

Tech Dump + Tech Discounts Announce New Name and New Partnership with Ramsey County

The name change reflects the org's multi-faceted mission of recycling and refurbishing electronics and digital equity work while providing paid training and jobs for people facing barriers to employment.

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In order to better reflect the organization's core values and mission to provide fair chances for people, planet, and technology, electronics recycler and social enterprise Tech Dump and its retail arm Tech Discounts has changed its name to Repowered, with a new logo and energized brand presence. Additionally, Ramsey County has begun offering free electronics recycling to all county residents and has selected Repowered as its e-waste recycling partner.

Originally launched as The Jobs Foundation, a nonprofit with a mission to provide jobs and training for individuals who faced barriers to employment such as prior incarceration, addiction, or lack of stable housing, the group explored a number of working models in its early years. After a resounding success on what was slated to be a one-off electronics collection event, fittingly named a "Tech Dump," the group decided to focus on e-waste recycling and refurbishing services.

CEO Amanda LaGrange explains: "In August 2011, we held our first electronics collection event geared primarily towards residents. We called it a 'tech dump.' For two days, we accepted electronic items residents no longer wanted or needed. Needless to say, it was a huge success, and Tech Dump was born."

After over a decade of significant growth and a growing list of municipal and corporate clients under that somewhat accidental moniker, LaGrange says that the group felt that the time was right to be more intentional with a more fitting name. "We've gotten a lot of mileage out of a spur-of-the-moment name, but we are so much more than just a place for people to get rid of outdated or unwanted tech items. 'Repowered' sums up the good things that can happen when we look at the world through a lens of transformation, something we see every day with our IT disposition work, our focus on providing affordable quality refurbished tech options, and of course it highlights the positive outcomes we witness in working with our Work Readiness Employees. I think of Josh Wilson, who was with us at that very first collection event, worked with us for several years, and then went on to work for the City of Minneapolis. Josh recently joined our Board of Directors, which is just so thrilling. He is a living example of the spirit behind the new name."

An industry leader and one of the largest collectors of e-waste in the state of Minnesota, the IT disposition firm is currently headquartered in St. Paul with a second location to shop and recycle in Golden Valley. They have processed nearly 40 million pounds of electronics waste to date, all while adhering to the highest standards of data security.

Rae Eden Frank, Interim Environmental Health Division Director with Ramsey County, explains how thrilled the county is to be able to offer free electronics recycling for Ramsey County residents in partnership with Repowered. “This organization has been a critical partner to the County not only for secure electronics recycling but also for providing affordable technology to the community as we so successfully demonstrated with our collaboration on the 2020 TechPaks project. The additional fact that Repowered offers paid employment training for adults reentering our community after incarceration is so crucial and also adds to our local economy. The partnership with Repowered is an example of the county’s environmental, economic, and equity goals in action. This truly is a win for all parties involved.”

In addition to providing seamless electronics recycling services for residents and organizations of all sizes, the team at Repowered continues to do work on the policy front in support of “Right to Repair” legislation, which would ensure the right of individuals and businesses to decide from a variety of vendors to repair their electronics and other technology, thereby extending the life of those items while keeping them out of landfills.

LaGrange sums it up by sharing, “Our mantra is that everything and every person has value. The new name relays that inspiration to our corporate and residential clients as well as those in the social enterprise and workforce sectors. We are on a great trajectory and excited about the renewed energy this name brings forth. The spirit behind our new name Repowered more effectively says who we are and what we do best.”

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More information on the Ramsey County e-waste recycling can be found at

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/recycling-waste/collection-sites/electronics-recycling>

More information on Repowered: www.getrepowered.com