



Boosting Recycling Without Breaking the Bank

How the City of Thorp Blew the Lid Off the Recycling Container

Thorp's Recycling Numbers Over Time

- ▶ Recycling peaked in 2007 with 252,720 pounds (163.45# per capita)
- ▶ Downward slide from 2008-2011, dropping 45.3% to 138,180 pounds (94.11# per capita)
- ▶ Slight rebound 2012-2013, increasing to 165,880 pounds (101.58# per capita)

Sustainability Committee Forms a Vision

- ▶ Thorp became an Energy Independence Community, formed Energy Independence Committee under Doyle Administration
- ▶ Committee had been inactive
- ▶ Committee decided to expand its scope and rebrand as the Sustainability Committee
- ▶ With larger goals of sustainability in mind, the committee chose to focus on smaller goals that could yield immediate success and credibility



Increased Recycling Chosen as the First Goal. But Why?

- ▶ Recycling is the law
- ▶ Collection of recyclables costs less than collection of solid waste
- ▶ Recycling is the right (sustainable) thing to do
- ▶ Increased recycling can be achieved with very little effort by or inconvenience to citizens (they just need to do it better!)
- ▶ Success could be precisely measured

Understanding the Decrease was Crucial

- ▶ The demise of newspapers
- ▶ Reduced focus on public education
- ▶ Lack of convenience (especially in public places)

Keys for a Successful Initiative

- ▶ Having a contractor that wanted to serve as an active partner in the recycling program
- ▶ Setting a lofty but achievable goal
- ▶ Providing constant feedback to the community
- ▶ Engaging kids and the school district
- ▶ Incentives

Bids for Contractors

- ▶ Current contract for collection of recycling and solid waste was expiring
- ▶ In addition to financial data, bidders were asked to include proposals to enhance the recycling program
- ▶ Express Disposal (a local company) had the best package financially, but blew the competition away as a recycling partner
 - Asked that an employee be appointed to Sustainability Committee
 - Conceptualized the “Recycling Star” program
 - Fronted the funds to purchase a fluorescent bulb crusher



Setting a Goal



Providing Feedback



Engaging Kids and the School



Providing Incentives

- ▶ Offered one month credit for recycling fees if 14% goal was met
- ▶ When doubling the goal became a possibility, offered to double the credit to two months
- ▶ Express Disposal selects one household each month as the “Recycling Star” and pays \$20 in “Thorp Bucks”. City provides t-shirts to family.

Some of our Recycling Stars



Results

- ▶ Recycling increased 24.4% in 2014. Goal was “14 in 14”. 206,280 pounds or 127.26 lbs. per capita was recycled.
- ▶ Recycling increased another 6.28% in 2015—short of our 10% goal. 219,240 pounds or 134.17 pounds per capita was recycled.
- ▶ YTD in 2016, a 20.77% increase in recycling. That’s ~60% increase in 2.75 years. On track to have an all time record year for recycling in 2016. Projecting ~256,000 pounds or ~157 lbs. per capita.

2015 Recycling Excellence Award

THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
RECYCLING EXCELLENCE AWARD
 for
PROJECTS & INITIATIVES
 is presented to the
CITY OF THORP

The Recycling Excellence Awards recognize local governments for their dedication to providing outstanding recycling service to their residents. Thank you for your efforts to improve recycling in your community, exceeding expectations of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and leading the way for other communities. We hope you and your residents will take pride in this achievement and continue to strive for recycling excellence.



Ann Oakley

Waste and Materials Management Bureau Director

October 27, 2015

Date

Did it Break the Bank?

- ▶ Graphic Designs Fees \$350
- ▶ Window Clings \$210
- ▶ T-Shirts \$970
- ▶ Prizes (posters, inventions) \$125
- ▶ Recycling Fee Credit \$1000
- ▶ Total Expenditures \$2655 over three years

- ▶ Social Media, Local Print Media, Word of Mouth **FREE!**
- ▶ ~\$1.60 per capita (\$.54/capita/yr.), or \$44.25 per %



Questions?

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