

The Waste Not

OUR VISION

To provide Brown
County municipal
commercial and industrial customers
cost-effective and sustainable solid waste
management systems
with the focus on resource recovery primarily through recycling, d and energy
recovery

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Robotics to Address Worker Shortages and Improve Recycling Efficiencies

Outagamie County, on behalf of the BOW partners of Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago County, recently received a grant that will help with the cost of adding new technologies, in the form of artificial intelligence (AI) robotics, to aid in the plastics sorting process at the Tri-County Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Appleton.



Robotic Sorting Equipment

Currently, mixed plastics and polypropylene are sorted by hand at the MRF. Unfortunately, like many industries, the Tri-County MRF is facing a labor shortage that has required team members to shift among various sorting lines for more efficient and effective productivity.

The addition of robotics, currently scheduled for installation in November, will allow the MRF to focus staff on the higher-value-commodity sorting and perform quality control monitoring responsibilities, while robotics handle sorting on the less valuable, yet still important, mixed plastics sorting line.

The robots will be programmed to prioritize picking mixed plastics, followed by used beverage cans (UBC), polyethylene terephthalate (PET #1) and high -density polyethylene (HDPE #2). Additional benefits include the ability to adjust the robot's pick priority at any moment depending on the characterization of incoming material loads and creating flexibility to identify and separate other new or additional commodities as markets continue to change.



Credit: WLUK. Inside of Tri-County Material Recycling

With the addition of robotics, the MRF can continue to divert as much material as possible from landfills, while optimizing staff resources. This not only helps to lengthen the life of the BOW landfills but also helps improve the environment by repurposing existing materials.

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Recharge What You Know About Recycling

We've all been told that materials such as paper, plastic and aluminum go into a recycling bin and that everything else goes into the trash. However, with changes in technology and the recycling industry, along with the creation of new products, the old ways of handling waste might not be the best way anymore. It's not that what was done in the past is wrong, it's just that systems have evolved to better dispose of and recycle materials that keep our planet healthy, create revenue streams and avoid safety dangers.

Take electronics and the batteries they contain. Many handheld devices contain batteries that cannot be or are hard to remove. In the past, you might have just thrown them in the garbage or put them in the recycling bin, hoping it was the right choice. Today, neither one is the right choice. Batteries and battery containing devices – especially those containing lithium batteries - are a fire hazard when placed in garbage or recycling. Because of this many municipalities are creating battery take back programs, like the Batteries NOW Included program at Brown County Resource Recovery. We'll take and dispose of household batteries and battery-containing devices for free.



And then there's the dilemma about plastic bags and plastic film. Plastic, in a bottle or container form, can be put in with your curbside recycling. However, bags and film are considered "tanglers" because they can wrap around sorting equipment and lead to machinery breakdowns as well as posing a danger for employees having to remove the film by hand.

Most paper products continue to be recycled the normal way. However, shredded paper is an exception, it's better off disposed of in the garbage. When shredded paper is added to recycling, the small pieces can fly away and create unwanted litter in our communities or landfills and a mess in recycling facilities. Check in with local office supply stores or document management companies to see if they have opportunities to collect shredded paper for recycling.



It's important to know how your community approaches recycling and waste disposal because each municipality takes a slightly different approach. For those living in Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties, there is a handy mobile app you can use called Betterbin. It allows you to simply scan a barcode and the app will tell you where it should go for disposal. Another option is the Tri-County Recycling's Waste Wizard where you can type in an item and be provided with locations and guidance on disposal in Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago counties. It always pays to stay up to date on what is and isn't recyclable because just like life constantly changes and evolves, so do the ways we dispose of and recycle materials.

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Reduce Your Impact: Clothing & Textiles

Every human on Earth needs air, water, food, and shelter to survive. Shelter could mean clothing that shelters you from the elements, but how much clothing is enough? For a single childless person working in a coffee shop in a warm climate, this could mean fa limited number of pants and shirts, a week's worth of undergarments and socks, one or two nice tops, and a few pairs of shoes. On the other hand, a family of 5 in a four season state will easily be stressed attempting to contain the mountains of clothing required to keep everyone fashionable, warm, and presentable.

No matter how many closets are filled in your home, everyone should do a personal inventory of the amount and type of fashion we adorn ourselves with. Starting at



Credit: www.earth.org

the beginning, before the item gets into your in-store or online cart, consider if the textile was ethically sourced and made from materials that will last. According to Oxford Languages, fast fashion is "inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends". Avoid filling up your cart with fast fashion items in place of ethically and sustainably sourced clothing. Instead, consider purchasing a few good-quality pieces of clothing that can be used in different outfits.



Credit: www.greenactioncentre.ca

After reducing your purchases and/or replacing them with more sustainable clothing, the next issue to tackle is what to do with the clothes you no longer need or want. Good quality clothing can be donated, while lesser quality items should be worn to the extent of their use. If you are a gardener or spend a good amount of time cleaning, a set of work clothes is always a must.

Now you are only purchasing quality items when needed, and your wardrobe has been narrowed down through donation, leaving you with some pretty torn and used clothes. What is next? Consider upcycling the textiles as rags or in craft projects. If you are not a crafty person, the final place that textiles can go is into the garbage, where they will be

transported to a landfill. This option is better than wish-cycling which is the act of hoping the material is recyclable or reusable, ultimately clogging the recycling system or burdening donation centers with unusable material

Holiday Hours for Resource Recovery Facilities

Brown County Port & Resource Recovery Department Holiday Hours 2023 - 2024

	NOVEMBER 2023			DECEMBER 2023					JAN 2024
_	Thu 11/23	Fri 11/24	Sat 11/25	Fri 12/22	Sat 12/23	Mon 12/25	Fri 12/29	Sat 12/30	Mon 1/1
General Offices 2561 S. Broadway	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
RECYCLING Transfer Station 2561 S. Broadway	Closed	O pen 7:30-4:00	Open 8:00-12:00	Open 7:30-4:00	Closed	Closed	Open 7:30-4:00	Open 8:00-12:00	Closed
SOLID WASTE Transfer Station 3734 W. Mason	Closed	O pen 7:00-4:00	Open 7:00-2:00	Open 7:00-4:00	O pen 7:00-12:00	Closed	Open 7:00-4:00	Open 7:00-12:00	Closed
SOUTH LANDFILL 1258 Mill Rd	Closed	O pen 7:30-4:00	Open 7:30-12:30	Open 7:30-4:00	Open 7:30-12:30	Closed	Open 7:30-4:00	Open 7:30-12:30	Closed
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RECOVERY 2561 S. Broadway	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed

Master Recycler Classes with Tri-County Recycling

Do you have what it takes to become a Master Recycler?

Take the first step and brush up your recycling skills with Tri-County Recycling's brand new Recycle Right Master Class! This is a FREE introductory program that will begin to give you the tools you need to teach your family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers how to recycle right. Learn what goes IN your recycle bin, what stays OUT, and get your recycling questions answered. Topics include why we recycle, a deep-dive through the Tri-County Recycling Facili-

ty, local recycling basics, common contaminants, and what happens to recyclable materials after they leave our sorting facility.

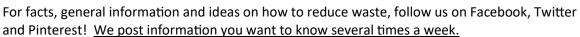
Attendees must sign up to attend.

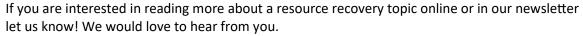
Visit <u>www.recyclemoretricounty.org/classes/</u>

Space is limited to attend one of our upcoming classes, check it out now!



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Brown County Port & Resource Recovery Department

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