The background image shows an industrial facility with blue and yellow railings and a complex metal structure. A large green rectangular overlay is centered on the image, containing white text. The text is arranged in a hierarchical manner, with the main title in the largest font and the subtitle in the smallest font.

RECYCLING ON THE EMERALD COAST:
ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY FOR TODAY
AND TOMORROW

EMERALD COAST UTILITIES AUTHORITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
AWARD APPLICATION

OUTLINE

- Residential Recycling Programs
 - History
 - Summary and Timeline
 - Goals
 - Program Development
 - Single Stream Recycling
 - Bulk Recycling
 - MRF
 - Recycling in Industry
 - Biosolids Composting
 - FOG
- Public Education & Community Involvement
 - Advertising Campaigns
 - Strategies
- Digital Strategies to improve recycling
 - Social Media
 - Recycle Coach App
- Community Outreach & Recognition
 - Recycle Star Award
 - Protector of the Environment Award
 - Event Participation
- Measuring our Success
- Program Growth



AN OVERVIEW OF OUR HISTORY

- The Escambia County Utilities Authority (ECUA) was created in 1981 by the Florida Legislature to own, manage, finance, promote, improve and expand the water and wastewater systems of Escambia County and the City of Pensacola.
- ECUA, officially changed its name to the Emerald Coast Utilities Authority in June 2004 and is an independent special district, existing under the laws of the State of Florida.
- The ECUA began offering sanitation services in Escambia County in 1992. Residents are served by three individual sanitation providers:
 - The City of Pensacola, which serves approximately 19,000 households within its city limits
 - The Town of Century, which serves approximately 2,000 households
 - The ECUA, which serves 75,000 households
- Prior to the introduction of ECUA's residential recycling program, the only method of recycling household materials was for residents to deliver recyclables to the County-owned landfill or to several drop-off locations, dispersed throughout the county.

As the County's largest sanitation collection provider, ECUA knew that we had to make Residential Recycling a reality.

SUMMARY & TIMELINE

2008

In 2008, the Florida Legislature established a statewide goal of 75% waste diversion by 2020. Guided by its Mission Statement and corresponding Core Values of Environmental Stewardship, Quality Service, and Reasonable Price, the ECUA developed a residential recycling program that mirrored these core values while filling a community need and working to help fulfill the State's goal.

2009

ECUA launched its Residential Curbside Recycling Program on January 5, 2009

2016

Despite state-wide industry challenges and after experiencing the unexpected closures of several third-party recycling processing vendors, ECUA identified the critical need for dependable recyclables' processing in our region. This realization led to the building of the ECUA's Materials Recycling Facility in 2016 (MRF).

ongoing

AS A VOLUNTARY PROGRAM, A SUCCESSFUL, COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN WAS CRITICAL TO ASSURE ITS SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH, GROWTH AND CONTINUED POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT.

Initial Goals

- Reach a 20% level of participation by the first 6 months of the program
- 40% by year 1
- 50 % by the end year 2
- Educate customers on Rollout details –
 - Upcoming changes to pickup days
 - Delivery of recycling carts
 - Which items ARE or ARE NOT accepted

ECUA HAD TO FIND A WAY TO:

1

DECREASE HOUSEHOLD
REFUSE TONNAGE

2

REDUCE LANDFILL
DISPOSAL COSTS

3

MAINTAIN VALUE AND
SERVICES TO OUR CUSTOMERS.



ECUA'S SINGLE-STREAM
CURBSIDE RESIDENTIAL
RECYCLING PROGRAM
WAS BORN

CHALLENGES

ECUA had to overcome a sudden processing challenge when it learned that the privately-operated recycling facility in Alabama was unexpectedly shutting down in October 2015. This was the third processing facility used by ECUA since the launch of its recycling program in 2009 to close before the end of their contract with ECUA. The Alabama facility was the last (and closest) processor with the capacity to process the volume of ECUA's collected recyclables.

A short-term and partial solution could have been another private facility within reasonable proximity; however, this facility could only process 30% of ECUA's recyclables and it drastically increased the tipping fee, making this option too costly.

As a last resort, ECUA announced to all that it would temporarily start transferring its recyclables to the County Landfill while the MRF was being constructed. ECUA was able to make good on its promises to their customers, surrounding municipalities and other governments when it opened the MRF just 18 months after its conception.

SOLUTION

ECUA and the County formed a partnership to develop a strategy for long-term handling of the region's recyclable materials. The first key decision was acknowledging the need for a publicly-owned MRF that would provide reliable processing of recyclables on the Emerald Coast, eliminating the reliance on a third-party processor.

Second, the facility would be owned by ECUA but located on the County's property at their landfill. This would enable the facility to provide a “one-stop-shop” for the ECUA fleet and other haulers within the region.





THE BIRTH OF ECUA'S MRF

MRF

The ECUA's MRF is a remarkable example of how governmental agencies can come together to solve a challenging recycling issue in an extraordinarily short timeframe. The partnership worked under an expedited timeframe to build a 53,460 square-foot single stream MRF capable of processing 25 tons-per-hour. Strategic planning for the \$10.7 million facility began in 2015 and was completed in just 18 months. ECUA decided to employ a dynamic process where the equipment, site development, and operations schedules were compressed by overlapping the design, permitting, procurement, negotiations, and construction. ECUA has constructed a modern high-tech MRF with several state-of-the-art enhancements to allow for advanced automation, customization for desired materials removal and processing, and automatic performance reporting thus producing a cleaner and more marketable material.

"Building this partnership has been instrumental in eliminating our reliance on outside contractors for the processing of this region's recyclables. Now, we can focus on what's really important: keeping recyclable material out of the landfills and putting them to good use once again."

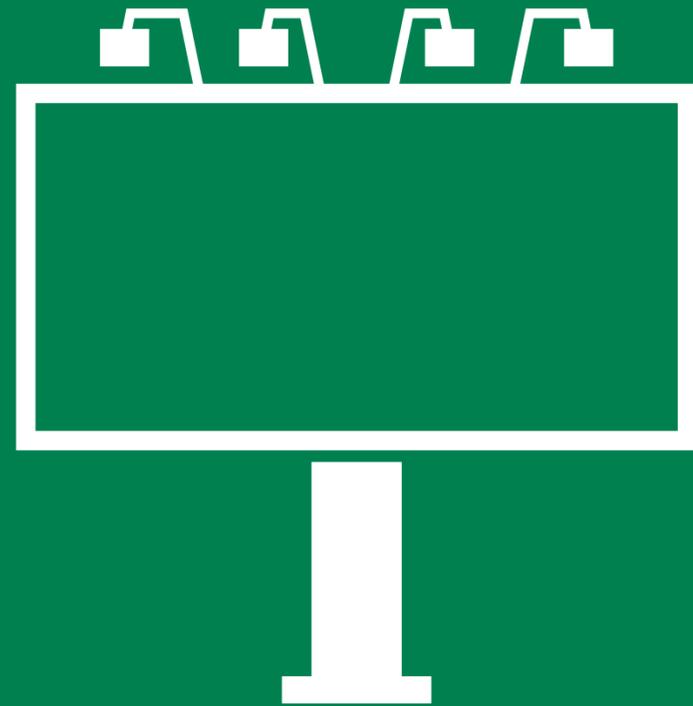
- Stephen Sorrell, ECUA Executive Director



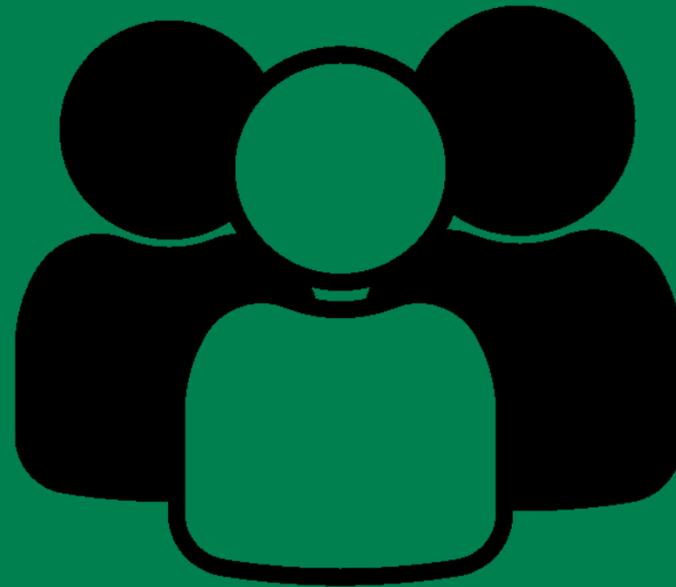
"With the opening of this facility, we will no longer be completely dependent on outside parties to process our recyclables. We will control our destiny, and each year, we will snatch 40,000 tons of material that would have languished in the landfill in perpetuity, and recycle it for future use. Today is a testament to the people of our community who embrace recycling and who wanted a greener world."

*- Ms. Lois H. Benson, ECUA Board Chairman
and Representative for District 2*

PUBLIC EDUCATION



TRADITIONAL MEDIA



PUBLIC OUTREACH



DIGITAL &
SOCIAL MEDIA

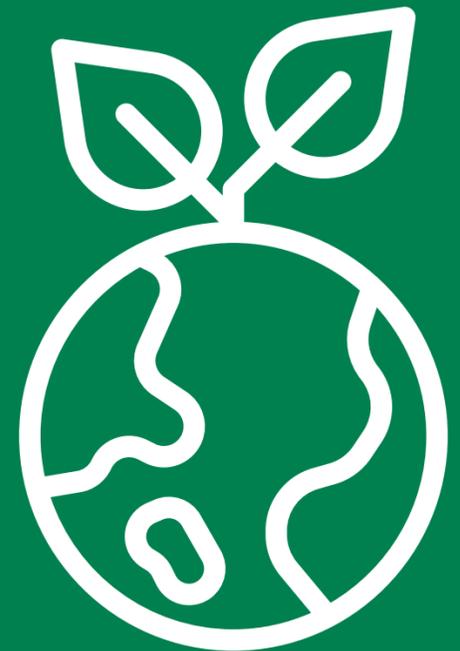
PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

 Public information staff researched other communities' programs and communication methods to determine best practices and moved forward to create our own strategies tailored to a local audience.

We tapped into established tools: our customer newsletter; direct mail letters; door-hangers; websites; outdoor, radio, online and print advertising, and one-on-one media interviews.

Over the years, we've added:

- Truck signage
- Recycle Star Program
- Recycle Coach App
- Social Media



TARGET AUDIENCES

- Primary Audience: our 62,500 residential household customers (in 2009); Current customer count: 75,000
- Secondary Audience: Tourists and visitors / military residents.
 - Vacation destination = vacation rentals and condominium
 - Military presence = continuous turnover of residents near NAS Pensacola
 - More recently: emergence of AirBnB and VRBO rentals = more visitor traffic



BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- Initial Budget: \$50,000 spread over two fiscal years
- Worked with an advertising agency on some campaign components
- Created as much artwork in-house to maximize our budget
- Used well-timed press releases and our existing relationships with local media to obtain considerable public exposure through interviews and news reports
 - The region's only daily newspaper, the Pensacola News Journal (PNJ) developed a front page / full page tear-out feature that residents could retain for future reference near the time of our launch; periodic on air interviews with radio stations and television also provided a continual reminder to the community that our program's launch was approaching



TRADITIONAL MEDIA & PRINT MATERIALS

CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

- Local Media exposure included: Pensacola News Journal; northescambia.com; IN Weekly; WEAR-TV3; FOX10News; WCOA; AM 1620, WUWF Radio (PBS)
- Refrigerator Magnets
- Monthly Newsletter & Flyer
- Online “motion” ads feature materials falling into the can. These were a huge success as people loved to watch the pizza box, glass bottle, and bunched up tin foil dropping into recycling containers



CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

- Artwork creative was designed to be adaptable to suit several applications. “We Never Tire of Recycling” artwork was used in small print ads, online ads, billboards, and truck signage.
- Billboard and truck signage art were used at the launch of the program. This is the version that appeared on the billboards. The truck signage version included our logo and a website address and is still on some of our trucks.



PUBLIC OUTREACH

ECUA's important environmental programs have a pronounced impact on our community. We share our immediate program priorities through several means: Our Newcomer's Welcome Kit, Neighborhood Watch appearances, participation in community and school events, and an annual calendar.

This year, Public Information staff did not create a calendar due to the impacts of the pandemic, and the absence of venues for calendar distribution. However, we are looking forward to resuming the publication of this most popular and annually-anticipated public education tool with a 2022 edition. Intended for distribution to employees and customers, the calendar typically features beautiful local photography that highlights an ECUA program or service each month, as well as providing educational material in support of our Recycling and FOG programs.



★ RECYCLE STAR ★

- The ECUA's Recycle Star Program recognizes our residential recycling customers who consistently practice positive, safe, and clean recycling. The program includes recognition through a monthly award presented to the Recycle Star winner, randomly selected at the monthly Board meeting from a pool of eligible candidates, dedicated to practicing and exhibiting positive recycling habits.
- Criteria for judging include random inspection of individual recycle containers by ECUA recycling staff and confirmation of compliance with recycling guidelines. We recognize the monthly winner with a certificate, an assortment of modest prizes, and a \$50 gift card from ECUA or one of our Recycle Star Program vendor partners.



PROTECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

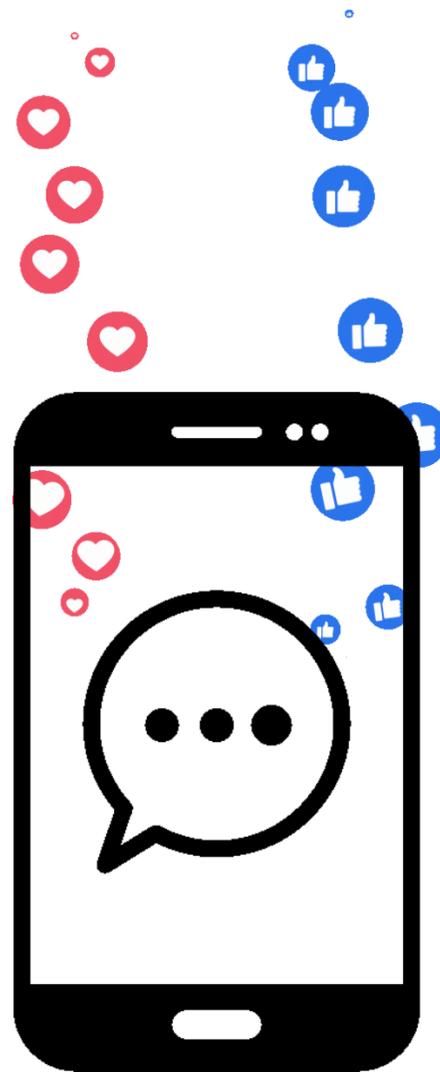
The Emerald Coast Utilities Authority (ECUA) Protector of the Environment award is a one of-a-kind initiative, which rewards local businesses and food service establishments that promote a positive, safe, and clean work environment through the ECUA Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) and Backflow Programs. Prior recipients of the POE Award include: Baptist Hospital, McDonald's, Hilton Garden Inn, International Grocery, Sacred Heart Hospital, Whataburger, Navy Federal Credit Union, Escambia County School Board, Pensacola State College, West Florida Hospital, WENDCO (Wendy's), Beaver's Inc. (Arby's), and Publix Supermarkets just to name a few.



The award is aimed at recognizing community leaders and businesses who properly train their employees on Best Management Practices (BMPs), participate in scheduled cleanliness inspections, and have no FOG and Backflow Program violations and/or warnings within a one-year period.

DIGITAL MEDIA

- In January 2021, ECUA partnered with Recycle Coach to offer free download and use of the app to all ECUA residential sanitation customers.
- Following Hurricane Sally in late 2020, ECUA recognized a sharp increase in the use of Social Media platforms such as Facebook as a means of sharing timely information between ECUA and the community. In response to this trend, ECUA hired its first Digital and Social Media Coordinator in May 2021 and the use of social media continues to grow rapidly.



RECYCLE COACH

We know that recycling can be complicated, so ECUA made the Recycle Coach application available to all of our sanitation customers for free. This helpful app is designed to keep our customers connected and engaged in the recycling process. It provides fast, convenient information on collection schedules and Recycling "Do's and Don'ts."

The useful "What Goes Where" feature allows users to search specific items to see if they are accepted at our MRF. For items that we are not currently accepting, such as Styrofoam and textiles, the app can provide information on where these items can be taken to recycle locally. Subscribers can sign up to receive weekly calendar reminders and can even report a missed pickup or damaged cart through the app.

- Since January 2021, 1,724 ECUA sanitation customers have downloaded the app
- 8,408 material searches have been entered
- 65,494 interactions have occurred on the app



New for ECUA Residential Sanitation Customers!

Search for an item

Your Schedule

Today

- Trash
- Recycling
- Yard Waste
- Bulk

- Notifications & reminders about collection schedules
- Sort waste correctly with the "What Goes Where?" search tool

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

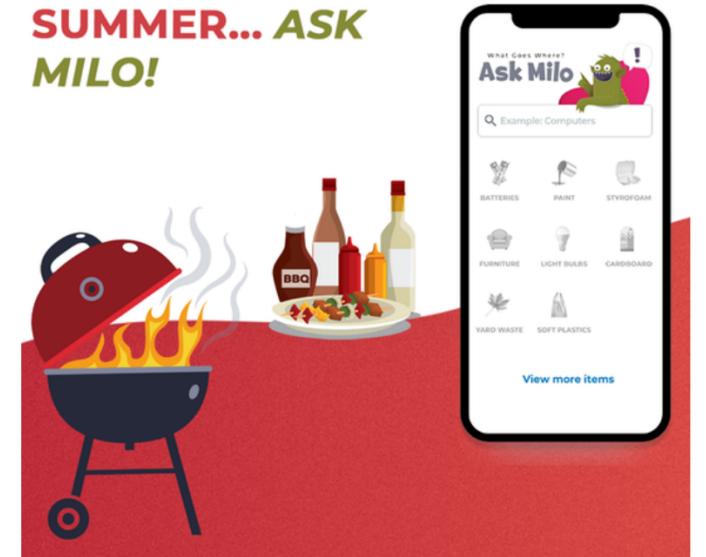


CAMPAIGN
ELEMENTS

Sort your waste correctly with the
"What Goes Where" Search Tool



RECYCLING MADE
EASY THIS
SUMMER... ASK
MILO!



How to dispose of fireworks!



Know what items
you can recycle.



Plastic Bags Cannot be Recycled in
Your ECUA Recycling Receptacle.

SOCIAL MEDIA



40,314 Tons
of Recyclables
Were Processed at the
ECUA MRF in 2020

To learn more about our recycling program, visit: [LiveGreenECUA.com](https://www.LiveGreenECUA.com)

Keeping You and the
Environment Safe

Waste and Recycling
Workers Week

Week of June 17th

CONSERVE + PRESERVE

RECYCLE & RENEW

OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT!

Styrofoam can
NOT be recycled
in your ECUA
recycling bin.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

HAVE A BALL WITH RECYCLING
AND THE NEW RECYCLING APP FOR ECUA CUSTOMERS




recycle coach

ECUA
YOUR RECYCLING PARTNER

Search for an item

Your Schedule

Today JANUARY 14TH

- Trash
- Recycling
- Yard Waste
- Bulk

- Weekly Reminders
- Notifications
- Sorting Tool
- Educational Campaigns
- AND MUCH MORE

DOWNLOAD TODAY

GET IT ON Google Play Available on the App Store

FIRST

TRASH THE LEFTOVERS



THEN

RECYCLE THE BOX



RECYCLE RIGHT • NO FOOD OR LIQUIDS

ECUA
YOUR RECYCLING PARTNER

Live Green, Recycle.



ECUA
YOUR RECYCLING PARTNER

LEARN MORE

ECUA RECYCLES

- glass
- paper
- plastics
- aluminum
- cardboard
- and a whole lot more

ECUA
YOUR RECYCLING PARTNER

visit us at: livegreenequa.com • ECUA.fl.gov

Biosolids Composting

ECUA
Leaf the Plastic Behind
Brown is the New Green

Emerald Coast
bloom
• The Most in Bio-Compost •

Have you heard?
Brown is the new Green

Leaf the Plastic Behind - Brown Bag It Instead!

ecua.fl.gov



ECUA
YOUR RECYCLING PARTNER

*** Celebrate ***
DON'T CONTAMINATE!

NO LIQUIDS

NO FOOD

Check it BEFORE
You Can it
ecua.fl.gov



ADDITIONAL RECYCLING PROGRAMS

- **Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG)**

- Our FOG program is designed to reduce the number of sewer pipe blockages and related overflows by educating residents and businesses on how to properly dispose of fats, oils, and grease. Introducing FOG into the sewer system can result in backups and overflows on streets, properties, and into businesses. Sewer overflows aren't only unsanitary and bad for the environment, the expensive cleanup and repairs associated with the improper disposal of FOG can lead to increased sewer rates for all customers as well.



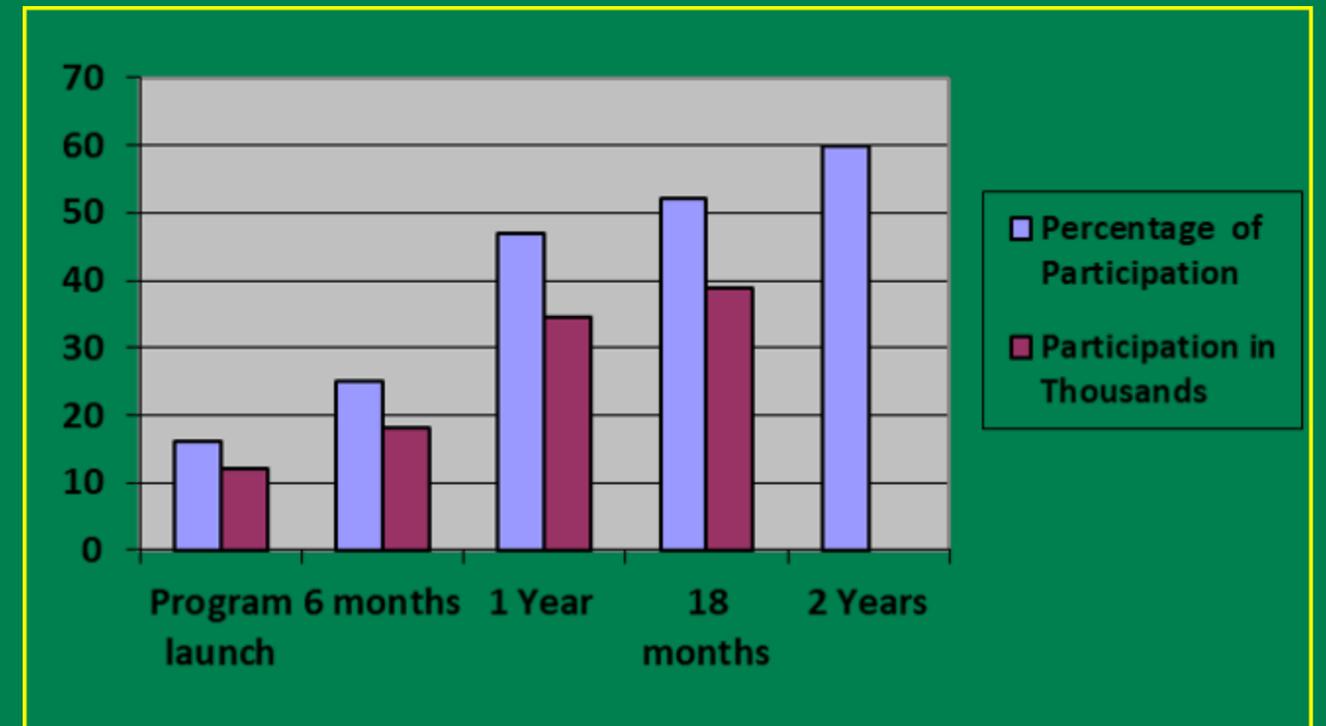
- **Composting**

- Emerald Coast Utilities Authority (ECUA) began composting operations at the Central Water Reclamation Facility (CWRF) in March 2016. The composting process combines ground yard waste (leaves, grass, pine straw, etc.) collected throughout the community with biosolids to create an optimal blend of materials that generate a nutrient-rich final product, 'bloom'- the most in bio-compost.



MEASURING RESULTS

- Goals: reach a 20% level of participation by the first 6 months of the program
- 40% by year 1
- 50 % by the end year 2
- Participation levels measured by the numbers of customers signed-up at:
 - The launch of the program
 - At six month intervals thereafter, to the 2-year mark
- We also tracked the rate at which customers signed up
 - In the early days of the program, we were delivering 600+ containers per week
 - 300-400 containers per week after the first several months, tapering to
 - 200-250 sign-ups near the end of the first year

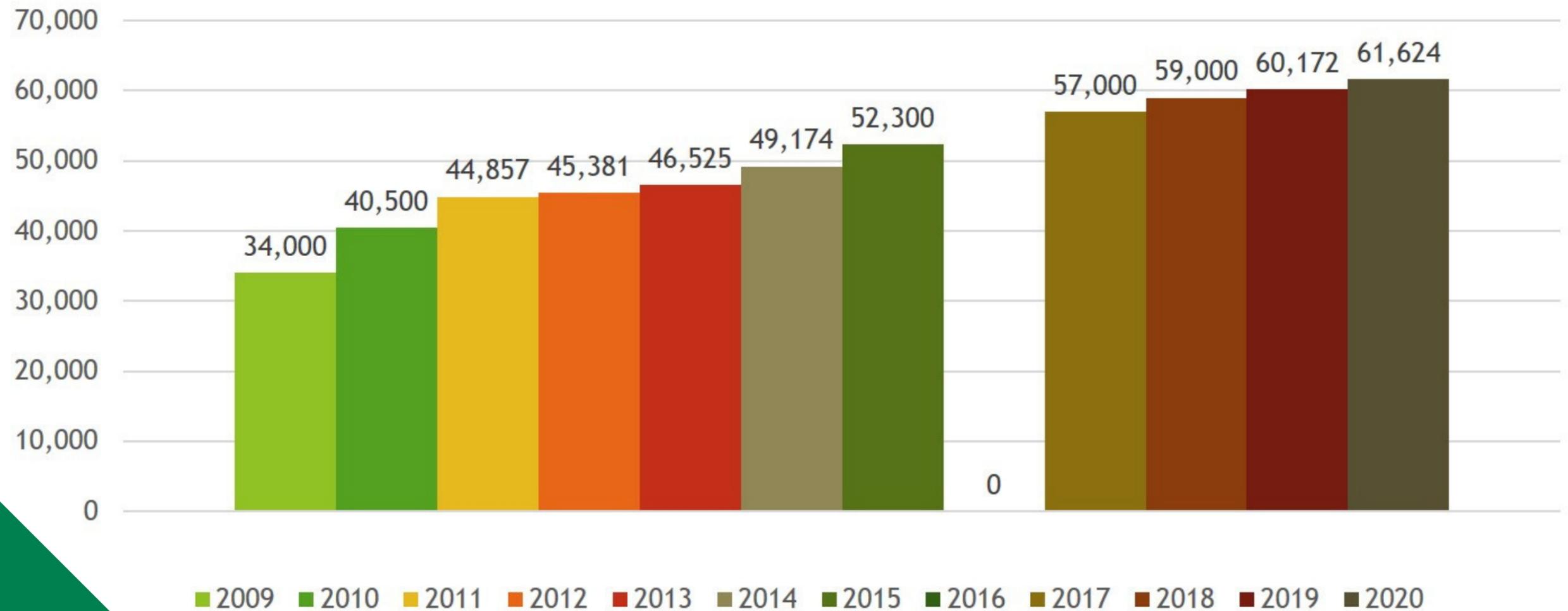


MEASURING RESULTS

- We were astonished to see that at launch on January 5, 2009, we already had 80% of our first six-month goal achieved!
- We reached our 20% goal by the third week in January
- We surpassed each milestone set in our goals and continued to increase our participation each year since the inception of the program

MEASURING RESULTS

- Today, we are at 75% participation and receive about 50 weekly requests for recycling containers.



THANK YOU!

