

# Mississippi Recycling Coalition

Post Office Box 23294  
Jackson, MS 39225-3294

<http://msrecycles.org/>

Phone: (601) 853-4210  
Fax: (601) 961-5785



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Contact: Jennifer Milner (601-961-5739)  
Sarah Kountouris (601-853-4210)

## Mississippi Recycling Coalition Announces 2017 Environmental Heroes

(JACKSON, MS) – The Mississippi Recycling Coalition (MRC) is pleased to announce the 2017 Environmental Hero Award recipients honoring outstanding recycling programs and organizations in the state. Each year, MRC seeks nominations of organizations, businesses, agencies, schools, and local governments from around the State of Mississippi that have excelled in their recycling and materials management program efforts. The nominees are evaluated based on the success of their recycling efforts including promotion and outreach, the duration and extent of their recycling program, their overall environmental stewardship, and the manner in which recycling has improved community waste handling and environmental practices. The MRC is pleased to recognize the 2017 recipients with our Environmental Hero Awards as “Recyclers of the Year” in the following 6 categories:

- The **City of Hattiesburg** is the recipient of the 2017 “Local Government Recycler of the Year” Award for the state. Under a new administration the City of Hattiesburg has made great strides in increasing participation among residents in the City’s recycling program. The City conducts various outreach activities and programs in area schools and as part of community events throughout the year to promote recycling and educate residents on its many benefits. In addition, the City’s Recycling Division under the Public Works Department has put several plans in place to increase recycling rates in the City including working with community and neighborhood organizations, conducting marketing of the program through various methods (rebranding, website, social media, door to door campaigns, and special events), and increasing recycling efforts in City departments. For these efforts to promote and increase recycling in the City, the City of Hattiesburg receives the 2017 Local Government Recycler of the Year Award for the State of Mississippi.
- The **University of Mississippi** is the recipient of the 2017 “Educational Institution Recycler of the Year” Award for the state. The University of Mississippi conducts several programs and projects which encourage students, faculty, staff and visitors to reduce waste, reuse and recycle. The University has a campus-wide recycling program collecting mixed paper, cardboard, plastics #1 and #2, aluminum and steel. Recycling stations are provided in all buildings on campus and large roll-off bins are available in various locations around campus for the collection of larger amounts of materials making recycling easier and more convenient. In addition, the University collects recyclables during football season as part of their Green Grove Gameday Recycling Program with the help of student volunteers who hand out recycling bags and sort collected materials at the Oxford Recycling Center after the game. Also, the University operates an on-campus composting facility as part of the UM Composting Program. Since the program’s establishment in 2013 more than 45 tons of pre-consumer food waste collected from various campus dining locations around campus

has been diverted from the landfill. The UM Composting Program is also working to complete the loop by partnering with the UM Food Bank and UM Garden Club. Expired food from the food bank is composted, the finished compost is used in the UM Garden, and produce grown in the garden is sent to the Food Bank. The University also conducts and participates in several public outreach and education activities including its annual Green Week Celebration and events with K-12 schools in the area. For their ongoing efforts to promote and educate students, faculty and the overall community on the benefits of recycling, the University of Mississippi receives the 2017 Educational Institution Recycler of the Year Award for the State of Mississippi.

In addition to the University of Mississippi, other educational institutions receiving honorable mention for their recycling efforts include Ridgeland High School of the Madison County School District and Northwest Rankin High School of the Rankin County School District.

- **PACCAR Engine Company** is the recipient of the 2017 “Business and Industry Recycler of the Year” Award for the state. PACCAR Engine Company in Columbus, MS has been a zero waste facility since starting production in 2010, and in 2016 was admitted to MDEQ’s EnHance Program at the Steward Level. As part of their application for EnHance, the company developed a project to reduce the amount of wood waste produced by using plastic returnable containers instead of wooden crates to transport their products. This change enabled PACCAR to reduce the amount of wood waste from over 1200 tons in 2015 to less than 700 tons in 2017, a 43% reduction. In addition, PACCAR has installed new equipment which allows for the reworking of engines in a manner that could not be done in the past. This practice has resulted in less engines being scrapped reducing the amount of scrap metal waste produced. PACCAR continues to explore ways to reduce waste at the source and reuse and recycle any wastes produced where possible. In 2017, PACCAR reused or recycled nearly 5800 tons of materials including wood waste, plastics, scrap metal and cardboard. For their ongoing efforts to improve and promote recycling and waste reduction, PACCAR Engine Company receives the 2017 Business and Industry Recycler of the Year Award for the State of Mississippi.

In addition to PACCAR Engine Company, Carpet Designs, Inc. in Jackson, MS receives honorable mention for their recycling efforts in the State.

- The **Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality** is the recipient of the 2017 “State Agency Recycler of the Year” Award for the state. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has been recycling within the agency’s facilities since the early nineties, but has recently increased efforts to improve MDEQ’s recycling program to make recycling easier and more convenient for their employees and to help ensure the collection of both a higher quantity and quality of materials for recycling. These efforts include working more closely with the agency’s recycler, Allen’s Recycling, to streamline collection and reduce contamination; increasing the Recycling and Waste Reduction Branch staff; developing a new employee recycling guide; adding new bin and promotional signage at various locations within agency facilities; consolidating and increasing bins

where necessary to maximize convenience; and meeting with the different divisions within the agency to present information on the recycling program and answer questions.

In addition, the MDEQ continues to lead and assist other state agencies and institutions with recycling as well as promote and encourage recycling throughout the state. For these efforts to increase recycling and waste reduction within the agency and throughout the state, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality receives the 2017 State Agency Recycler of the Year Award for the State of Mississippi.

- **Keep Ridgeland Beautiful** is the recipient of the 2017 “Non-Profit Organization Recycler of the Year” Award. Keep Ridgeland Beautiful (KRB) is a local affiliate of the Keep America Beautiful (KAB) organization. As part of their mission, KRB works with the City, area schools and other community organizations to educate residents on the importance of recycling through various outreach and education activities and community events. These efforts include partnering with Ridgeland High School on their recycling program, adding recycling bins in area parks using grant funds, installing a bottle filler in Friendship Park using MDEQ grant funds, and participating in Ridgeland’s Kids Fest and Trunk or Treat events to engage attendees on the importance of recycling. Recently, KRB, with the help of a \$5000 grant from PepsiCo created a recycling mascot for the City called the Ridgeland Recycle Ranger. Recycle Ranger, a recycling super hero of sorts, has been a positive addition to the KRB team helping to convey the message of recycling in his travels around the City and to special events including the National Keep America Beautiful meeting in Dallas. Recycle Ranger has also been featured in KRB’s 12 month PSA Billboard campaign in Ridgeland and in Ridgeland Life’s 2017 Winter Magazine. For their commitment to promote and grow recycling in their community, Keep Ridgeland Beautiful receives the 2017 Non-Profit Organization Recycler of the Year Award for the State of Mississippi.

In addition to Keep Ridgeland Beautiful, other non-profit organizations receiving honorable mention for their recycling efforts include Keep Tupelo Beautiful and Mississippi Blood Services.

- **City of Winona** is the recipient of the 2017 “New Program Recycler of the Year” Award. The City of Winona started the recycling program in 2016 with one drop off location consisting of one 16 cubic yard roll-off bin purchased through MDEQ grant funding. This brightly colored bin displaying recyclables as cartoon like characters with happy faces not only serves to hold materials, but also to help promote the program. The local garden club and other community organizations also helped the City promote the new program to residents by conducting presentations at the Public Library and area schools. The promotion of the City’s recycling program was so successful that the roll-off needed to be emptied two to three times a week or more. To keep up with the residents’ enthusiasm, the City purchased an additional bin, also brightly decorated, to place at the drop off site. Even with this new bin, the City is transporting a full bin of aluminum and steel cans, cardboard, mixed paper, #1 and #2 plastics to Greenwood/Leflore Recycling once a week. In addition, to collecting a large quantity of materials the City has been able to successfully educate

residents on which items do not belong in the bin resulting in the collection of high quality, clean recyclables with very few instances of contamination. The City has plans to continue expanding the recycling program to best serve their residents. For their commitment to improve and enhance recycling conditions in their community, the City of Winona receives MRC's New Program Recycler of the Year Award for the State of Mississippi.

Congratulations to each of these organizations on receiving the 2017 Recycler of the Year Awards for the State! MRC appreciates the hard work and commitment to recycling that these organizations and individuals have consistently demonstrated, and we look forward to continued growth of the recycling industry in Mississippi through the efforts of this year's award recipients.

The Mississippi Recycling Coalition is a consortium of recycling companies, local governments, state agencies, and other interested organizations in the State of Mississippi. MRC promotes and encourages responsible solid waste management through various methods such as source reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting programs. For more information on the MRC and the MRC Environmental Hero Awards, please visit the MRC web page at [www.msrecycles.org](http://www.msrecycles.org), like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MSRecycles](https://www.facebook.com/MSRecycles), and follow us on Twitter @MSRecycles.

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