

MRF of the Month

Recycling Systems, Inc.'s Chicago Recycling Facility



Located on the west side of Chicago in the community of South Lawndale (more commonly known as the Little Village Neighborhood), Recycling Systems, Inc.'s (RSI) Chicago Recycling Facility processes green waste and other yard material, construction and demolition (C&D) debris, as well as traditional recyclables generated by the residential and commercial sectors.

Situated on a former Brownfield site along the Chicago Canal, which RSI had to clean up and redevelop in order to make the plot usable, the facility consists of two 18,000-square-foot buildings that handle material on behalf of 831 accounts (making up 5,000 sites located throughout the greater Chicago area). The MRF operates two processing lines for all incoming commodities.

According to Rebecca Zalman, a sales and marketing associate with RSI, 70 percent of the material handled by RSI's Chicago Recycling Facility is directly related to C&D debris, with the remaining 30 percent comprising of traditional recyclables, vegetative and yard debris (green waste makes up one percent of the overall material processed) and refuse.

Most all traditional recyclables handled at the facility come from multi-family properties, as well as mixed-use buildings, as RSI doesn't handle material generated from single-family residences, unless the household was to order a roll-off container for C&D purposes. In addition to drop-off and third-party competitors transporting packer loads to the MRF, the Chicago Recycling Facility also receives a considerable amount of straight loads, with concrete, dirt, metal and cardboard being the most popular straight loads processed by RSI. The company handles leaves on behalf of the Windy City as well.

Producing an average per-day throughput of nearly 2,000 tons, for the 2009 calendar year, RSI expects the



Technical Specifications*

Recycling Systems, Inc.
Chicago Recycling
Facility

Location:

Chicago, Illinois

Start-up date:

April 2004

Number of processing lines:

Two (C&D, traditional
recyclables and vegetative
and yard debris)

Throughput:

2,000 tons per day

**Approximate tons of material
processed (2009):**

104,000

Residue rate:

Around 30 percent

2007-2008 Materials Processing and Recycling in the United States: Yearbook and Directory

5th Edition — Print or CD-ROM

The 1,300 page Yearbook is the only comprehensive guide to Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) in the United States, providing information on 583 operating, planned and shut projects. A nationally recognized resource, it provides a strategic analysis of the post-consumer recycling industry and a database of U.S. Material Recovery Facilities. It is an invaluable reference tool for solid waste decision makers, planners, consultants, and organizations interested in the present and future of recycling.

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GAA, Inc.

MRF to process roughly 104,000 tons of material. RSI's Chicago plant is outfitted with technology from Action Vibratory Equipment, though a majority of the materials separation conducted at the plant is carried out manually.

Zalman stated the biggest issue being dealt with at the plant involves contamination of recyclables by organic materials, food scraps or other unwanted commodities. A staff of 200 – working under two shifts – is employed at the RSI Chicago Recycling Facility. The plant operates 24 hours per day, Monday through Friday, and until 3 p.m. on Saturdays, with employees working under the belief that “the simplicity of our facility, and the ability to quickly adapt to changing waste streams, is what makes RSI so effective.”



*Know of a North American MRF that you feel *Resource Recycling* readers should know about? If so, e-mail your recommendation, with hi-resolution pictures, to justin@resource-recycling.com, and your facility may just be highlighted in a future “MRF of the Month” column.