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Expanding end markets for recycled glass

by MAURA KELLER

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Glass recycling in the United States has long faced a paradox – consumers are willing to recycle glass, but the infrastructure needed to efficiently recover and reuse that material has struggled to keep pace. While glass remains one of the most recyclable materials in the waste stream, recovery rates have remained relatively stagnant for more than a decade. At the same time, evolving legislation, corporate sustainability commitments and expanding end markets are creating new opportunities to strengthen the glass recycling system.

According to Lainika Johnson, chief executive officer of TrashLogic, the challenge is not a lack of public interest but rather a system that was not designed to maximize recovery.

“Glass recycling in this country doesn’t have a caring problem. People want to do the right thing. We don’t have infrastructure that makes that easy,” Johnson said. “We’ve been stuck at 30 to 33 percent for over a decade. Switzerland and Germany are at 90 percent. Our infrastructure was never built to succeed in the first place.”

Lisa-Marie Assenza, founder and chief executive officer at Impacked, agrees that improving glass recycling rates requires addressing challenges throughout the entire value chain – from consumer collection and processing infrastructure to end-market demand.

“Expanded bottle bills and EPR are driving positive change in recycling rates in states with active policies, creating incentives for collection and end-market demand,” Assenza said.

While increasing glass-to-glass recycling remains a key industry goal, the future of recovered glass may increasingly depend on expanding alternative markets. Applications such as construction aggregate, water filtration media, abrasives and engineered materials are providing new outlets for glass that may not meet the specifications required for new containers.

“If glass can’t become a new bottle, it doesn’t have to become landfill. That’s the shift happening right now,” Johnson said.

Infrastructure hurdles

The U.S. glass recycling industry has established ambitious goals, including a target set in 2019 by producers and the Glass Packaging Institute to reach a 50 percent recycling rate by 2030. Achieving that goal will require significant improvements throughout the collection and processing chain.

One of the biggest challenges is the continued reliance on single-stream recycling systems, where glass is collected alongside paper, plastics and other materials. While convenient for consumers, the system often damages glass before



Collecting glass alongside paper, plastics and other materials can damage the glass before it reaches a processor, increasing contamination and reducing the amount that can be recovered.

it reaches a processor, creating contamination issues and reducing the amount of material that can be recovered.

“Most people assume glass recycling is broken because people toss bottles in the wrong bin. It’s not. It’s broken because we built the wrong collection system,” Johnson said.

Single-stream collection causes glass containers to break during transportation and become mixed with other recyclables, resulting in material loss. Johnson noted that only about 40 percent of glass collected through single-stream systems is typically usable, compared with recovery rates of 90 to 98 percent from deposit-return or source-separated collection programs.

Assenza said one of the industry’s biggest opportunities is increasing the amount of clean glass entering the recycling system in the first place.

“One of the biggest challenges continues to be bringing in more glass at the top of the funnel to be recycled,” Assenza said. “This largely relies on consumers taking steps to recycle their glass, and that glass making it into the recycling process.”

Recycling participation varies significantly by state, and Assenza believes policies that make recycling easier while also encouraging consumer action can have a measurable impact.

“We’ve seen positive results in terms of increasing recycle rates from states that have implemented and expanded bottle bills in recent years,” Assenza said. “Making it easier for consumers to recycle and incentivizing them to do so are both important parts of the solution.”

New York, for example, has seen significant improvements in glass recycling rates following expansions to its bottle-return system, according to industry research. These programs help create cleaner material streams while providing a direct incentive for consumers to participate.

Building new demand

As the industry works to improve collection systems, alternative applications are helping create demand for recovered glass that cannot be returned to bottle manufacturing.

Construction markets represent one of the largest opportunities because they can use large volumes of recycled glass without requiring the same level of purity, color separation and consistency needed for new containers.

“Crushed recycled glass is replacing natural sand and gravel in asphalt, unbound pavements, concrete, pipe bedding and backfill,” Johnson said. “Some of these applications cut CO2-equivalent emissions by more than 40 percent, on top of reducing extraction costs.”

Using recycled glass as aggregate helps reduce dependence on virgin materials while diverting glass from landfills. Glass aggregate can provide performance benefits in certain construction applications while supporting broader sustainability objectives.

Foam glass aggregate is another emerging market with significant potential. Produced by processing glass into a lightweight, insulating material, foam glass can be used in applications such as backfill, drainage layers and insulation.

“Construction aggregates and foam glass are where I’d put my money,” Johnson said. “They can absorb large volumes of mixed-color, lower-purity glass – the material that fails strict color-sorting standards for new bottles.”

Beyond construction applications, water filtration is emerging as another promising market for recycled glass. Crushed glass media can serve as an alternative to traditional silica sand filtration systems in municipal, industrial and residential applications.

“Filtration media is the one I’m watching closest,” Johnson said. “Crushed glass

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Republic Services reports second quarter results

Republic Services, Inc. reported net income of \$566 million, or \$1.84 per diluted share, for the three months ended June 30, 2026, versus \$550 million, or \$1.75 per diluted share, for the comparable 2025 period. Excluding certain expenses and other items, on an adjusted basis, net income for the three months ended June 30, 2026, was \$569 million, or \$1.85 per diluted share, versus \$556 million, or \$1.77 per diluted share, for the comparable 2025 period.

“Our second quarter results reflect the strength and resilience of our business model, as we continue to execute our strategy and deliver differentiated value for our customers,” said Jon Vander Ark, president and chief executive officer. “Pricing in excess of cost inflation and our disciplined cost management supported accelerated growth in revenue and EBITDA. Given our strong operating performance and momentum across the business, we are increasing our full-year financial guidance.”

Second-Quarter and Year-to-Date 2026 Highlights:

- Total revenue growth of 4.6 percent includes 3.7 percent organic growth from our recycling and waste business, 0.2 percent decline from our environmental solutions business, and 1.1 percent growth from acquisitions.
- Core price on total revenue increased revenue by 5.3 percent. Core price on related business revenue increased revenue by 6.4 percent, which consisted of 7.8 percent in the open market and 4.1 percent in the restricted portion of the business.
- Revenue growth from average yield on total revenue was 3.4 percent, and volume decreased revenue by 1.6 percent. Revenue growth from

- average yield on related business revenue was 4.0 percent, and volume decreased related business revenue by 1.9 percent.
 - Net income was \$566 million, or a margin of 12.8 percent.
 - EPS was \$1.84 per share, an increase of 5.1 percent over the prior year.
 - Adjusted EPS, a non-GAAP measure, was \$1.85 per share, an increase of 4.5 percent over the prior year.
 - Adjusted EBITDA, a non-GAAP measure, was \$1.42 billion. Adjusted EBITDA margin, a non-GAAP measure, was 32.1 percent of revenue, which remained consistent with the prior year. The Company overcame 50 basis points of margin headwind from event driven landfill volumes received in the prior year.
 - Year-to-date cash invested in acquisitions was \$860 million.
 - Year-to-date cash returned to shareholders was \$1.04 billion, which included \$651 million of share repurchases and \$385 million of dividends paid.
 - The company’s average recycled commodity price per ton sold at its recycling centers during the second quarter was \$136. This represents a decrease of \$13 per ton over the prior year.
 - The company completed and commenced operations on two renewable natural gas projects during the quarter.
- Republic continues to increase cash returns to shareholders, and previously announced that its board of directors approved an increase in the quarterly dividend. The quarterly dividend of \$0.670 per share for shareholders of record on October 2, 2026, will be paid on October 15, 2026.

SWACO helps expand recycling at Ohio State Fair

This year’s Ohio State Fair was a little greener and a little more sustainable thanks to a special grant from the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO). Visitors to the fair in Columbus found more upgraded and expanded recycling options this year in five Ohio Expo Center buildings, including Kasich Hall, the Lausche Building, and the Celeste Center. The 100 new receptacles this year build on a successful pilot program from 2025 that diverted more than eight tons of recycling from the landfill, and the expansion is phase one of a three-year partnership that includes a more than \$24,000 grant from SWACO.

The Ohio State Fair welcomes more than one million visitors each year and the Ohio Expo Center hosts more than 200 other events throughout the year, including the All-American Quarter Horse Congress, Equine Affair, Goodguys Rod & Custom Car Show, and the Arnold Sports Festival. The new partnership will allow the Expo Center to better coordinate its recycling program, increase



the amount of material diverted from the landfill, and establish measurable diversion benchmarks for long-term evaluation and improvement.

In addition to the new receptacles, SWACO provided improved signage for fairgoers, training for custodial staff, and other technical assistance. Throughout the course of this year’s fair, which ran from July 29th to August 9th, the project is expected to divert up to 14 tons of recyclable materials. Expo Center staff will collect data on the project during the fair and compile a report that will inform subsequent years of the program.

Recycle Services expands footprint while advancing glass recycling innovation

Ryan Stansley, president, Jeff Stansley, chief executive officer and Branden Stansley vice president are leading Recycle Services’ continued growth as the family owned company expands its glass recycling network across the United States.

Founded in Sylvania, Ohio, in 2010, Recycle Services has grown into a significant player in the glass recycling industry.

Today, Recycle Services operates facilities in Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee, North Carolina and Texas. Supported by its own fleet of trucks, the company provides glass recycling and transportation services to customers nationwide.

Turning used glass into valuable raw material

Recycled glass remains a highly sought-after commodity among global glass manufacturers because cullet helps reduce both energy consumption and carbon emissions during the glass manufacturing process. However, transforming discarded glass into furnace-ready material requires extensive processing and contamination removal.

Recycle Services has developed an eight-step cleaning and sorting process designed to remove contaminants including paper, plastics, metals, ceramics and liquids. The company worked with engineering firms, including specialists in Austria, and collaborated with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to develop its advanced recycling facility at its Ohio headquarters.

“This multimillion-dollar investment in a specialized glass recycling facility required us to make a strong commitment to sustainability,” said Jeff Stansley, vice president of sustainability and co-founder of Recycle Services.

Challenges of glass transportation

Glass presents a unique logistical challenge due to its weight. Transportation costs can significantly impact recycling economics, particularly when collection and processing facilities are located far from end users.

Recognizing this challenge, Recycle Services leveraged its expertise in industrial transportation and materials handling to create a residual -to-value solution for glass generators.

Beyond environmental benefits, Recycle Services emphasizes a “triple bottom line” approach focused on people, planet, and profit. The company employs more than 90 recycling professionals and supports a variety of community initiatives, including Avenues for Autism, Young Life and programs promoting environmental stewardship.

G.R.I.T. Initiative Strengthens glass collection

A key component of the company’s growth strategy is its Glass Recycling with Integrity & Transparency (G.R.I.T.) initiative, a program designed to increase glass recovery rates and strengthen the circular economy for glass packaging.

Launched in partnership with members of the Northwest Ohio Innovation Consortium (NOIC), the initiative expands collection opportunities through community drop-off locations, bars, restaurants, and municipal partnerships.

Company leaders say their goal remains clear: keeping valuable glass materials out of landfills and returning them to manufacturers for use in new products.

New York DEC awards electric vehicle transition grants

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner, Amanda Lefton, announced \$4 million in grants awarded to municipalities across the state for the purchase or lease of zero-emission vehicles for municipal fleets, and grants for the purchase and installation of public electric vehicle charging stations in communities as part of DEC’s Zero-Emission Vehicle Rebate and Zero-Emission Vehicle Infrastructure programs.

“New York State is committed to reducing pollution by supporting the transition to electrify the state’s transportation sector and improve the health and quality of life for residents,” said Lefton. The 2025 round of the program is providing awards to 14 municipalities to support the purchase or lease of 55 battery electric vehicles totaling more than \$400,000. Since its start in 2016, the ZEV Rebate Program awarded more than \$2.25 million to municipalities for 286 electric vehicles and 115 plug-in hybrids.

- Recipients of the 2025 rebate awards:**
- City of Buffalo, \$30,000 for four vehicles
 - Town of Colonie, \$37,500 for five vehicles
 - Village of Hastings-on-Hudson, \$7,500 for one vehicle
 - Town of Huntington, \$52,500 for seven vehicles
 - City of Kingston, \$82,500 for 11 vehicles
 - Monroe County, \$7,500 for one vehicle
 - City of Plattsburgh, \$30,000 for four vehicles
 - Town of Red Hook, \$7,500 for one vehicle
 - Village of Scarsdale, \$42,500 for seven vehicles
 - City of Schenectady, \$45,000 for six vehicles
 - Tompkins County, \$22,500 for three vehicles
 - Town of Victor, \$7,500 for one vehicle
 - Westchester County, \$7,500 for one vehicle
 - City of White Plains, \$22,500 for three vehicles

The Recycling Partnership names Greg Saxon as chief executive officer

The Recycling Partnership (The Partnership) announced that Greg Saxon has been named its next chief executive officer, effective July 20, 2026. Saxon succeeds founder and chief executive officer Keefe Harrison, following a planned leadership transition announced this spring.

The appointment comes during a period of evolution for the U.S. residential recycling system, as one in five Americans now live in states with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws for paper and packaging. The transition follows a rigorous national search led by

The Partnership’s Board of directors to identify an executive capable of navigating this complex regulatory shift while scaling investments and infrastructure improvements across the U.S. recycling system.

Saxon brings more than 20 years of leadership experience, with a strong systems perspective built from experience across electronics recycling, packaging, procurement, supply chain, operations and circular materials systems. His background reflects the complexity of the recycling system and the breadth of partners needed to strengthen it.

ReMA issues new guidance to help recycling operations prevent and manage fire risk



The Recycled Materials Association (ReMA) released new industry guidance to help recycling operations prevent, detect, mitigate, and respond to fire risks.

Approved by ReMA’s board of directors, the guidance provides a practical framework for recycling facilities to strengthen fire safety planning and operational preparedness.

The full guidance is available to ReMA members as part of the association’s broader Fire Safety and Prevention Resources, which also includes ReMA’s detailed Guide for Creating a Fire Prevention and Management Plan.

“Safety is the foundation of a successful recycling operation,” said ReMA president, Robin Wiener. “Recyclers are facing new challenges that require proactive solutions. This guidance reflects the industry’s commitment to protecting employees, communities, first responders, and critical recycling infrastructure.”

The guidance is organized around four key principles:

- **Prevention:** Establishing material acceptance policies, inspecting inbound materials, and preparing contingency plans for operational disruptions.
- **Detection:** Training employees to identify potential hazards and implementing systems that can detect heat signatures and alert facility personnel.
- **Mitigation:** Managing material storage, maintaining fire breaks, and ensuring

fire-suppression equipment is readily available and functional.

- **Education:** Conducting regular employee training and drills while building strong partnerships with local fire departments, community leaders, and regulators.

The recommendations build upon ReMA’s longstanding safety resources, including guidance on battery management, fire prevention planning, hazard recognition and emergency response procedures.

The guidance also emphasizes collaboration with local fire departments and emergency responders, encouraging facilities to conduct site visits, joint training exercises and ongoing communication to improve preparedness and response capabilities.

“Recycling facilities play a vital role in supplying manufacturers with essential recycled materials that support American industry, infrastructure, and economic growth,” Wiener said. “Maintaining safe operations is critical to ensuring those materials continue moving efficiently through the supply chain while protecting workers and neighboring communities.”

ReMA will continue working with members, policymakers, manufacturers and other stakeholders to advance practical solutions that reduce fire risks while supporting a safe, resilient, and sustainable recycling system.

Casella Waste Systems reports increased revenue

Casella Waste Systems, Inc., a regional solid waste, recycling and resource management services company, reported its financial results for the three and six month periods ended June 30, 2026.

Key Highlights:

- Revenues were \$543.7 million for the quarter, up \$78.4 million, or up 16.9 percent, from the same period in 2025.
- Solid waste pricing for the quarter was up 5.5 percent from the same period in 2025, driven by 5.8 percent collection price growth and 4.7 percent disposal price growth.
- Net income was \$3.8 million for the quarter, as compared to \$5.2 million for the same period in 2025. Adjusted Net Income, a non-GAAP measure, was \$25.3 million for the quarter, up \$1.1 million, or up 4.6 percent, from the same period in 2025.
- Adjusted EBITDA, a non-GAAP measure, was \$123.2 million for the quarter, up \$13.7 million, or up 12.5 percent, from the same period in 2025.
- Net cash provided by operating activities was \$161.0 million for the year-to-date period, up \$21.4 million, or up 15.3 percent, from the same period in 2025.
- Adjusted Free Cash Flow, a non-GAAP measure, was \$78.1 million for the year-to-date period, up \$7.3 million, or up 10.3 percent, from the same period in 2025.
- Acquired five businesses to date in 2026 with approximately \$165 million in aggregate annualized revenues.

“We delivered another quarter of solid financial and operating performance as

our teams continued to execute at a high level across the business,” said Ned Coletta, president and chief executive officer of Casella Waste Systems, Inc. “Our disciplined operating approach, strong pricing execution, healthy landfill volumes and continued acquisition activity drove positive results during the quarter. The momentum we have built through the first half of the year, together with the strength of our operating platform, reinforces our confidence in our strategy and execution for the remainder of the year.”

“Our core business continued to perform well during the quarter,” Coletta said. “Solid waste pricing remained strong, including disposal pricing of 4.7 percent, with municipal solid waste and construction & demolition pricing growth of 4.5 percent at the landfills. As we advanced pricing, landfill volumes also increased year-over-year.”

“Notably, as fuel prices rapidly increased this year and remained elevated through the second quarter, our floating fuel recovery fees offset this higher cost, although resulting in a headwind to Adjusted EBITDA margins of 40 basis points. At the same time, our teams remained focused on driving results through our key operating programs as well as acquisition integration, including continued progress within our Mid-Atlantic region, where we have completed our systems integration work, initiated various route optimization initiatives, and look to further execute against our plan in the second half of the year.”

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Glass recycling

■ Continued from Page A1

sand is being marketed as a silica-sand replacement in municipal, industrial and residential water treatment – finer particle removal, lower biofouling, smoother surface.”

Research and industry experience have demonstrated that recycled glass filtration media can offer performance advantages in certain applications, including improved contaminant removal and reduced maintenance compared with conventional silica sand systems.

Abrasives and engineered products

Recovered glass is also finding applications in abrasive products used for surface preparation, including rust and graffiti removal. Crushed glass abrasives can replace traditional materials in blasting operations while helping divert recovered glass from disposal.

Additional end markets include fiberglass insulation, countertops, architectural tile and other engineered products. These applications provide opportunities for glass that may not meet the strict requirements of container manufacturing but still offers value as a recycled material.

“The industry stopped waiting for glass to be ‘recycling-perfect’ and started building markets around what it actually is,” Johnson said.

Advances in sorting and processing technology are helping increase the value of recycled glass by improving the quality of recovered cullet. Modern optical sorting systems can identify and remove contaminants such as ceramics, stones and porcelain while also separating

plastics and other unwanted materials.

Additional technologies can help detect lead-containing glass from materials such as crystal or certain cookware, preventing contamination of recycled streams.

“The sorting technology has quietly become the most important part of this whole system,” Johnson said.

Johnson highlighted emerging dark-cullet sensor technology as a particularly promising advancement because it addresses a longstanding limitation in glass sorting.

“Before this, that material was lost entirely – the optics simply couldn’t distinguish one from the other,” she said.

Improved sorting capabilities allow processors to recover more usable glass while reducing contamination, creating stronger supply streams for both traditional and alternative markets.

However, Assenza believes technology investments must be paired with broader improvements at material recovery facilities (MRFs) and throughout the recycling infrastructure.

“The economic case for buying and selling recycled glass ultimately needs to make sense,” Assenza said. “This will require investments at the MRF level, which I see as one of the biggest challenges facing improved recycling rates.”

The future outlook

As more companies establish recycled-content commitments, the demand for reliable supplies of recovered glass continues to grow. Assenza expects expanded EPR programs to further accelerate this trend by creating financial

incentives for companies to incorporate recycled materials.

“Continued expansion of EPR across the U.S. will only further this demand because it will add a financial incentive for large buyers to buy recycled glass beyond the sustainability story or optics alone,” Assenza said.

Collaboration among recyclers, manufacturers, municipalities and businesses is also strengthening recovery systems. Commercial programs that capture glass from restaurants, bars, hospitality venues and other high-volume sources can provide cleaner material streams than traditional curbside collection.

Assenza believes targeted collection strategies will be essential moving forward.

“In addition to continued legislation, expanding curbside recycling for glass and clean glass-only drop-off sites can bring more glass into the loop,” she said. “We need to take a two-pronged approach – target commercial programs and expanded legislation at places where glass waste is especially concentrated like bars, while at the same time continuing to make it easier for consumers to take action.”

She pointed to dedicated collection programs as examples of how reducing consumer friction can improve participation. TerraCycle’s partnerships with brands to collect difficult-to-recycle glass products demonstrate how targeted programs can capture material that may otherwise be lost.

One example is a nail polish bottle recycling program designed to address a challenging waste stream. Small glass containers can be difficult to capture through traditional sorting systems and are often contaminated when placed in recycling bins.

“Putting investment behind a dedicated collection program and assets educating consumers about how to clean and cure these bottles to maximize recycle readiness makes total sense,” Assenza said.

The next five years will likely determine whether the glass recycling industry can overcome long-standing infrastructure challenges while building a stronger circular economy.

Assenza believes progress will depend on continued collaboration among policymakers, brands, recyclers, processors and consumers.

“It will require real work across the value chain to make a meaningful impact,” she said. “But results so far of combining legislation with ambitious CPG company and retailer goals seem to be taking us in the right direction.”

The biggest opportunities, she believes, are improving the quality and availability of recovered glass while strengthening the economics that support processing and reuse.

“Expanding curbside recycling for glass and clean glass-only drop-off sites can bring more glass into the loop,” Assenza said. “The economic case for buying and selling recycled glass ultimately needs to make sense.”



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OVERALL:	
LENGTH	40'
WEIGHT	53,000 LBS.
HEIGHT	13'3"

HYDRAULICS:	
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HEIGHT	9'1"

OVERALL:	
LENGTH	42'
WEIGHT	61,000 LBS.
HEIGHT	13'3"

HYDRAULICS:	
PRESSURE	2,400 PSI
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Miami-Dade County's recycling contamination rates drop to lowest level in years

Miami-Dade County's recycling contamination rate has declined from nearly 50 percent in 2020 to 36.5 percent, marking one of the county's most significant improvements in recycling quality in several years. The milestone, which includes a 2.3 percent decrease in the past six months alone, reflects the Miami-Dade County Department of Solid Waste Management's (DSWM) ongoing efforts to educate residents, expand recycling opportunities, and strengthen enforcement.

"Every item recycled represents a small but meaningful action toward a healthier environment and a more sustainable future for us all," said Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava. "This remarkable reduction in recycling contamination demonstrates what can be accomplished when government, schools, community partners, and residents work together toward a shared goal. We are proud of the progress we've made, and we thank our residents for embracing better recycling habits that help build a cleaner, greener, and more resilient Miami-Dade."

Since 2020, DSWM has expanded curbside recycling by adding new materials while launching initiatives to reduce contamination, including:

- Updated recycling cart stickers highlighting accepted materials, soon-to-be deployed.

- Expanded public education and outreach campaigns focused on proper recycling.
- Partnerships with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to educate students.
- Community presentations, workshops, and events promoting the Recycle Right initiative.
- The launch of the SCRAPP mobile app, giving residents instant recycling guidance.
- Educational tours of WM's recycling facility highlighting how AI technology improves recycling, reduces contamination, and maximizes beneficial reuse.
- Continued collaboration with municipal partners to standardize recycling practices.

Education is complemented by proactive field efforts to reduce contamination. Each month, DSWM Code Enforcement Officers inspect more than 1,000 recycling carts and provide residents with guidance on proper recycling. In addition, AI-powered cameras on recycling collection vehicles help identify contamination, allowing the Department to target education outreach where it is needed most.

Reducing contamination improves the quality and value of recyclable materials, lowers processing costs, decreases landfill disposal, and advances the County's Zero Waste Master Plan.

AF&PA releases paper reports

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) released the following second quarter 2026 reports.

Boxboard

Total Boxboard production in Q2 increased by 2 percent compared to Q2 2025. The boxboard operating rate was 88.8 percent, down 0.6 points from the same quarter last year.

- Solid Bleached Boxboard production in Q2 increased 4 percent compared to Q2 2025.
- Unbleached Kraft & Coated Recycled Boxboard operating rate was 92.6 percent, up 2.6 points from the same quarter last year and up 2.0 points year-to-date.
- Uncoated Recycled Boxboard operating rate was 97.2 percent, up 3.6 points from the same quarter last year and up 2.1 points year-to-date.

Containerboard

The total industry operating rate increased to nearly 95 percent for the quarter compared to 93 percent for the preceding quarter. Total containerboard production in Q2 decreased 2 percent compared to Q2 2025. It was down 5 percent when compared to the same 6 months of 2025.

- The operating rates for 3 of the 4 major grades increased in Q2, with



unbleached Kraft liner in particular going up to 95.7 percent. Recycled medium was the only grade that had an essentially flat operating rate since Q1 –down 0.1 points to 93.5 percent.

- Domestic demand was up 1 percent compared to the same quarter last year, despite the aforementioned decrease in total production over the same period. Most of the production decline contributed to reduced exports, which were down nearly 19 percent since Q2 2025.

Mill inventories dropped to their lowest level in over 15 months at the end of June.

TerraCycle launches innovative vape device recycling service

TerraCycle Commercial™, a division of TerraCycle®, has launched a new collection and recycling service for vape devices, with nicotine pods disposed of through incineration in compliance with applicable legal requirements. Powered by TerraCycle's capability to recycle complex materials, this new service is designed to meet applicable federal and state regulatory requirements and is completely turnkey for customers.

"For years, used vapes have been one of the fastest-growing waste management challenges. These devices present real risks when improperly handled, and until now, there has been no clear path to a scalable recycling solution," said Tom Szaky, Founder and CEO of TerraCycle. "Through the dedication of our R&D team, our operations and compliance experts, and the strategic investments made to grow TerraCycle, we are proud to deliver a national solution for vape device recycling in the United States."

Scalable solution designed for compliant collection and processing

In the U.S., improper disposal of used vape devices can create safety risks, and in a number of states, their disposal is now regulated by law. The lithium-ion batteries inside vape devices can pose a significant fire hazard when damaged, compacted, or exposed to extreme temperatures, which are conditions routinely encountered in trash compactors, garbage trucks, and landfills. According to a PIRG report on vape waste, fires in waste facilities caused by disposable vape devices cost at least \$95 million each year in the United States alone.

The Nicotine Vape Device Collection solution is a turnkey, prepaid service



designed for the compliant collection and recycling of used nicotine vape devices and to meet the needs of households, municipalities, schools, hotels, managed facilities, businesses, etc. The price covers device recycling, the collection container, inbound and outbound shipping, and nicotine pod disposal.

Each container is designed to collect and recycle used nicotine vape devices generated by households and individual consumers in compliance with 40 CFR § 261.4(b)(1). The containers are available in three sizes:

- 1.25-Gallon — Holds approximately 30 devices | Weight limit: 22 lbs.
- 2.5-Gallon — Holds approximately 75 devices | Weight limit: 35 lbs.
- 5-Gallon — Holds approximately 155 devices | Weight limit: 55 lbs.

For organizations planning to collect and recycle vape devices on a larger scale, TerraCycle Commercial also offers bulk pallets and FTL shipments.

Through TerraCycle's proprietary recycling process, compliant vape devices are disassembled, sorted by material type and recycled in accordance with TerraCycle's Recycling Guarantee. Nicotine pods are disposed of through incineration in compliance with applicable legal requirements.

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METALS

June steel shipments up 4.8 percent

The American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) reported that for the month of June 2026, U.S. steel mills shipped 8,536,500 net tons, an 8.7 percent increase from the 7,854,290 net tons shipped in June 2025. Shipments were up 4.8 percent from the 8,141,900 net tons shipped in the previous month, May 2026. Shipments year-to-date in 2026 are 47,527,101 net tons, up 5.3 percent vs. 2025 shipments of 45,139,569 net tons for six months.

A comparison of shipments year-to-date in 2026 to the first six months of 2025 shows the following changes:



corrosion resistant sheet and strip, up 14 percent, hot rolled sheet and strip, up 8 percent and cold rolled sheet and strip, unchanged.

Steel imports decrease 4.3 percent

Based on preliminary Census Bureau data, the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) reported that the U.S. imported a total of 2,092,000 net tons (NT) of steel in June 2026, including 1,457,000 NT of finished steel (down 4.3 and 6.9, respectively, vs. May 2026). Total and finished steel imports are down 22.9 percent and 24.5 percent, respectively, year-to-date vs. 2025. Over the 12-month period July 2025 to June 2026, total and finished steel imports are down 22.0 percent and 25.9 percent, respectively, vs. the prior 12-month period. Finished steel import market share was an estimated 17 percent in June and is estimated at 16 percent over the first six months of 2026.

Key steel products with a significant import increase in June compared to May are line pipe (up 94 percent), hot rolled sheets (up 28 percent), sheet and strip all other metallic coated (up

19 percent) and structural pipe and tubing (up 18 percent). Products with a significant increase in imports over the 12-month period June 2025 to May 2026 compared to the previous 12-month period include heavy structural shapes (up 28 percent).

In June, the largest suppliers were South Korea (422,000 NT, up 6 percent vs. May), Canada (294,000 NT, up 4 percent), Brazil (245,000 NT, down 26 percent), Mexico (191,000 NT, up 4 percent) and Vietnam (151,000 NT, up 6 percent). Over the 12-month period July 2025 to June 2026, the largest suppliers were Canada (3,288,000 NT, down 44 percent compared to the previous 12-months), South Korea (3,205,000 NT, up 17 percent), Brazil (3,049,000 NT, down 33 percent), Mexico (2,165,000 NT, down 35 percent) and Vietnam (1,139,000 NT, down 2 percent).

U.S. Imports of Steel Mill Products by Country of Origin (thousands of net tons)									
COUNTRY	JUNE 2026 PRELIM	MAY 2026 FINAL	% VAR. JUNE VS. MAY	YTD 2026 (6 MON.)	YTD 2025 (6 MON.)	% VAR. 2026 VS. 2025	JULY 2025 TO JUNE 2026	JULY 2024 TO JUNE 2026	% VAR.
Canada	294	281	4.4%	1,572	2,808	-44.0%	3,288	5,885	-44.1%
South Korea	422	399	5.6%	1,994	1,451	37.4%	3,205	2,743	16.8%
Brazil	245	331	-26.0%	1,506	2,582	-41.7%	3,049	4,565	-33.2%
Mexico	191	185	3.5%	1,114	1,772	-37.2%	2,165	3,337	-35.1%
Vietnam	151	142	6.2%	744	474	57.2%	1,139	1,164	-2.1%
Japan	108	142	-23.9%	584	532	9.8%	1,128	1,124	0.3%
Taiwan	70	94	-25.6%	453	612	-26.0%	934	1,105	-15.5%
Germany	58	79	-26.8%	353	629	-43.9%	852	1,256	-32.2%
India	62	63	-1.6%	321	272	17.8%	601	420	43.2%
Turkey	31	58	-46.5%	299	289	3.7%	558	453	23.1%
China	38	66	-42.5%	227	255	-10.9%	414	533	-22.3%
Netherlands	29	36	-19.4%	168	284	-40.7%	410	621	-33.9%
Argentina	35	31	11.6%	156	15	929.5%	369	40	825.8%
United Arab Emir.	2	2	28.5%	123	184	-32.8%	364	396	-8.0%
Indonesia	68	63	7.6%	170	88	92.8%	303	131	132.1%
All Other	289	215	34.9%	1,494	2,378	-37.2%	3,116	4,383	-28.9%
Total	2,092	2,186	-4.3%	11,280	14,626	-22.9%	21,895	28,156	-22.2%
memo EU-27	232	233	-0.4%	1,413	2,244	-37.0%	3,048	4,467	-31.8%

Steel Dynamics makes senior management changes

Steel Dynamics, Inc. announced that the company's board of directors unanimously approved that effective January 1, 2027, Theresa E. Wagler will become the company's president and chief executive officer upon Mark D. Millett's concurrent retirement as chief executive officer and transition to executive chairman of the board of directors. Wagler will become a member of the Steel Dynamics' board of directors effective immediately.

Richard A. Poinssatte, the company's executive vice president and treasurer, will succeed Wagler as the company's executive vice president and chief financial officer on January 1, 2027. Additionally, in support of the company's long term growth, succession plan, and talent development, the following senior leadership changes are taking place effective September 1, 2026:

Barry Schneider, executive vice president and chief technology officer

Barry Schneider will be assuming the new strategic growth role of executive vice president and chief technology officer. The company is adding this executive leadership role to drive product and technology development, process innovation, and capitalize on the company's continued decarbonization journey. In this new role, Schneider will also assume oversight of the company's decarbonization strategy and continue to have companywide oversight of safety and information technology. Schneider has been with Steel Dynamics since the beginning, holding various leadership roles within the entire organization.

Miguel Alvarez, executive vice president and chief operating officer aluminum flat rolled products and metals recycling operations

In addition to his current oversight of the company's new strategic aluminum investments, Alvarez will assume executive oversight of the company's metals recycling business, with Matt Bell, vice president of metals recycling, continuing to lead the platform, reporting directly to Alvarez. Alvarez joined the company in 2019 as senior vice president, Southwest U.S. and Mexico to support the company's steel and metals recycling growth strategy in that region. Subsequently, he was promoted to lead the company's metals recycling platform from March 2022 to October 2025.

James Anderson, executive vice president and chief operating officer construction products operations

In addition to his current oversight of the company's long products steel group,



Steel Dynamics, Inc.®

Anderson will assume executive oversight of the company's steel fabrication business, with Chad Bickford, vice president of Steel Fabrication, continuing to lead the platform, reporting directly to Anderson. Anderson joined SDI in 2007, as a principal of an acquired flat rolled steel galvanizing company. Subsequently, he was promoted to lead the company's steel fabrication business from 2015 to 2024, where he successfully diversified and grew the business.

Christopher Graham, executive vice president and chief operating officer flat rolled steel operations

Graham has been promoted in recognition of the scale of the company's flat rolled steel operations and continued associated product diversification and growth opportunities, as well as his leadership contributions to the company overall, especially within the discipline of maintaining the company's performance-driven, entrepreneurial culture. Graham has been with Steel Dynamics since the beginning, holding various leadership roles within the steel and steel fabrication operations.

Theresa E. Wagler, president and chief executive officer

Wagler has been the company's executive vice president, chief financial officer and corporate secretary since May 2007. Wagler joined Steel Dynamics in 1998, and has held various strategic, operational, finance and accounting positions. She is responsible for and oversees the areas of accounting and taxation, treasury, risk management, legal, cybersecurity, human resources, companywide decarbonization strategy and strategic business development, as well as, financial planning and analysis, investor relations, and corporate communications. Wagler has been especially influential and instrumental in the company's strategic growth positioning, differentiation, and capital allocation execution.

Additionally, Wagler also has held leadership roles for companywide safety, expansion and commercialization of copper wire and rod operations and expansion and commercialization of decarbonized product offerings through

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METALS



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Structural	per gross ton	375.00	375.00	372.00	374.00	375.00
#1 & #2 Mixed Steel	per gross ton	299.00	298.00	299.00	310.00	330.00
Crushed Auto Bodies	per gross ton	220.00	224.00	222.00	224.00	247.00
Shredded Auto Scrap	per gross ton	428.00	410.00	420.00	419.00	420.00
NON FERROUS						
#1 Copper Bare Bright	per pound	6.30	5.90	5.98	5.98	6.10
#2 Copper Wire & Tubing	per pound	6.10	5.70	5.78	5.78	5.90
Aluminum Cans	per pound	1.00	.98	.99	.99	1.01
Al/Cu Radiators	per pound	3.10	3.09	3.08	3.09	3.10
Aluminum Radiators	per pound	.46	.45	.40	.44	.43
Heater Cores	per pound	1.45	1.43	1.46	1.44	1.48
Stainless Steel	per pound	.69	.69	.67	.68	.69

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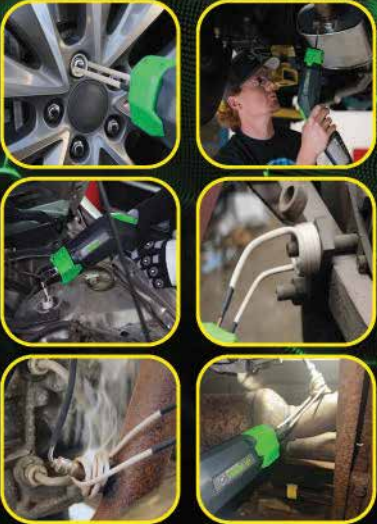
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World crude steel production increases

World crude steel production for the 70 countries reporting to the World Steel Association (worldsteel) was 155.7 million tonnes (Mt) in June 2026, a 1.7 percent increase compared to June 2025.

Crude steel production by region

Africa produced 2.2 Mt in June 2026, up 20.0 percent on June 2025. Asia and Oceania produced 115.2 Mt, up 1.5 percent. The EU (27) produced 10.8 Mt, up 4.6 percent. Europe, Other produced 3.7 Mt, up 10.4 percent. The Middle East produced 4.0 Mt, down 13.4 percent. North America produced 9.5 Mt, up 5.0 percent. Russia & other CIS + Ukraine produced 6.8 Mt, down 2.2 percent.

South America produced 3.5 Mt, down 0.3 percent.

Top 10 steel-producing countries

China produced 83.7 Mt in June 2026, up 0.4 percent on June 2025. India produced 14.1Mt, up 4.5 percent. The United States produced 7.2 Mt, up 3.5 percent. Japan produced 6.8 Mt, up 1.3 percent. Russia is estimated to have produced 5.6 Mt, down 3.4 percent. South Korea produced 5.3 Mt, down 0.9 percent. Turkey produced 3.3 Mt, up 14.7 percent. Germany produced 2.9 Mt, up 9.5 percent. Brazil produced 2.8 Mt, up 0.1 percent. Viet Nam produced 2.6 Mt, up 27.5 percent.

Top steel-producing countries				
	Jun 2026 (Mt)	% change Jun 26/25	Jan-Jun 2026 (Mt)	% change Jan-Jun 26/25
China	83.7	0.4	500.0	-3.0
India	14.1	4.5	87.0	7.1
United States	7.2	3.5	42.8	6.3
Japan	6.8	1.3	40.4	-0.4
Russia (e)	5.6	-3.4	32.1	-8.4
South Korea	5.3	-0.9	31.7	2.1
Turkey	3.3	14.7	19.8	8.1
Germany	2.9	9.5	18.6	8.9
Brazil	2.8	0.1	16.3	-1.5
Vietnam	2.6	27.5	15.2	26.9

e-estimated. Ranking of top 10 producing countries based on year-to-date aggregate

Steel import permit applications increases

Based on the Commerce Department’s most recent Steel Import Monitoring and Analysis (SIMA) data, the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) reported that steel import permit applications for the month of July totaled 2,294,000 net tons (NT). This was a 10.1 percent increase from the 2,084,000 permit tons recorded in June and a 9.1 percent increase from the June final imports total of 2,103,000. Import permit tonnage for finished steel in July was 1,594,000, up 8.6 percent from the final imports total of 1,468,000 in June. For the first seven months of 2026 (including July SIMA permits and June final imports), total and finished steel imports were 13,585,000 NT and 9,766,000 NT, down 19.4 percent and 21.8 percent, respectively, from the same period in 2025. The estimated finished steel import market share in July was 18 percent and is 16 percent year-to-date (YTD).

Steel imports with large increases in July permits vs. June final imports include oil country goods (up 62 percent), wire rods (up 58 percent), standard pipe (up 51 percent), hot rolled bars (up 43 percent) and tin free steel (up 32 percent). Products with significant year-to-date (YTD) increases vs. the same period in 2025 include heavy structural shapes (up 63 percent), standard rails (up 36 percent), structural pipe and tubing (up 18 percent) and reinforcing bars (up 15 percent).

In July, the largest steel import permit applications were for South Korea (514,000 NT, up 22 percent from June final imports), Mexico (327,000 NT, up 71 percent), Canada (279,000 NT, down 5 percent), Brazil (180,000 NT, down 26 percent) and Vietnam (156,000 NT, up 4 percent). Through the first seven months of 2026, the largest suppliers were South Korea (2,508,000 NT, up 41 percent), Canada (1,850,000 NT, down 41 percent) and Brazil (1,686,000 NT, down 42 percent).



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METALS

Aurubis inaugurates new recycling plant in Hamburg

Aurubis AG, a global provider of nonferrous metals and a large copper recycler, marked the inauguration of a globally unique plant at its Hamburg, Germany site. The new facility will enable the company to process greater volumes of increasingly complex recycling materials and smelter intermediates in the future. The Complex Recycling Hamburg (CRH) facility integrates the capabilities of multiple smelting processes into a single unit. For the first time, raw materials containing copper, lead and sulfur can be processed in a single plant.

The US\$217 million investment is expected to deliver a considerable positive financial contribution once fully ramped up. This makes CRH one of the most significant growth projects under the company’s current strategy, “Aurubis Performance 2030: Forging resilience. Leading in multimetal.”

Unlocking more value from complex materials

The new facility enables Aurubis to process attractive recycling materials for which there are only a limited number of buyers worldwide. CRH will allow the company to treat more than 30,000 additional tons of recycling material per year, as well as significantly larger volumes of high-value smelter intermediates with exceptional efficiency. This enhances Aurubis’ ability to recover important metals, such as

copper, lead and precious metals, and to produce sulfuric acid – all indispensable for key industrial applications.

The objective of this process innovation is to keep more materials and value within the Aurubis smelter network, optimizing the utilization of existing assets and further enhancing production resilience. The new plant also strengthens Aurubis’ business model with its diversified earnings drivers.

Benchmark in technology, environmental protection, and automation

At the heart of the plant is a specially engineered converter that separates the individual elements. The unit processes batches of around 45 tons at temperatures of up to 1,400 degrees Celsius.

CRH is equipped with cutting-edge technology and sets a new benchmark in efficient, environmentally friendly multi-metal production. Around a third of total investment went towards air pollution control measures, underscoring the plant’s high environmental standards.

Key project for critical metals for Europe

The CRH project received funding from the European Union and directly contributes to advancing the EU Critical Raw Materials Act. Project financing was backed by the first investment loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB) under its comprehensive raw materials strategy.

RUBBER

Liberty Tire Recycling strengthens recycling efforts with acquisitions

Liberty Tire Recycling, a portfolio company of I Squared Capital, an independent global infrastructure investor, announced a major expansion of its Gulf Coast operations through the acquisition of All American Tire, Colt Tire Recycling, and Genan, Inc. (U.S. subsidiary of Genan A/S).

The acquisitions significantly enhance Liberty’s rubber recycling capacity, tire collections and other capabilities across Texas and Louisiana, creating the region’s most comprehensive tire recycling network.

Together, the three acquisitions strengthen Liberty’s ability to provide integrated tire collection, processing and recycled material solutions throughout the Gulf Coast while increasing capacity to meet growing customer demand for sustainable end-of-life tire management.

These partnerships expand Liberty’s ability to serve retailers, manufacturers and local governments across the Gulf Coast, one of the nation’s fastest-growing regions.

All American Tire

All American Tire, based in Fort Worth, Texas, was founded by Tom and Jodi Parker. All American has grown into a market leader in collections and crumb rubber production in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The All American team brings decades of hands-on experience and community involvement, making it a natural partner to bring Liberty’s

industry-leading reliable service and recycling rates to one of the fastest-growing metropolitan regions in the country.

Colt Tire Recycling

Colt Tire Recycling, based in Louisiana, was founded by Kip and Sydney Vincent and is the leader in tire collection in Louisiana, as well as an innovator in the use of recycled rubber for civil engineering applications. The operational excellence of Colt has made it an essential piece in the Gulf region’s recycling infrastructure.

Genan, Inc.

Genan, Inc., a large, state-of-the-art processing facility in Houston, is a leader in tire recycling and recovery, with a focus on crumb rubber and micronized rubber. Genan specializes in producing rubber granules for technically demanding applications, including flooring, automotive parts, asphalt, as well as an industry-leading, patented technology for playground surfaces. Thomas Boehme of Genan will continue to lead growth efforts in the U.S. for Genan through a new role with Liberty.

Liberty recognizes that the success of All American, Colt, and Genan has been built by exceptional leadership teams. To maintain continuity for customers and employees, senior members of each company’s leadership team will join Liberty and help guide the next phases of the respective businesses.



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WASTE

Reworld expands access to zero waste-to-landfill solutions in Indiana

Reworld®, a leader in sustainable waste solutions, has launched operations at a new United Dumpsters transfer station in Fort Wayne, providing local manufacturers with a cost-effective pathway to achieve zero waste-to-landfill.

The facility includes a dedicated bay for profiled waste, allowing companies to deliver materials locally for consolidation and transport to the Reworld Indianapolis Thermomechanical Treatment Facility (TTF). This approach eliminates the need for individual long-haul shipments, which would increase truck traffic, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

“This partnership creates a practical, scalable solution for manufacturers that want to reduce landfill disposal but lack local access to Reworld facilities,” said Blake Williams, owner of United Dumpsters. Material collected at the site is bulked and transported to the Reworld Indianapolis TTF, reducing transportation costs for participating companies. The model enables manufacturers to advance sustainability initiatives without the time and expense of managing individual shipments or relying on landfill disposal.

Local manufacturers seeking a more cost-effective and sustainable alternative to landfill disposal are encouraged to contact Jimmy Jenkins, Reworld sales manager for Northeast Indiana, at jjenkins@reworldwaste.com to learn how to participate in the Fort Wayne transfer program.

Kent County Partners with AMP to recover recyclables from municipal waste

The Kent County Department of Public Works (DPW) in Michigan is partnering with AMP, a leader in AI-powered sorting solutions for the waste and recycling industry, to deploy an AMP ONE® municipal solid waste processing system designed to recover valuable commodities from mixed waste before they enter the county’s waste-to-energy process.

By recovering recyclable materials before combustion, the system will return commodities such as cardboard and select plastics to productive use while improving the thermal characteristics of the remaining waste stream. The strategic deployment will enable the waste-to-energy facility to process more municipal solid waste within its existing operating limits, increase landfill diversion, and preserve regional landfill capacity.

The system will process approximately 25 tons per hour of municipal solid waste from Kent County, using AMP’s computer vision and pneumatic sortation technology to identify and recover recyclables from bagged trash. With AMP’s solution, Kent County can:

- Recover valuable commodities from mixed waste;
- Improve recovery of cardboard and plastics before waste-to-energy processing;
- Enable greater throughput at the waste-to-energy facility;
- Extend regional landfill life; and
- Integrate recycling and waste-to-energy into a unified waste management strategy.

Municipal solid waste still contains significant quantities of recyclable material not captured through traditional recycling programs. By recovering these commodities before downstream processing, Kent County can increase resource recovery, preserve landfill capacity and return valuable materials to productive use.

“Installation of sortation equipment at our waste-to-energy facility is an important step toward achieving our goal of reducing Kent County’s landfill waste,” said Dar Baas, director of DPW. “This will quickly become a best practice for the waste industry as we look to increase our efficiency; improve safety; increase recycling; and protect the air, land, and water in our community.”

The project demonstrates a practical approach to modernizing municipal waste infrastructure by integrating AI-powered sortation into existing operations. The approach provides communities with a lower-risk, faster-to-deploy pathway for expanding material recovery while evaluating future infrastructure investments.

“Communities across the country face increasing pressure on landfill capacity while striving to improve recycling outcomes within existing infrastructure constraints,” said Tim Stuart, AMP chief executive officer. “This project demonstrates how AI-powered automation can help municipalities unlock more value from the waste stream, extend landfill life, and complement waste-to-energy systems in a cost-effective and scalable way.”

The project builds on AMP’s existing relationship with Kent County, which included the previous deployment of AMP’s AI sortation technology at the county’s Recycling & Education Center to support more efficient operations and advance the county’s broader waste diversion goals.

Casella Waste Systems and Waga Energy commence operations of RNG facility

Casella Waste Systems, Inc. and Waga Energy, an expert in the production of Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) from landfills, announced the start of operations of the RNG production facility at the Hyland Landfill in Angelica, New York.

The facility coming online marks another important milestone in Casella’s strategy to recover value from the waste it manages. Hyland is the second of three RNG projects developed by Casella and Waga Energy to enter operation, following the Chemung County facility.

“It is so gratifying for our team to see our fourth RNG project come online at the Hyland landfill,” said Ned Coletta, president and chief executive officer of Casella Waste Systems, Inc. “Several years ago, we made the strategic decision to work with RNG experts to develop the capacity at our landfills, and we have not been disappointed about our decision to partner with Waga Energy. Their entire team has collaborated effectively with our team to bring these projects online within a tight timeline, and their innovative technology is performing well at each landfill.”

The facility uses Waga Energy’s patented WAGABOX® technology to upgrade landfill gas into pipeline-quality RNG. With 3,000 SCFM of installed processing capacity, Hyland can generate up to 610,000 MMBtu (180 GWh) of renewable gas annually, making it one of the largest RNG production units in Waga Energy’s U.S. portfolio.

The RNG produced on-site is injected directly into the Eastern Gas Transmission and Storage network, supplying the region with a renewable alternative to fossil natural gas. The project is expected to avoid 47,000 tons of CO₂-equivalent emissions each year, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.

Under the terms of the agreement, Waga Energy deployed the capital required to fully fund the construction of the facility and will own and operate it for 20 years, while Casella and Waga Energy share the revenue generated from RNG sales.

The Hyland project is expected to qualify for incentives under the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Recology to acquire Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal

Employee-owned resource recovery company, Recology Inc., and Tahoe Truckee Disposal Co., Inc. (TTDC) have entered into a definitive purchase agreement for Recology to acquire TTDC. TTDC is a family-owned waste and recycling company serving the North Lake Tahoe, Truckee, and greater Sierra region. The transaction is expected to close this fall, subject to receipt of certain approvals and satisfaction of customary closing conditions.

TTDC has served the region for 62 years, providing waste collection to approximately 31,000 residential and commercial customers throughout the Town of Truckee and Placer, Nevada and El Dorado Counties.

Customers will see no changes to their service, rates, or collection schedules as a result of this announcement, and community programs will be continued. TTDC will continue to operate independently until the transaction closes.

Following the close of the transaction, TTDC’s operations, employees and customers will become a part of Recology under the new name Recology Tahoe Truckee.

Waste Pro honoring 30 employees for 20 years of service

Waste Pro celebrated a remarkable milestone by recognizing 30 employees who have each dedicated two decades of service to the company. During two special recognition events held in Ft. Myers and Tallahassee, Florida, the company honored these long-tenured Waste Pros with a combined \$300,000 in service awards. These events reinforce the company’s longstanding commitment to investing in people who have helped build the company into one of the nation’s fastest-growing privately owned waste and recycling collection, processing, and disposal companies.

Each honoree received a \$10,000 bonus, a crystal commemorative plaque, and recognition from president and chief executive officer Sean Jennings alongside members of Waste Pro’s executive leadership team. The celebrations also included catered lunches and an opportunity for employees and their families to reflect on the relationships, accomplishments, and memories built over the past 20 years.

“At Waste Pro, our success has always been driven by our people,” said Sean Jennings, president and chief executive officer. “Recognizing employees who have devoted 20 years of their careers to this company is one of the greatest privileges we have.”

BUSINESS BRIEFS

AMERIPEN welcomes new members to board of directors

■ AMERIPEN, a public policy organization representing the packaging value chain in the United States, announced the election of nine new or re-elected members to its board of directors. Representing leading companies across the consumer-packaged goods, packaging manufacturing, retail, and materials sectors, the new directors bring extensive expertise in government affairs, public policy, sustainability, and the circular economy as AMERIPEN continues its work to advance science-based packaging policy.

New or re-elected members to the board are:

- Brendan Adams, associate director, government affairs, The Kraft Heinz Company;
- CJ Stolle, Head of U.S. Circular Economy Public Policy, Amazon;
- Gabby Shah, senior manager, government relations & public policy, Procter & Gamble;
- George Southworth, deputy director, US Government Affairs, Mondelēz International;
- Lauren Aguilar, director of government relations, McDonald's;
- Phil Rozenski, vice president, government affairs, Novolex;
- Samantha Kappalman, vice president, corporate affairs & public policy, US & Canada, Tetra Pak;
- Stephen Kittredge, vice president, global government affairs, Amcor; and
- Taylor Loeber, sustainable packaging policy manager, General Mills.

"Our Board reflects the breadth of the packaging value chain and the collaborative approach that defines AMERIPEN," said Lynn Dyer, president of AMERIPEN.

Rumpke names CFO successor

■ Rumpke Waste & Recycling's chief financial officer (CFO), Phil Wehrman, retired June 30, and Rumpke's current executive vice president of finance, Justin Birkle, will succeed him.

Wehrman began his Rumpke career on May 15, 1995. He first joined Rumpke as a financial controller. He earned the role of chief financial officer and treasurer in 2000, a position where he would excel for the next two and half decades. When Wehrman started his job at Rumpke, company revenues were under \$200 million annually, in 2025 Rumpke's annual revenue was almost \$1.3 billion.

Birkle joined Rumpke in 2024 and has provided valuable expertise in fiscal management and supply chain performance.

In partnership with Wehrman, he has helped lead technology upgrades, enhance customer billing processes, strengthen risk management framework and expand financing capabilities to best support Rumpke's investments in new infrastructure and acquisitions.

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Designing recycling into plastic packaging

by MAURA KELLER

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For years, efforts to improve plastics recycling focused largely on what happened after a product reached the end of its life – better sorting equipment, expanded collection programs and stronger markets for recycled resin. But many in the industry now recognize that recycling success is often determined long before a package ever reaches a materials recovery facility (MRF). Increasingly, manufacturers, packaging designers and recyclers are embracing “design for recyclability” – an approach that considers a package’s entire lifecycle during design, rather than after it’s already manufactured.

Instead of asking whether a package is technically recyclable, companies are asking whether it can realistically move through today’s collection and processing systems. Every design decision – resin selection, barrier materials, labels, adhesives, pigments, closures, additives – can determine whether a package is successfully sorted and transformed into new products. Recyclability has become an engineering challenge as much as an environmental one, pushing manufacturers to work more closely with recyclers and industry organizations to ensure packaging fits within existing infrastructure.

Recycling begins at the drawing board

Jonathan Dineen, head of design and innovation, North America, at ALPLA Recycling, said one of the industry’s biggest mindset shifts has been recognizing that recycling begins long before consumers place a package in the bin. “Recycling begins at the drawing board,” Dineen said.

That philosophy is reshaping how packaging is developed. Rather than treating recycling as an end-of-life issue, companies increasingly consider whether a package can complete what Dineen called a true cradle-to-cradle journey – where a plastic bottle is collected, recycled and remade into another bottle instead of being down-cycled or lost from the stream entirely.

“When packaging is designed to work with existing collection and recycling systems, it has a much better chance of returning as new packaging rather than leaving the circular material stream,” he said.

Richa Desai, chief sustainability and strategy officer at Sabert, said many recycling challenges originate during product development. “Packaging must be thought about holistically. Every part matters, from the base resin to the labels, adhesives, colorants, closures, barriers and additives.” A package may be made from recyclable materials, she explained, but if any individual component is incompatible with current infrastructure, its odds of becoming new packaging drop sharply.

“One of the most overlooked considerations is whether the recycling infrastructure exists and whether it will actually accept the package,” Desai said.

The problem with multi-material packaging

One of the clearest examples of why design matters involves multi-material flexible packaging. Nicholas Wahl, founder of TWO Packaging and TWOFORM, said consumers often assume that if individual materials are recyclable, the finished package will be too. That’s rarely the case with laminated flexible packages common in the food industry.

He pointed to a common pouch structure combining matte oriented polypropylene, metallized PET and polyethylene. Individually, each material can be recycled, yet permanently bonding them together creates a package current systems cannot separate.

“Polypropylene is recyclable. PET is recyclable. Polyethylene is recyclable. Aluminum is recyclable,” Wahl said. “But the moment you laminate them together into one film, no sorting facility can pull those layers apart again. Four recyclable materials go in, one unrecyclable package comes out.”

Desai said multi-material constructions remain one of the biggest barriers to recycling because sorting systems are built to identify complete packages, and do not dismantle complex layers after the fact. Because MRFs sort whole packages by resin type rather than pulling apart laminates, a product’s recyclability is effectively decided months before it enters the waste stream.

“Design is where the problem starts, so it’s where the fix has to start too,” Wahl said.



Manufacturers, packaging designers and recyclers are embracing “design for recyclability” – an approach that considers a package’s entire lifecycle during design, rather than after it’s already manufactured.

The rise of mono-material solutions

To address that challenge, manufacturers increasingly are replacing multi-layer structures with mono-material packaging – relying on a single polymer family, such as all-polyethylene or all-polypropylene, paired with advanced barrier coatings to maintain freshness. These structures carry different cost and performance tradeoffs, but offer compatibility with existing recycling systems that laminated packaging often cannot. According to Wahl, moving customers away from traditional Mylar-style structures toward mono-material packaging has produced the greatest impact. “It’s rebuilding the whole structure of the package down to one material instead of four,” he said.

Desai said manufacturers are also focusing on lighter-colored packaging that optical sorters can recognize, while incorporating post-consumer recycled content wherever possible. Sabert recently introduced packaging with 25 percent post-consumer recycled material and lighter colors that improve sorting compatibility. “We’re seeing many manufacturers design packaging that can be processed within existing recycling systems rather than waiting on the infrastructure to be in place,” she said.

Dineen agreed manufacturers are rethinking development – simplifying

structures, reducing unnecessary material combinations, and evaluating every component through the lens of recyclability, while still protecting products through distribution.

“The goal is to improve recyclability while continuing to protect the product effectively, because a packaging change that results in more damaged, spoiled or wasted product is not a sustainable improvement,” Dineen said.

Small design choices, big recycling impacts

While multi-material packaging is one of the industry’s biggest challenges, smaller choices matter too. Labels, adhesives, pigments and inks often determine whether an otherwise recyclable package makes it through processing.

Wahl said labels are frequently overlooked. A recyclable container can still be rejected if the label uses an incompatible resin or an adhesive that won’t release during recycling. “Some adhesives are made to let go clean in the hot wash step recyclers use to strip labels off,” he said. “Others are made to hold on no matter what. It’s one small spec choice...and it can be the whole difference between something actually getting recycled or getting rejected at the plant.”

Desai said dark pigments, certain inks

See PLASTIC RECYCLING, Page B2

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Plastic Recycling

■ Continued from Page B1

and incompatible adhesives frequently interfere with optical sorting and downstream processing. “If a package cannot be sorted correctly, it cannot be recycled, regardless of how sustainable the rest of the design may be,” Desai said. Carbon-black plastics are a well-known example,



since near-infrared sorters struggle to detect them; choosing detectable pigments can meaningfully improve recovery without changing performance.

Dineen added that package size, incompatible materials and colors that degrade recycled resin quality all shape how well products move through today's infrastructure. “The goal is to design it so it can be recognized and processed within the systems that actually exist,” he said.

Better design, better material – and earlier collaboration

For recyclers, better package design translates directly into improved processing efficiency and higher-quality recycled materials. Rohini Battacharjee, associate business analyst at ALPLA Group, said designing with recycling in mind benefits every stage of the process, from automated sorting through resin recovery. “By designing with recycling in mind, you can make it easier for sorting equipment to identify and easier to separate from other materials, resulting in better material yields,” she said.

“Good packaging design supports the production of high-quality recycled material that can remain in circulation for longer,” Battacharjee said.

That perspective has encouraged greater collaboration between recyclers, manufacturers and brand owners earlier in development, with recyclers increasingly helping companies understand how products will perform in real-world collection and processing systems. “The earlier those conversations happen, the better,” Battacharjee said.

Desai agreed manufacturers increasingly engage recyclers during the design phase rather than after commercialization. “Recyclers are becoming key players in the packaging design process, helping inform decisions at the start and ultimately helping drive better outcomes for the entire system,” she said. “It needs to be a collaborative process,” Battacharjee added. “Everyone shares the same goal of keeping more material in circulation.”

Regulation and industry standards drive better design

This collaboration is becoming more important as sustainability commitments and regulations evolve. Desai said recyclability now carries direct financial implications as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs, recycled-content mandates, California's SB 343 and the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation reshape packaging decisions. “We are now entering an age in which recyclability has a

direct financial value attached to it,” she said. Companies that redesign today, she added, will be better positioned to reduce future EPR costs, improve access to recycled-content supplies and meet evolving customer expectations. “Regulation often speeds innovation and gives a competitive advantage to companies willing to move early rather than wait for mandates.”

Wahl has seen those forces firsthand. “We've got customers running through 100,000 Mylar bags a month,” he said. “When you're moving that kind of volume you start seeing the trash pile up.” Whether companies are driven by regulation or customer demand matters less than the outcome, he said: “Either way you end up with a recyclable package, so it's a net win regardless.”

Organizations like the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) and How2Recycle have developed detailed design guidance covering labels, pigments, adhesives, closures and material compatibility, while assessment tools, lifecycle modeling platforms and material-selection software now let companies evaluate packaging before it reaches the marketplace. “Designing for recyclability has become much more data driven,” Desai said.

Designing for a more circular future

Looking ahead, industry experts believe design for recyclability will become standard practice rather than a specialized sustainability initiative. “I think we'll reach a point where designing for recyclability is simply part of designing packaging,” Dineen said, pointing to growing collaboration across the value chain. “A circular economy can't be built by any one part of the value chain alone. We close the circle together, and the stronger those connections are, the longer that circle can keep turning.”

Desai believes the greatest progress will come when improvements in package design and recycling technology advance together – continued investment in optical sorting, AI, robotics and digital watermarking will help, but even the most sophisticated infrastructure cannot compensate for poor package design. “The greatest progress will be achieved when innovation at the upstream and downstream stages advances together,” she said.

She also sees consumer education as key. “We might design a package to be recyclable and set up sophisticated recovery systems, but if consumers are unclear about how or where to recycle it, the system will fail,” she said, pointing to a need for more consistent labeling and clearer disposal instructions.

Mix of technologies required to recycle engineering plastics

According to a recent article by BASF researchers, a mix of recycling technologies is necessary to ensure that a broad variety of plastics can be recycled. Unlike high-volume commodity plastics such as the polyolefins used in packaging, specialty plastics often require recycling technologies tailored to their specific properties and applications. This applies, for example, to compounded polyolefins, polyurethanes and polyamides. These materials are designed for demanding uses, such as automotive applications, where standard plastics often do not provide the required performance.

Achieving circularity for plastics from heterogeneous waste streams requires two things: scalable sorting processes and the right mix of recycling technologies. The suitable approach depends on the material itself as well as on the composition of the waste stream. “There is not one single standard technology for recycling engineering plastics,” emphasized lead author Dr. Bernhard von Vacano, head of the Plastics Circularity Research Program at BASF. “Instead, it is crucial to have an intelligent mix of various complementary technologies adapted to particular plastic waste streams. The aim is to produce high-quality recycled materials and achieve a closed loop for engineering plastics.”

Various paths for plastic recycling

The most common technology is mechanical recycling, in which plastics are sorted, crushed and melted. This process is energy-efficient but does not work with all plastic types and requires clean and homogenous waste streams. Mechanical recycling is particularly well suited for packaging waste materials with large volumes of relatively pure polymers and limited amounts of additives. Nevertheless, quality and hygiene requirements can restrict the use of mechanically recycled materials in new packing products. There are limits to mechanical recycling for plastics used in technically demanding applications, as suitable waste streams are often scarce and plastic products frequently contain complex polymer compositions.

In contrast, solvent-based recycling is suitable for more complex waste plastics. In this process, a solvent is used to selectively dissolve, separate and clean one type of plastic. For example, polyamides can be recovered from scrap vehicles and used again in the manufacturing of new components.

Another important recycling technology is depolymerization. Here, plastics are broken down into their building blocks and put back together again. BASF researchers have developed loopamid®, an innovative process that enables circular textile-to-textile recycling of polyamide 6. Waste textiles can thus be transformed back into polyamide fibers with the same high-quality standards as conventional polyamide 6. In early 2025, BASF started up its first commercial loopamid production facility at its Caojing site in Shanghai, China.

Plastics from very heterogeneous waste streams, which often end up in incineration plants, can be recycled in thermochemical processes, such as pyrolysis or gasification. These technologies require a lot of energy. In pyrolysis, the long-chain polymers of the plastics are broken down into short hydrocarbon chains, which can then be utilized again as a raw material (pyrolysis oil). Gasification produces syngas, which can be deployed as a chemical feedstock in production.

Supportive regulatory frameworks are key for the scale-up

Numerous BASF pilot projects have demonstrated that many recycling processes for polyurethanes and polyamides are technically feasible and can convert waste plastics back into virgin-quality feedstock. “However, two key conditions must be met before these technologies can be deployed at scale and to enable business cases for large scale investments. First, we need effective waste management systems that keep plastics in the loop over the long term. Second, policymakers need to provide clear and reliable regulatory frameworks that support recycling,” said Dr. Jens Hamprecht, co-author of the publication and vice president in BASF's performance materials division.

As an important pillar of the transformation towards a sustainable economy, recycling keeps materials circulating, reduces dependencies on fossil raw materials and conserves resources. A clear and predictable regulatory policy framework can help position Germany and Europe as leading hubs for innovation, supporting technological progress and sustainable growth in the chemical and manufacturing industries. This is why BASF conducts research along the entire value chain to systematically improve recycling processes and close material loops.

Recyclability labeling improves recycling systems

According to The Recycling Partnership, the 2026 Recycling Confidence Index sits at 609 out of 1,000, down 18 points from the 2022 baseline score of 627.

First launched in August 2022, the Recycling Confidence Index was designed to track resident confidence and identify the factors that could be improved to support a system where people can and do recycle. This 2026 update shows where confidence has shifted, and where the system is gaining ground.

Anthony Tusino, senior director of public policy and government affairs of

The Recycling Partnership commented, “Consumer confidence in recycling is falling, and on-pack labeling can help consumers make the right choice when it comes to being part of an effective recycling system, but labeling is one piece. A truly effective recycling system requires five things – packaging is designed to be recycled; communities have access; constituents are engaged; materials are sorted and processed; and end markets turn old material into new products, demanding recycled content for recycled content products.”



Tom Szaky of TerraCycle

by MATT JONES

news@americanrecycler.com

TerraCycle originated from a university project focused on live worm composting. Although this background may imply that chief executive officer, Tom Szaky's, motivations were purely environmental or sustainability-driven, his vision extended beyond those concerns.

"I've always had an interest in entrepreneurship – the idea of starting and building businesses," Szaky told American Recycler News. "In college I really started thinking about purposeful entrepreneurship and became very interested in the weird anomalies of waste."

Among those anomalies are how, while supply and demand curves are drawn regularly in economics, waste is the only type of material that experiences negative demand – people will pay to have it taken away. Szaky muses that everything we possess will one day become property of a garbage company.

"Yet, for how big of a point that is, it's also the least innovative industry per dollar of revenue it enjoys, and a lot of other strange anomalies," said Szaky.

The initial idea for the worm composting project started with marijuana. While Szaky's friends were growing pot plants in a basement, they struggled with the ins and outs of indoor gardening. But one friend eventually solved their problems through feeding organic waste to worms to create fertilizer. While his friends may have been happy to have better-grown smoke, Szaky was struck by the concept of making a product out of garbage.

"You get paid for the input and you can get paid for the output," explained Szaky. "Negative raw materials cost, and this started that academic exploration on waste. It also was solving the idea of how a business can be a force for good, like purposeful solutions. That's how TerraCycle began as a worm poop company."

Around 2001, Szaky left Princeton and started growing the company. By

their third year, he started to consider an existential question about their purpose – was their goal to be a fertilizer company, or was it to solve waste? If they wanted to be a fertilizer company, they needed to focus on that and develop the very best product they could, which would mean focusing on specific types of garbage. The more he thought about it, he realized he was much more interested in making the garbage the "hero" instead of any specific product. That realization set in motion the metamorphoses of the business from a caterpillar born in worm poop to the beautiful multifaceted butterfly it is today.

The first question they asked themselves was "what really drives recyclability?" They first perceived that to be driven by technical issues, i.e., that perhaps cardboard boxes are recycled because they can be, while toothbrushes are not because we lacked the technology. But the further they dug into the topic, they realized it's not a technological issue, but one of intrinsic economics.

"What makes a toothbrush not recyclable is that a recycler would lose money collecting and recycling it," said Szaky. "And that's the case for 90 to 95 percent of objects. If you zoom out to all the physical things in our lives, the vast majority are not locally recyclable. Not because they can't be, but because they cost more to collect and process than the results are worth."

On the inverse, what makes a cardboard box or an aluminum can recyclable? That it's profitable. Szaky notes that this points to an issue that is getting worse as time goes on – that the biggest trend in object design is cost reduction. Everyone wants things to be cheaper than they were yesterday, which makes them intrinsically less desirable to those who recover raw materials. Our waste streams are constantly becoming less valuable.

So the answer for TerraCycle was to find funding solutions – finding someone who is going to pay the bill to recycle

toothbrushes or toothpaste tubes or juice pouches or plastic gloves. While there are often regulations that prevent the material from being recycled (such as gloves touching bodily fluids), it is extremely rare that the technical challenges cannot be solved – the real bottleneck has always been funding.

In terms of logistics, TerraCycle employs just under 500 people (mostly front office workers), with half of



While they are produced by third parties, TerraCycle designs their own collection bins in-house.

their revenue coming from operations in the United States and the other half coming from their work in 19 other countries around the world. Their supply chain has three major components – collection, sorting and processing. In some cases those are done internally, in others, externally.

A wide variety of collection bins are designed in-house and then produced at scale by fabricators. Transportation is almost always conducted by a third party, though the company does have their own fleet of vehicles. Those vehicles are predominantly parcel delivery-style trucks – never garbage trucks.

As for sorting, about 40 percent of sorting is done in-house with the rest handled by third parties. Which option is generally decided by logistics. Their facility in Aurora, Illinois, for example, is about 120,000 square feet and has significant capacity for sorting. But in other areas they have not established such large facilities.

"Our smallest sorting centers would be in our reuse division. We run the biggest reuse system in France, and there are a dozen micro sorting centers. Sorting, though, is very different than a material recovery facility (MRF). In an MRF, you have mixed waste and then either it is manually or mechanically sorted into these fractions with fast conveyor belt that movement. Our waste stream purity coming in is 98.7 percent pure to that waste stream and the sortation fraction is incredibly narrow. Most of our input is incredibly pure in that way."

Processing is largely conducted by third parties, but there are exceptions such as lightbulb processing in their B2B division or e-waste assembly in their universal waste division. Beyond that, processing such as plastic pelletization is generally handled by third parties, but TerraCycle

will invest into these companies to have them build lines for them. These investments will amount to millions of dollars annually.

A few examples of materials that TerraCycle will recycle that other companies won't touch – latex nitrile gloves are the first that came to Szaky's mind. Medical gloves that touched bodily fluids cannot be recycled, but that's less than a percentage point of total plastic glove usage. Latex gloves worn by airport security officers are replaced many times a day and while the gloves cannot be effectively reconstituted into the exact same form they were, they can be used for other purposes, such as adding little bits of additional 'grit' to the fingertips of certain gloves to help a user grip better.

Business has been extremely good for the company in recent years – their revenue stream in the United States has almost doubled in the past five years, from \$25 million to about \$50 million. Szaky attributes this to both organic and inorganic growth as the company has grown itself, but they have also made a number of acquisitions in recent years, such as Connecticut-based NLR, which does lightbulb recycling.

"We're looking for U.S.-based acquisitions. We're looking for companies that have been around for a while, ideally a decade or two, that have demonstrated a strong track record of profitability and then focus on doing great recycling work in a very specialized category. What we're not looking for is a curbside recycler or a generic hauler."

As for the organic growth of the company itself, that seems driven by the multifaceted nature of the company and the many waste streams they deal with.

"It's why we have a robust organization," said Szaky. "It's taken us 25 years to get here."



TerraCycle's incoming waste streams – such as the load of pill packaging seen here – are incredibly pure compared to those found at a material recovery facility.

EQUIPMENT
SPOTLIGHT

Pelletizers

by MARY M. THORNTON
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Recycling plastic waste through pelletizing enables users to transform discarded plastic into pellets that can be used as raw material for other products or applications. Instead of sending plastic waste to a landfill, pelletizer machines convert it into valuable material that can be reused or sold, creating a potential source of revenue for the operator. The companies below manufacture equipment that serves many types of plastic recyclers, across the globe.

Bay Plastics Machinery (BPM) provides strand pelletizing systems designed to meet the diverse production requirements of plastics recyclers and compounders processing virtually any thermoplastic material. Products range from laboratory-scale pelletizers that process a single strand at less than one pound per hour to large production systems capable of handling up to 250 strands and throughput rates exceeding 10,000 pounds per hour.

Among BPM's most popular products is the AXP Series Strand Pelletizer. Available with cutting chamber sizes from 4 to 16 inches, the AXP Series can process up to 80 strands and is designed to convert extruded plastic strands into uniform pellets for packaging, handling and downstream manufacturing operations. "This pelletizer is known for its rugged construction, ease of operation, and low-maintenance design. Tool-free access to key components simplifies



Buskirk Engineering

cleaning and servicing, while a dual-bearing rotor support system enhances stability and durability in demanding production environments," Jim Forgash, vice president of sales, explained.

To improve productivity and reduce operating costs, BPM developed proprietary wear technologies that extend component life and minimize maintenance requirements. The InduraMaxx® upper feed rolls are manufactured from a specially engineered material that delivers superior wear resistance and performance at elevated operating temperatures. Complementing this technology is BPM's InduraCut™ carbide blade system, which utilizes a proprietary carbide formulation optimized for rotor and bed knife applications. Both products can help increase uptime and reduce maintenance frequency.

With roots in this technology originally developed by JETRO Inc., a pioneer in strand pelletizing, BPM's SMART control system provides enhanced process monitoring. This helps operators to maintain consistent pellet quality while supporting the evolving needs of modern plastics processing.

Adolfo Porrata, Buskirk plant manager said, "The most efficient plastics recycling takes place during the manufacturing process, minimizing waste handling costs. Our pellet mill is easily embedded into a process to automatically create production tailings in pellet form. Pelletized post-consumer waste – including plastics, can also be resold for use in furniture manufacture. Be it recycled plastics, pellet-fired furnace fuel, densified biomass animal feed, or bulk-reduced and sterilized solid waste for fertilizer, we produce our pellet-mills to perform the pelletizing function seamlessly."

Buskirk builds virtually all associated pieces of equipment to provide customers with a fully-functioning, turnkey pellet production system. Whether the customer is a small, entry-level user or a mid-size through industrial-level operation, a system is engineered and scaled to meet customer needs.

For a manufacturing company that had nearly

30,000 square foot of storage space set aside for regrinding waste, trim and off spec plastic products, Buskirk provided a pelletizing system that allowed the customer to emulate their original raw material. Previously, the client could only blend 20 percent of regrind into raw material. Buskirk Pellets improved efficiency and greatly reduced processing and storage space requirements.

"We stand behind our quality, whether it is the materials used or the workmanship we incorporate. Regardless of where you are located, we ship not just our equipment but replacement and spare parts, to every corner of our distribution area. If it is not in inventory, production stands ready to replace the part to meet our customer's schedule needs. The best testimony of our quality is the rate of growth supported by returning customers and their referred associates across the industries into which pellet production continues to expand," Porrata concluded.

INTCO Recycling manufactures GREENMAX plastic recycling equipment, including plastic pelletizing systems designed to convert recovered plastic materials into reusable pellets for downstream manufacturing. GREENMAX pelletizing solutions can be configured for different plastic streams, including post-consumer and post-industrial materials such as EPS, EPE, EPP, PE, PP and other recyclable plastics, depending on material



Greenmax/Intco Recycling



Bay Plastics Machinery

condition and customer requirements. The systems are typically used after proper sorting, crushing, washing, drying or densifying, helping recyclers transform loose or bulky plastic waste into a more uniform recycled raw material. Key features include stable extrusion performance, user-friendly operation, durable construction, efficient material feeding and flexible system layouts for varied facility needs, including: recycling plants, packaging waste processors and manufacturers with in-house scrap and companies seeking to improve the value of recovered plastic.

One of the main challenges for users is that plastic waste often varies in moisture level, contamination, size, density and melt characteristics. These factors can affect pellet quality and production stability. For many operators, successful pelletizing begins before the pelletizer itself, with proper material preparation and consistent feeding. GREENMAX helps customers evaluate the full recycling process, including size reduction, drying, densification, extrusion and pellet cutting,

See Pelletizers, Page B5

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Pelletizers

■ Continued from Page B4

so the equipment can match the material type and expected processing volume. Training, maintenance access and reliable technical support are also important for reducing downtime and improving long-term performance.

Byron Gu, marketing manager, noted how the market for plastic pelletizing equipment continues to grow as companies look for practical ways to reduce landfill disposal, lower raw material costs and support circular economy goals. “Demand is being driven by higher interest in recycled-content products, corporate sustainability programs and regulations that encourage plastic recovery and reuse. Customers are also paying more attention to automation, energy efficiency, pellet consistency and the ability to process challenging plastic waste streams.

INTCO Recycling’s advantage is its long-term experience not only as an equipment manufacturer, but as a recycler and recycled product manufacturer. This background allows GREENMAX equipment to be developed with real production needs in mind. By helping customers turn plastic waste into valuable recycled pellets, GREENMAX supports a more efficient and commercially viable recycling process.”

As polymer producers increasingly prioritize throughput, energy efficiency and operational reliability, advanced pelletizing technology has become a decisive competitive factor in modern extrusion lines. The Underwater Pelletizer from KraussMaffei Extrusion “addresses these requirements with a solution specifically engineered for demanding LDPE, EVA and POE applications, combining high production capacity, limited maintenance demands and consistent pellet quality,” commented Tim-Keke Umlauf, product manager petrochemical.

KraussMaffei Extrusion has been supplying underwater pelletizers since 1961 and today supports customers with processing volumes of approximately 100 up to 500 KTA per year. The company’s current underwater pelletizer portfolio covers sizes from 50 to 80 and achieves average throughputs ranging from 20 to 60 t/h, depending on melt index and individual customer specifications. Higher throughput capacities can be provided upon request. Usually, the pelletizer is



KrauseMaffei Group GmbH

combined with the KraussMaffei Extrusion KE single-screw extruder.

A key differentiator of the system is its unique cutting concept for LDPE, EVA, and POE applications. Unlike conventional “direct contact cutting” technologies, the KraussMaffei pelletizer operates with a defined gap of 0.05 to 0.1 mm between the knife and die plate. This is enabled by rigid knife heads that are precisely aligned to the die plate, while flexible knife hubs for contact cutting remain available as an option.

The benefits are substantial. Knife lifetime can increase to up to 12 months, compared with an industry average of approximately three months, significantly reducing maintenance intervals and production stoppages. Die plate

lifetime is also extended, contributing to lower overall operating costs. Furthermore, the use of less heat-conductive hard facings such as titanium carbide improves thermal balance within the die plate. Combined with a 2:1 row design and heating channels positioned close to the die holes, the system ensures more uniform melt heating and enhanced pellet quality while less heat is transferred to the cooling / transport water.

“As current market trends are continually shaped by growth in the solar energy sector and the expanding plastics recycling market, KraussMaffei Extrusion continually develops recycling technologies to address evolving sustainability requirements across the polymer industry,” stated Umlauf.

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PSRA reports on the state of polystyrene recycling in North America

The Polystyrene Recycling Alliance (PSRA), a North American coalition advancing innovative polystyrene recycling solutions, issued a comprehensive report documenting the current state of recycling infrastructure, technologies, and end markets for both expanded polystyrene (EPS) transport packaging and rigid polystyrene (HIPS/GPPS) packaging across North America.

The report, informed by rigorous third-party research from Resource Recycling Systems (RRS) and grounded in active regional demonstration projects, presents a detailed account of polystyrene recycling as of 2026 – from collection infrastructure and recycling technologies to verified end markets and investment activity spanning the full value chain.

“This report is about evidence, not aspiration,” said Justin Riney, chair of the Polystyrene Recycling Alliance. “Polystyrene recycling is not a future goal, it is a functioning system with proven technologies, documented end markets, and active projects operating right now in cities across the United States, Canada, and Latin America. The question before stakeholders is whether they will use that evidence to support polystyrene playing an important role in the emerging circular economy for plastics.”

The report highlights key findings by the PSRA, including a substantial and independently verified 31 percent recycling rate for EPS transport packaging in North America, roughly 100 million Americans have access to recycle at least one polystyrene item, and the fact that three commercially active recycling technology –mechanical, dissolution and chemical recycling technologies – can recycle polystyrene today.

With Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation advancing in Oregon, Colorado and other states, PSRA calls on policymakers to let the evidence guide fee structures and to use EPR as a catalyst for polystyrene recycling infrastructure that is already proving itself at scale across North America.

Riney continued, “The facts are clear: polystyrene is not a material to be eliminated. It is a circular opportunity already being realized, one investment and one partnership at a time.”

PureCycle, Mitsui & RM TOHCELLO partner on recycled polypropylene packaging in Japan

PureCycle Technologies, Inc., a U.S.-based company revolutionizing plastic recycling, announced a strategic partnership with RM TOHCELLO Co., Ltd., a large producer of biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) film and Mitsui & Co., Ltd., a global trading and investment company that collaborates with PureCycle. The partnership marks a significant breakthrough in sustainable packaging, as BOPP film has historically been one of the most difficult applications to achieve with meaningful recycled content, due to the extremely high purity that is required.

The partnership was initiated in Q1 2023, when RM TOHCELLO began running initial samples of PureFive® resin provided by PureCycle & Mitsui. Those early-stage trials produced promising results, paving the way for pilot-scale production runs that have since been successfully completed. The partners are now preparing to introduce these pioneering materials to converters and brand owners in Japan, with the execution of a formal commercial agreement anticipated in 2027 and shipments to Japan following compliance with import regulations.

“This partnership represents exactly the kind of step-change we envisioned when PureCycle’s technology was developed. We’re unlocking an entire segment of applications where recycled content had been locked out,” said Wiebe Schipper, PureCycle vice president of European and Asia Pacific Operations. “The fact that we have now successfully completed trials with one of the world’s premier film producers is a powerful validation of what our resin can do. We are energized by what this means for our customers, for brand owners, and for the future of sustainable packaging.”

BOPP film is used extensively across food packaging, labels and consumer goods. These are applications where optical clarity, consistency, and performance are necessary. Mechanically recycled polypropylene has long fallen short of the stringent quality requirements these applications demand, which has kept recycled content from being used in this high-value segment of the packaging market.

“Flexible films are one of the fastest growing segments in packaging and we’ve been waiting for a solution like PureCycle’s to allow us to start using recycled content in BOPP film and PP sealant film,” said Masaru Furukawa, RM TOHCELLO executive officer, head, business sector. “We believe these innovative films can help transform post-consumer waste into materials contributing to GHG-emission avoidance. We would like to promote application developments with our value chain partners.”

PureCycle’s proprietary dissolution recycling technology removes additives, colors, odors and other impurities from post-consumer polypropylene waste. PureCycle produces a third-party certified recycled resin that has proven successful in a wide range of applications.

Retail sales growth signals broad-based demand for plastics

The Plastics Industry Association (PLASTICS) chief economist, Dr. Perc Pineda, has released a new economic analysis examining how continued strength in U.S. consumer spending is supporting demand across the plastics value chain. Drawing on the latest U.S. Census Bureau retail sales data, the analysis highlights broad-based growth across key plastics end markets, including motor vehicles, electronics, sporting goods and e-commerce, and what it means for U.S. manufacturing.

Pineda wrote, “Overall, the first half of 2026 reinforced the resilience of consumer spending despite ongoing economic concerns. Growth across many of the retail sectors that are important to plastics provides a favorable backdrop for demand through much of the year. While spending on essential goods remains comparatively stable, the breadth of retail sales growth suggests that consumer demand continues to provide an important foundation for plastics manufacturing and the broader plastics value chain.”

Consumer spending remains a source of strength

U.S. consumers kept the economy chugging along during the first six months of 2026. According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Advance Monthly Retail Trade report, retail sales totaled \$4.4 trillion in the first half of the year, a 5.1 percent increase from the same period in 2025. In June alone, seasonally adjusted retail sales reached \$768.6 billion, up 6.7 percent year-over-year (YoY).

Several major retail categories that are important end markets for plastics posted healthy gains. Sales at motor vehicle and parts dealers increased 5.7 percent YoY, reflecting continued consumer demand for automobiles. Manufacturers have largely kept pace with that demand. The Federal Reserve’s Industrial Production Index for motor vehicles and parts manufacturing has increased on a year-over-year basis since April, rising 1.2 percent in June. That marks a notable turnaround from the 2.1 percent decline recorded a year earlier and the 6.2 percent drop in November 2025.

Broad-based demand across plastics end markets

Electronics and appliance stores also recorded strong performance, with combined retail sales increasing 8.6 percent YoY. Demand for electronics continues to benefit from the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence technologies, which depend on computers, data centers, networking equipment, consumer electronics, and increasingly sophisticated vehicle electronics – all of which rely extensively on plastics for components, housings, wire insulation, and connectors.

Appliance sales, meanwhile, remain closely linked to the housing market. Although new home sales declined 6.8 percent in May following a 10.7 percent decline in April from a year earlier, consumers continued purchasing replacement appliances and home electronics, supporting retail activity in this category.

Other retail segments also posted healthy gains. Sales at sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, and bookstores increased 15.2 percent YoY in May. Nonstore retailers, led by e-commerce, recorded a 14.2 percent increase, while miscellaneous store retailers and department stores posted gains of 6.0 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively. Food services and drinking places recorded a 3.8 percent increase. These sectors encompass a wide range of products manufactured from plastics or packaged in plastic materials.

Demand for essential goods also remained steady. Food and beverage stores recorded a 1.0 percent increase in retail sales, with grocery stores rising 0.9 percent YoY in May. Likewise, health and personal care stores posted a modest 0.2 percent increase. These categories tend to be less sensitive to economic cycles because they primarily consist of necessities, resulting in more stable – but slower-growing – consumer spending. For plastics manufacturers, this translates into steady underlying demand for packaging, medical products, and household goods.

Consumer spending remains a tailwind

Overall, the first half of 2026 reinforced the resilience of consumer spending despite ongoing economic concerns. Growth across many of the retail sectors that are important to plastics – including motor vehicles, electronics, sporting goods, and e-commerce – provides a favorable backdrop for demand through much of the year.



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Bill introduced to standardize recycled plastic claims

U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Adam Schiff (D-CA) introduced the Tracking Plastic Act, which would implement a standardized process for tracking recycled materials to address mislabeling and fraud by companies, reduce errors and verify the origins of recycled plastic content, helping Americans better understand the environmental impact of the products they are buying. The legislation would crack down on misleading recycled plastic claims by establishing the first standardized federal system to track and verify recycled plastic content throughout the supply chain. It would protect consumers from deceptive environmental claims, hold companies accountable for the accuracy of their labeling, and strengthen confidence in America's recycling system.

Companies currently use inconsistent methods to measure and report recycled plastic content, making it difficult to verify claims and leaving consumers vulnerable to misleading or inaccurate labeling. The Tracking Plastic Act would create a transparent, science-based framework for tracing recycled plastic content, improving accountability, reducing fraud and giving Americans confidence that products marketed as environmentally responsible are backed by credible data.

"Every time Americans pick up a product at the store, they should be able to trust what they see on the label and not have to wonder whether the products they buy are truly helping to reduce plastic waste," said Senator Booker. "This legislation will give consumers the honest information they need, strengthen our recycling systems, and ensure companies are accountable for helping

address the plastic pollution crisis."

"Implementing a reliable process of tracking recycled materials will provide Americans with accurate information on plastics used in the products they're buying. Consumers deserve the truth when making choices among competing products. Our legislation will crack down on companies that mislead the public on their reporting of recycled plastic content," said Senator Schiff.

The Tracking Plastic Act would establish a federal working group on recycled plastic content traceability with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Agriculture, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of State, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Laboratory of the Rockies, institutions of higher education and the National Academy of Sciences.

The working group would:

- Develop recommendations to improve the measurement, traceability, and reporting of recycled plastic content across applicable sectors of the economy; and
- Develop recommendations to increase the use of post-consumer resin.

In addition to Booker and Schiff, the legislation is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The Tracking Plastic Act is endorsed by the Association of Plastic Recyclers, Recycling Partnership, World Wildlife Fund, Ocean Conservancy and Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Aaron Industries appoints Todd Marchand as president

Aaron Industries, a provider of recycled polymer solutions, has appointed Todd Marchand as president. In this role, Marchand will lead the company's continued growth in recycled material innovation while supporting strategic business development and operational excellence across the organization.

Marchand brings more than two decades of plastics industry experience, including 20 years with Aaron Industries. During his tenure, he has held leadership roles spanning sales, operations, manufacturing, and executive management. Most recently, he served as vice president, where he helped guide the company through a period of significant growth and advancement.

Over the past 15 years, Marchand has played an instrumental role in doubling company revenue, expanding Aaron's customer base beyond the Northeast, and strengthening the company's presence in the Canadian market. He also participated in key organizational improvements, including the development of internal systems and office staff, as well as the implementation of ERP and quality



management systems. This sales growth led Aaron to modernize all manufacturing equipment to support increased capacity and consistency.

In addition, Marchand helped build Aaron Industries' pulverizing business from the ground up, growing the operation to three pulverizing lines running 24 hours a day, five days a week. He has also overseen vendor relationships and supply contracts to ensure the quality, consistency, and reliability customers expect.

Beyond his work with Aaron, Marchand was one of the founders of PEAK Performance Compounding LLC and served as president for six years. In 2025, the majority stake in PEAK Performance Compounding was sold to the Haartz Corporation. Marchand holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and management from Worcester State University.

U.S. plastic recycling volumes top 5.1 billion pounds



A newly released post-consumer plastic recycling study found that at least 5.1 billion pounds of post-consumer plastic generated in the United States were recovered for recycling in 2024 (most recent numbers), an increase of 114.9 million pounds from the previous reporting period in 2022. Released by the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) with the U.S. Plastics Pact and published on the 2024 U.S. Post-consumer Plastic Recycling Data Dashboard, results are based on surveys conducted by Stina Inc. as well as the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR). The study is conducted every two years and represents the most accurate measurement of the volume of post-consumer plastic recovered for recycling across the country based on data from facility operations.

While overall recovery increased, growth varied significantly across material categories. Plastic film posted the largest increase, rising by 206.8 million pounds for a total of 1,317.2 million pounds recovered, while bottles declined by 89.3 million pounds for a total of 2,694.7 million pounds recovered, and non-bottle rigid plastics declined by 7.5 million pounds for a total of 1,104.3 million pounds recovered. Other plastic categories varied.

"The industry has proven it can recover more than five billion pounds of post-consumer plastic, but holding steady isn't the goal," said Steve Alexander, president & chief executive officer of the Association of Plastic Recyclers. "Plastic recycling is poised for significant growth as a proven solution to reduce plastic waste and strengthen domestic manufacturing, but today's marketplace continues to favor low-cost virgin plastic over recycled materials. To unlock the next phase of growth, we need policies that create stronger demand for recycled plastics and support investment across the recycling value chain."

Findings also align with recommendations outlined in APR's recent report, How to Rebuild and Protect North America's Recycling System, which identifies practical strategies to strengthen domestic recycling through increased investment, improved collection and sorting systems, stronger demand for recycled plastics, and policies that support long-term market growth.

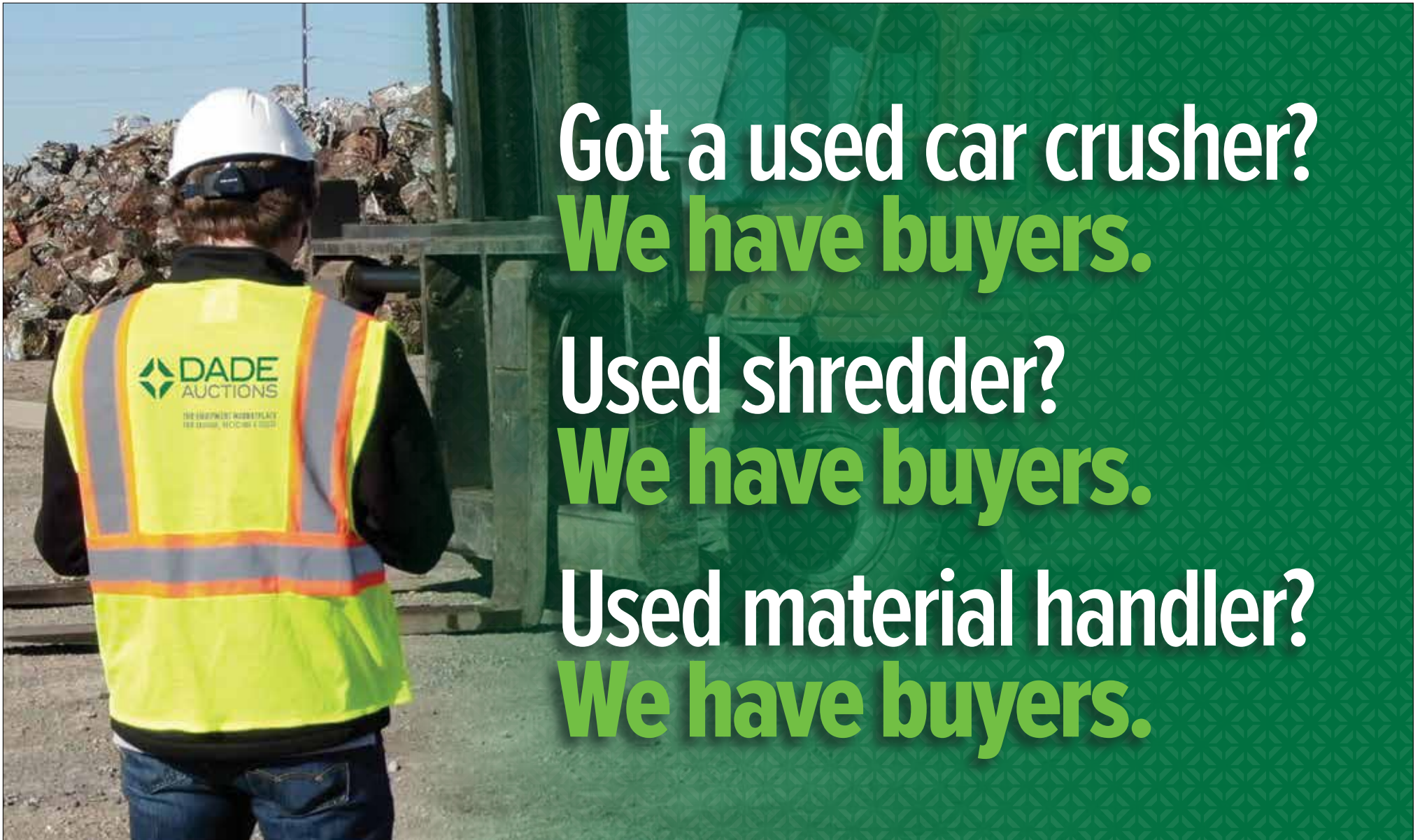
Survey respondents described a market that remained under pressure throughout 2024. Elevated bale prices, soft demand for post-consumer recycled

(PCR) resin, and persistently low virgin resin prices compressed margins across the recycling industry, making it more difficult for reclaimers to invest in additional capacity. It should be noted that these findings reflect market conditions prior to the PET recycling plant closures that occurred in 2025 and 2026.

The data reinforces the commitment to recycle plastics in North America, rather than overseas. Nearly 94 percent of the plastics recovered for recycling – 4.81 billion pounds – were processed by North American reclaimers, including Canada and Mexico. U.S. reclaimers alone acquired 4.35 billion pounds, demonstrating the substantial domestic recycling infrastructure already in place to process recovered plastic, which contributes jobs and economic benefits across the more than 21 states with active plastic reclamation facilities.

"The findings reinforce that a stronger recycling system depends on every part of the value chain working together," said Crystal Bayliss, executive director of the U.S. Plastics Pact. "This type of data consistently shows that plastic recycling works every day, and residents and businesses should feel confident putting recyclable plastics in their recycling bins. By designing packaging for circularity, strengthening collection systems, and expanding demand for recycled materials, we can turn incremental gains into lasting, system-wide progress."

While this data represents one of the industry's most comprehensive assessments of post-consumer plastic recovered for recycling, because the United States does not currently require comprehensive reporting for plastic recycling, a national recycling rate cannot be calculated consistently. The data underscores several opportunities to strengthen the recycling system, including continued investment in collection and recycling infrastructure, stronger demand for recycled materials, and policies that improve system performance. Seven states have now enacted packaging Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws, which are designed to provide dedicated funding for recycling systems while establishing more consistent reporting on the amount of packaging produced and the amount reused, recycled, or composted. As these programs are implemented, the additional reporting is expected to provide a more complete picture of recycling performance and help inform future investments and policy decisions.



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