

## **2014 Recycling Awards – Community Category**

### **Metro Waste Authority Winner – Partnership**

Location: Des Moines, Iowa

Amount of paper and paper-based packaging recovered in 2013: 12,370 tons

Population: 83,222 households

Amount collected per household: 0.14 pounds

#### **Partnership**

Each of the 21 cities in Polk County has a staff person who works closely with Metro Waste Authority (MWA) to offer the recycling program in their community. Many of them help promote recycling education through their own newsletters, websites and social media. MWA's waste hauler also provides them with financial support for education. This financial commitment supplements MWA's outreach budget to expand reach. MWA worked with The Carton Council to educate the public and added gable top and aseptic containers as part of the collection process. Finally, MWA partners with schools, libraries and civic groups. In 2013, their education specialist presented recycling information to 10,973 students – who often helped to change recycling behavior in their homes.

#### **Background**

MWA is the primary source of recycling education in the Des Moines Metro Area. In 1994, MWA rolled out the first curbside recycling program, *Curb It!*, in 20 communities within Polk County, plus some rural areas. MWA also manages seven recycling drop-off sites in their service area to provide a recycling outlet for those who don't have curbside recycling, or have more material than fits in their carts. In early 2012, MWA developed a communications campaign designed to expand the public's view of what mixed paper is recyclable. Their efforts led to an increase of 10 percent of mixed paper getting collected through the program.

#### **Program**

At least twice year, MWA conducts an in-depth audit. Using what they learn, MWA tailors communication efforts to better educate the public and divert more paper from the landfill. The components of this extensive campaign included a TV commercial, YouTube videos, radio ads, blogs on their website, a recycling guide on their website, and assorted social media.

#### **More information**

To learn more about Metro Waste Authority, visit [www.WhereShouldItGo.com](http://www.WhereShouldItGo.com).