

Community POWER: Partners on Waste
Education & Reduction

Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board



ROUND 13 FINAL SUMMARY REPORT BUSINESS EDUCATION IN RAMSEY COUNTY

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Executive Summary

As part of the Community POWER grant program, Ramsey County designated funding for four business education grants in 2013. Projects lasted 12 months from August 2013 to August 2014. The maximum grant amount was \$12,000. Two of the four projects were extended for another grant year, and four new projects will be carried out in 2014-2015.

The goal of the grant projects was to educate businesses that are not currently aware of waste reduction and recycling practices in the workplace by increasing awareness of waste issues and engaging participants in waste reduction activities, leading to long-term behavior change.

Through the four Round 13 Business Education Community POWER projects, 2,967 Ramsey County businesses of the metro area were engaged in active waste reduction activities. These activities include things like attending a workshop, taking part in a video or resource development, attending train-the-trainer sessions, interacting at a booth, and receiving technical assistance.

An additional 22,881 businesses were reached with waste reduction messages through the marketing and communication efforts of grantees. Most of these messages included Rethink Recycling information and/or RethinkRecycling.com. These messages were shared through newsletters, newspapers, email, radio ads, websites, presentations, and community newspapers.

Project Summaries

Grand Avenue Business Association

The Grand Old Day Planning committee worked with experts to increase waste reduction and recycling at the event. In 2014, 3.9 tons of recycling was properly disposed of through the use of a waste management team. Seven businesses on Grand Ave applied for the business recognition program and were awarded F.R.O.G. (For Recycling on Grand) decals to place in their store windows to recognize their store for their waste reduction efforts. One

of the F.R.O.G. businesses was also honored with a sustainability award at GABA's annual meeting, with more than 175 people in attendance.

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

SPACC continued the "Think Green" project to promote sustainability integration among small businesses in the East Metro. They featured a new "Think Green" tip of the week in our e-newsletter that is received by over 12,000 recipients. They also created a Reduce, Reuse, Recycle video competition with cash prizes for businesses that took the initiative to implement simple and effective or innovative techniques to reduce company waste or environmental impact.

Union Park District Council

The Union Park Composter: A Business Initiative directly engaged 100 Union Park businesses through presentations at UPDC and Midway Chamber events. They also reached out to 600 businesses with communications strategies. UPDC published monthly notices in the Union Park District Council e-newsletter and included periodic notices on the Union Park District Council Facebook page. They mailed a postcard to all area Union Park businesses and kept several of those to pass out at events and at the Union Park office. They also offered technical assistance to 15 area businesses to initiate a food recycling program with the help of Waste Wise.

White Bear Lake Chamber of Commerce

The White Bear Chamber of Commerce continued much of the same process as last year with a few modifications with assistance from Minnesota Waste Wise and the city of White Bear Lake by requesting community sponsorships from the White Bear Township and the city of Vadnais Heights. They participated in the Century College Green EXPO reaching 31 businesses and talked to 40 attendees at the Mahtomedi EXPO. They received interest in from 12 companies through Waste Wise visits. They distributed a newsletter and e-newsletter articles in White Bear publications and produced programs on the cable stations.

Project Highlights

One of the aspects of the project that we are most proud of was the expansion of the business recognition program. We have heard wonderful feedback from many stakeholder groups (businesses, residents, F.R.O.G. committee members, etc.). We were excited to be able to highlight the changes through a variety of channels. In addition, we are very excited to expand on the efforts of the past year.

-Sue Evens, Executive Director, Grand Avenue Business Association

We are very proud of our video contest. We received many views and positive feedback on our introduction video. Many members commented that it was very original and entertaining, which was very rewarding considering all the hard work that went into it. Also, we received a number of organic entries, businesses that we did not directly encourage to enter, meaning our promotions were having a large reach and causing interest.

-Scott Beauchamp, Manager of Public Affairs, St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

I think having a great partnership with the Midway Chamber of Commerce made me most proud and excited about this grant. I was able to communicate my goals to a variety of businesses in many different venues with different business owners and employees. The

Lunch on the Avenue, Lunch N Learns, and special afternoon workshops (especially the one geared towards for-profit businesses working with nonprofit ones) made it fun and "profitable."

-Jennifer Carpenter, Recycling Coordinator, Union Park District Council

We were most proud of our participation in the Green Expo, which was supported by the city of White Bear and Century College.

- Tom Snell, Executive Director, White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce

Sharing Waste Reduction Messages

Grand Avenue Business Association

GABA shared best practices and challenges with our collaborative group of 20 volunteers from Macalester-Groveland Community Council, Summit Hill Association, Ramsey County, the City of St Paul, and Waste Wise.

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

We shared the link to our work through social media; we are followed by many business organizations including the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and Midway Chamber of Commerce.

Union Park District Council

At the January 21, 2014 Neighborhood Issues Committee meeting, a report on project goals and progress was shared with the Recycling Coordinator and local businesses, with 40 people in attendance. At the August 6, 2014 UPDC Board meeting, the Recycling Coordinator and a representative of Waste Wise presented an official report on project goals and progress to 20 people.

White Bear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce.

Century College was a co-sponsor of our Green Expo and promoted the event to their Horticulture, Solar Engineering, and Golf Course Management classes. We did three TV programs on local cable stations. The first one was an interview conducted with the manager of the Lodge and the others with Waste Wise. We also purchased ad space in the White Bear magazine and the White Bear Press to promote the companies that interviewed with Waste Wise.

How Projects Will Be Sustained

Grand Avenue Business Association

We will continue to promote recycling at our events, including Grand Old Day. We will enhance the F.R.O.G. Recognition Program for businesses that recycle.

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

The activities will continue with our grant in 2015 through many of the same ways. We will continue social media, website, and newsletter promotion, and we are looking into having displays and/or informational tables at Chamber events. Additionally, we will begin promoting Ramsey County's Biz Recycling program. Finally, we will restructure our video contest to increase participation and visibility.

Union Park District Council

Rethink Recycling material can be distributed to residents through the Union Park e-newsletter, website, and social media. Union Park will continue to support local businesses and serve as a liaison between the businesses, the city, the county, Eureka Recycling, and other organizations.

White Bear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce.

We plan to organize our Green Expo for October 2015. We were able to connect Waste Wise with 11 business site visits for 2015, and our goal is 20 visits total.

Lessons Learned and Challenges

Grand Avenue Business Association

The biggest challenge that we encountered this year was having the opportunity to share our experiences and findings with other organizations. In the future, it would be good to invite a group of other business association leaders to a continuing education session to share our findings regarding recycling at events and working with businesses to encourage them to be more sustainable. The Community POWER staff was great and was able to answer questions and provide resources as needed.

Overall we were very pleased with the outcomes and progress that was made over the past year. We learned a lot this past year and are already planning waste reduction and recycling efforts for Grand Old Day 2015. This could not have happened without the assistance of the grant.

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

Our biggest challenge was getting businesses to go from awareness to implementation. We have great engagement and were able to interact with a large number of businesses that were previously unaware of these recycling techniques. However, the next step of implementation can be difficult but we are confident that our work with BizRecycling next year will be the tool we need to push us over the top in this area.

We learned many lessons during this process, but a few stuck out. First, we would increase the time allowed for our video contest. We made it 15 seconds or less to try and encourage social media use but we discovered this was difficult for some entrants. Also, we will work to incorporate Rethink Recycling information into Chamber events and engage more members directly.

Union Park District Council

We could have used some additional support in the form of a main event. It could be attended by all the grantees within Ramsey County, where they'd be able to present a big kick off event, and invite businesses from across the county to hear about what we're doing. That way, more businesses can know what to expect from the different grantees in their neighborhood. This would also give the businesses other contacts to use for more information or questions in the future, once their neighborhood grant is over.

The main lesson I learned was to have patience and persistence. Many people want to know the information, but they may not have time right then to get it. I learned to create different methods to attract businesses that may want to recycle and compost more, even though it may not be on their radar. I learned the value in providing information that they can tuck away and have for later when they're ready to review and use it. Most importantly,

even if you think you're not reaching someone, you may have planted the seed of awareness, so they're more likely to respond during the second or third point of contact.

White Bear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce.

Business type seminars just did not work. Also, after contacts were turned over to Waste Wise there was only limited follow-up. I think there needs to be significant exposure concerning the increased cost of waste removal for business in 2016. I suggest bringing the MN. Chamber to various events with the grantee organizations as a co-sponsor, especially since Waste Wise is one of their programs.