

MRF of the Month

ecomaine Recycling Facility

Known as the largest MRF in Maine, the 47,000-square-foot ecomaine Recycling Facility is only one of a handful of single-stream plants serving the New England area, and the only single-stream facility operating in the Pine Tree State.

Opened in 1990 as a three-stream processing plant, the MRF received a \$3.7 million upgrade and began single-stream operation May 1, 2007. With the conversion, ecomaine now handles material on behalf of almost 76,500 households – over 300,000 residents – in 37 municipalities (the overall population of all 37 communities is more than 20 percent of Maine's total population). A non-profit solid waste management company, ecomaine is owned and operated by 21 Southern Maine municipalities, all of which voted in favor – on May 18, 2006 – to bring single-stream recycling to Maine. In addition, 16 other communities have contracts with ecomaine, bringing the total to 37 communities served.

Ecomaine handles commercial recyclables as well.

Ecomaine offers municipal customers two types of recycling contracts. The first is a market-based revenue share, where ecomaine pays for recycling when market values are up, and the community pays ecomaine when values are down. The second contract involves all recyclables being accepted by ecomaine under a no-pay/no-revenue share agreement with the community. Additionally, Ecomaine owns and provides, at no cost, more than 120 30-cubic-yard recycling containers for material; however, the non-profit does not provide hauling services.

Materials handled by the Portland-based MRF include: All cardboard; newspaper and inserts/junk mail; hard cover books; magazines, catalogs and phone books; paper bags; office paper, window envelopes and office file folders; kraft paper bags and paper plates (clean) and pizza boxes; drink and aseptic containers and milk and juice cartons; gift and cereal boxes; wrapping paper; tin, aerosol and aluminum cans; aluminum foil; pots and pans; all colors of



Technical Specifications*

ecomaine Recycling Facility

Location:

Portland, Maine

Start-up date:

1990 (facility switched over to single-stream in 2007)

Number of processing lines:

One (single-stream)

Throughput:

Designed for 15-18 tons per hour

Approximate tons of material processed (2008):

31,000

Residential: 26,350

Commercial: 4,650

Residue rate:

Three to four percent





glass bottles and jars; and all plastic containers. The ecomaine MRF also has the capabilities to handle plastic bags, and all materials are processed via one single-stream line designed to produce between 15-18 tons of throughput per hour.

With an overall capture rate of 97 percent, each fiscal year appears to translate into another new processing record for the recycling facility. For example, the record 24,610 tons handled during the 2005-2006 fiscal year wasn't a record long before it was shattered the following year by the more than 27,000 tons processed by the plant during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. And, that record, too, was only around about as long as the Mattel Aquarius Home Computer System, as an estimated 31,000 tons were processed during the 2007-2008 fiscal year, with a projected 26,350 tons of that residential and 4,650 tons commercial material.

The success of the recycling program can be attributed to the amount of time spent by ecomaine promoting and educating the public about diversion. Endeavors used by the non-profit to provide recycling communication, education and public outreach include tours for all ages, issue-based community meetings, news releases, individualized awareness campaigns, school presentations, recycling-based open house events and a community awards program.

Bollegraaf equipment (optical scanner, screens, magnetic separation, air separation, glass crusher and trommel, aluminum separator and separate newspaper balers), installed by Van Dyk Baler Corp, is used throughout the plant.

Altogether, processing at the ecomaine Recycling Facility is operated by 10 full-time employees and is supplemented by both temporary employees and county jail inmates (at no cost to ecomaine). All employees work under one shift, five days per week.

*Know of a North American-based materials recovery facility 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.

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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