



## A state recycling organization sampler

by Roger Guttentag

of U.S.-based SROs. This is by no means a complete survey or a “best of the best” listing. I would prefer to view it more as a sampling from a very large reservoir of knowledge.

### ***Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin (AROW)***

On the AROW site is a link to [reduce-ourwastream.org](http://reduce-ourwastream.org), which follows the efforts of families from the Randall and Saratoga campuses of the STEM Academy in Waukesha, Wisconsin to reduce the amount of waste they dispose starting Sept. 26, 2011 and running through Oct. 28, 2011. There is a scoreboard showing how each family is doing, along with information on what these families can do to succeed in reducing their waste streams. Even more interesting is a blog which records individual family’s thoughts on how they’re trying to achieve this goal, the problems they are facing and what has worked for them. This provides a fascinating window into what people are going through when they decide they want to change to a less wasteful lifestyle.

### ***Colorado Association for Recycling (CAFR)***

The Resources section of the CAFR site has a link to a 15-minute video tour of Boulder County’s new single-stream materials recovery facility (MRF). Single-stream process flows are more complex than the older dual-stream MRF designs, and they can be hard

to follow based on a written description, even with the help of diagrams. This video does a great job of showing how the individual subsystems – such as the stage where oversized paper, like corrugated, is separated from other paper grades and containers – work, and what specific machinery or labor practices are used to accomplish different sorting tasks.

### ***Illinois Recycling Association (IRA)***

There are a number of interesting resources that are accessible from the IRA site, but if you are involved in any way with the processing or marketing of recyclables, then I would recommend consulting “The Best Operational Practices Manual for Materials Recovery Facilities and Recycling Drop-Off Facilities” (2010). This is a recent update of an earlier manual produced for the IRA with funding support from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. The manual covers best practices for MRF operations with respect to functional areas such as receiving, sorting or product storage. It also covers technological design, such as dual- or single-stream processing. Key practices along with evaluative comments are nicely summarized throughout the document, along with an effort to update optimal manual sorting rates in response to the development of lighter-weight food and beverage packaging. There is also a healthy discussion of safety practices, along with a detailed safety question in the manual appendices. There is even one chapter devoted to recycling drop-offs and, while it doesn’t really provide any new insights, it does a good job of presenting the main operational issues in a clear and concise fashion.

### ***Iowa Recycling Association (IRA)***

If you have an interest in green meeting or event planning, then I would recommend downloading the IRA’s guide on this subject. You have the choice of downloading the entire document or individual components. The main guide provides a series of task

In reviewing my previous columns, I realized that I had not written about state recycling organization (SRO) websites since 2004. SROs, where they exist, usually exercise key roles in providing a social and professional networking function for professionals involved in some way with municipal recycling; advocating important recycling or waste reduction policies; sponsoring continuing professional education programs and conferences; and promoting the development of improved best management practices. Many of these associations also have technical councils that are devoted to a specific topic such as organics management or reuse.

SROs often post for public access the results of conferences, programs or projects they have undertaken so they can be a very useful source of technical information not only to their own members, but to recycling professionals in other parts of the U.S. and Canada. For this reason, this month’s column will highlight some of the interesting resources I have found on the websites

## Web Address Directory

Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin – Reduce Your School Stream Challenge

<http://www.arow-online.org/>

Colorado Association for Recycling – Boulder County single-stream MRF video

<http://www.cafr.org/resources/index.php>

Illinois Recycling Association – Best Operating Practices for MRFs and Recycling Drop-Offs

<http://www.illinoisrecycles.org/>

Iowa Recycling Association – Green Meetings and Events Guide

<http://tinyurl.com/IRAGreenMeetings>

Recycling Association of Minnesota – Programs

<http://tinyurl.com/RAMPrograms>

Recycling Organizations of North America

<http://www.recyclingorganizations.org/>

Virginia Recycling Association – GIS Mapping of Organic Waste

<http://tinyurl.com/VRA-GIS>

lists, such as event planning, purchasing, registration and venue selection, and links each specific task within these lists with specific goals that are to be accomplished, such as waste reduction, education or energy conservation. The main guide is supported by a set of technical appendices, some of which are specific to Iowa, while others, like a sample checklist for venue selection, can be used for any location.

#### ***Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM)***

I really enjoyed reading the programs section of the RAM site for the simple reason that much of it is quite unique, though I wish it wasn't. For example, Recycle Your Holidays provides about 400 locations throughout the state for the collection of old-style holiday lights starting Nov. 15 and runs through the end of January. The lights are picked up and taken to vocational centers where developmentally-disabled individuals dismantle them for recycling.

Three other programs, Key to Recycle, Message in a Bottle, and Run In & Recycle, are operated on a similar basis for recycling unwanted or orphan keys (I think everyone in America has those, including me), bottles

and cans generated at gas stations and other similar away-from-home locations and shoes. The Run In & Recycle program is currently operated in partnership at this point only with REI as its collection locations.

#### ***Virginia Recycling Association (VRA)***

The VRA site has an example of how geographic information systems (GIS) may be used to improve recycling rates. The VRA, in conjunction with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the Institute of Local Self Reliance, has developed a GIS system for mapping the locations of composting facilities and potential food waste generator sources such as educational facilities and hospitals. The goal is to use this system to identify where additional organic materials may be recovered, as well as where outlets for this material either exist or could be developed.

## **Final Thoughts**

As I mentioned earlier in this column, the information resources that I profiled this month are a small fraction of what is

available on SRO websites. Hopefully, this survey will encourage you to further investigate not only what your own SRO has to offer, but those of other states and provinces. *Resource Recycling* has a comprehensive Web address listing of SROs on its site under Industry Links which should help in locating these other organizations. In addition, I recommend going to the website of the Recycling Organizations of North America (RONA). The mission of RONA is to provide a means for organizations like SROs to cooperate effectively for advancing strong recycling and waste policies, create standardized effective professional education and certification standards and assist in the dissemination of best operating practices and innovative developments to its members. In particular, it is recommended that you consult the online documents and presentations relating to the creation of a standardized certification process for municipal recycling and waste reduction professionals.

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Roger M. Guttentag is a recycling and solid waste consultant located in Harleysville, Pennsylvania. He can be contacted at (610) 584-8836 or rguttentag@comcast.net.