



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 31, 2019

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Leading Local Recycler Begins Temporary Shutdown

The Surplus Exchange (TSE), a 501(c)3 organization that has been a mainstay of Kansas City recycling for more than 25 years, announced today it will halt all operations for a short period while working to reassess and restructure its current business model.

“The financial dynamics of recycling have changed tremendously over the past few years,” said Nancy Frazee, who is currently serving as co-chair of the TSE volunteer Board of Directors. “As a result, it has become increasingly difficult for the organization to fulfill its mission in a responsible and sustainable manner.”

From the outset, TSE has been committed to an aggressive zero landfill policy with zero export of equipment to Third-World Countries. Initially, the resale market for some components, such as metals, helped offset the cost of recycling others, such as glass. In addition, the company was often able to refurbish and resell select pieces of business electronics and furniture. Over the past several years, prices in both markets have dropped as the items become increasingly commoditized and the potential for return has shrunk as well.

“We’re disappointed to have to make this move,” said Jessica Merrigan, who is also currently serving as co-chair of the TSE Board. “We’re extremely grateful to TSE’s employees as well as its partners and service providers for their creativity and commitment in helping the organization weather these changes for as long as they have. We regret the impact this shutdown will have on them and hope to find resolution as quickly as possible.”

TSE was the first company in Missouri (or Kansas) to achieve e-Steward certification. This standard is set by the Basel Action Network, the world’s only organization focused on confronting the global environmental injustice of toxic trade and its devastating impacts.

The Board is currently evaluating potential partnerships that could best leverage the organization’s capabilities and assets to continue to serve the community. The organization’s Board hopes to finalize those plans within the next few weeks.

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