations from Illinois EPA and US EPA, along with ISTC, IEC, The Glass Packaging Foundation, and those national experts featured above from RRS, Busch Systems, and The Recycling Partnership. Be sure to [register today](#) at extended early-bird pricing!

AVAILABLE GRANTS



USDA Announces Cooperative Agreements for Compost, Food Waste Reduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced the availability of up to \$9.5 million for compost and food waste reduction pilot projects for the fiscal year 2023. The cooperative agreements support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost and food waste reduction plans. They are part of USDA's broader efforts to support urban agriculture. [Read more](#)

Stormwater Drain Grant Project

As part of their sustainability commitments, Dart Container Corporation is taking action to address marine debris, especially plastic litter, in the Great Lakes region. They recently took a major step by contributing \$100,000 in grants to the Council of the Great Lakes' Circular Great Lakes initiative for the purchase and installation of the LittaTrap™ and other innovative devices to capture debris. Dart is the first manufacturer to sponsor a program of this kind through the Council of the Great Lakes. [Visit Dart's website](#) for more information and to apply for a grant.

Thank You to Our 2023 Benefactors!



GDB
International, Inc.



Consider adding your logo here. Become a 2023 BENEFACTOR for \$2000.

If you have already joined and would like to upgrade to this status, send an email to executivedirector@illinoisrecycles.org

Join a Committee

As an IRF member, you are eligible to participate in one or more of our active committees. These committees tend to meet four to six times a year. All committees are seeking new members to participate. We also welcome ideas from you on a committee that would further your goals.

A list of committees is shown below. For more information, please view [committee descriptions](#).

To join a committee please contact [Sue Steilen](#).

HELP US CELEBRATE YOU

You can show off in a press release or simply show us your everyday operation. Either way, we can utilize your photos on social media and on our website. We are asking IRF Members to send photos of their recycling and collection operations. Pictures can be of office collection, residential drop-off, MRF sorting lines, curbside service, someone placing items in recycle bins, reuse events, compost operations, etc. Please send jpeg/jpg pictures to info@illinoisrecycles.org.



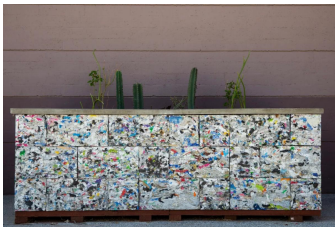
RECENT RECYCLING NEWS

[Minnesota Lawmakers Include Right to Repair in Budget](#)

[Maryland passes Packaging EPR](#)

Illinois Department of Agriculture to offer FREE RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR AGRICHEMICAL CONTAINERS

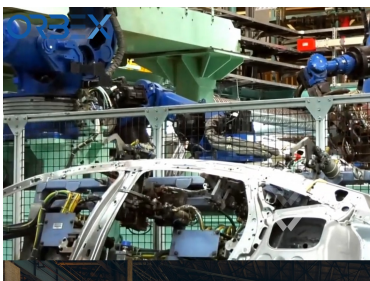
The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) encourages farmers and agrichemical facilities to take part in a free agrichemical container recycling program. Beginning in the middle of July and continuing into August, sites throughout the state will collect containers that are recycled to make shipping pallets. [Read more](#)



Tucson, AZ is Working On Turning Plastic Waste Into Building Blocks

A pilot program that turns unrecyclable plastic waste into multicolored building blocks is growing citywide in Tucson. Mayor Regina Romero and the City Council approved a four-year service agreement with ByFusion, a Los Angeles-based company that converts plastic waste into construction material.

[Read More](#)



Orbex launches world's first marketplace for authenticated recycled metals

In response to the growing pressure on businesses to prioritize environmental responsibility and develop more sustainable supply chains, Orbex has launched the world's first marketplace for globally-recognized authenticated recycled metals.

[Read more](#)



Mattress Textiles Could Be Used to Make Tomorrow's EV Batteries

Electrodes in the lithium batteries that will power tomorrow's electric vehicles could be made from recycled mattress textiles.

[Read More](#)

Job Postings

SEND US YOUR JOB POSTINGS

SWANCC is hiring a Communications Specialist in Wheeling, IL

GFL is hiring a Mechanic in Jacksonville, IL

Will County is hiring a Communications/Admin Assistant in Joliet, IL

We encourage members to visit the IRF [Membership Directory](#) and find member's websites to see their job listings.

Educational Opportunities

Illinois Recycling Foundation Members receive \$10 DISCOUNT - Please use promo code "NRCTENOFF". (Promo code field appears after adding the course to your cart.)



Whether you are just starting out and seeking advice on building support for environmentally preferred purchasing practices or establishing a policy in a centralized procurement system, need to communicate to and educate leaders and co-workers in a decentralized workplace, or are ready to locate responsible products and form relationships with EPP vendors, and require assistance with contract clauses and best practices in tracking outcomes like reportable environmental savings, this workshop will deliver!

[Read more](#)



On **Tuesday, June 6, 2023**, explore German technology and innovation in the circular economy sector, focusing on sustainable packaging and recycling, at our **transatlantic Expert Conference on Circular Economy "Closing the Loop: The Future of Recycling and Sustainable Packaging."** The conference will explore questions like: What innovative business models, technologies, and materials drive the transition to a circular economy, and how can they be scaled up? What role do customers play in transitioning to a circular economy? How can innovations be customer-focused to drive demand and adoption?

[Join Now!](#)

[DONATE](#)

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
– Lucius Annaeus Seneca

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