



CUSTOMER STORY | Eureka Recycling

In Northeast Minneapolis, Minnesota, Eureka Recycling keeps pretty busy. They provide curbside recycling collection and processing for Saint Paul, Lauderdale, Roseville and Shoreview, Minnesota, plus recycling processing for other haulers and municipalities, Minneapolis included, in its materials recovery facility.



Eureka Recycling is not your average hauler. It's a zero-waste nonprofit — one of just a handful of nonprofit recyclers left in the United States.



Its MRF processes about 400-450 tons per day, totaling about 100,000 tons of recyclables per year.



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According to Katrina Lund, Eureka's Director of Community Engagement, the company focuses on people, the planet, and local economic prosperity. It employs more than 100 people, pays its staff above living wages, staffs unionized drivers, and offers paid time off and benefits, too.

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Katrina Lund, Eureka's
Director of Community
Engagement



ReCollect also helps Eureka Recycling solve education issues. We want to make recycling education simple and easy and accessible for people.
Joanna Stone, Eureka's
Director of Customer Relations

“We recycle to demonstrate that, when done right, recycling can promote healthy communities, a stable climate, and strong, local economy,” she said.

Eureka also is focused on systems change, Lund said. While “you’ll find us picking up curbside recycling, you’ll also find us advocating for zero-waste policies and legislation that drive a bigger vision of how we can design our world to be more zero-waste.”

At its core, Eureka Recycling’s mission is to demonstrate that waste is preventable — not inevitable, Lund said. As part of implementing this, it has called on **ReCollect’s** digital tools — including the **Waste Wizard**, the **Waste Sorting Game** and the **Collection Calendar** — to help meet its goals.



Rising to the challenge

In partnership with its city and private-hauler customers, Eureka has developed comprehensive, nationally recognized recycling education for many years. As forms of communication have quickly evolved over the last two decades, Eureka has continually explored how to convey information in ways that are useful, accessible, and innovative.

In 2017, Eureka helped Saint Paul transition from recycling bins to carts with automated collection. As with any new program, there were lots of bumps in the road, Lund said. Customers who were learning the process and needed help or to report issues began reaching out in any way they could, from social media messages, to calls, to emails, and more.

In the aftermath, Stone said, the company wondered what other tools it could put into place to resolve future issues.

“ReCollect solves a couple problems for us: One is communicating about service, especially with winter weather; that’s a big one,” Stone said. You can only prepare so much, and sometimes decisions need to be made quickly, and customers need to stay in the loop.

ReCollect also helps Eureka solve education issues, Stone said. “We want to make recycling education simple and easy and accessible for people,” while also offering as much information as they can.

As soon as Stone was introduced to the Waste Wizard, known as What Can I Recycle? on its website, “I immediately thought, ‘finally!’ This is a way for us to share all of the detailed information we know about recycling without overwhelming our community members. We send out a recycling guide every year, but we have to keep the information in it very clear and concise, and a lot of people want to know more details,” Stone said.

Lund agreed. “Recycling is so regional ... especially for a recycler like us, where we really focus on transparency and local markets,” she said. For instance, the results of an internet search for whether No. 5 plastic is recyclable will depend on where you are. Just because it is recyclable in, say, Des Moines, Iowa, doesn’t mean that it’s recyclable in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Lund said.

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Meet people where they're at

Eureka's efforts are paying off, which makes for happy customers, happy employees, and more. ReCollect allows Eureka to help customers when and wherever they need it, as opposed to having to call during business hours or sending an email.



"People don't want to make phone calls anymore, so the more we can be on their mobile device when they're standing in the alley at 6 p.m., the more likely customers will be able to find the help they need," Stone said. Plus, many people are working or are otherwise busy during office hours, which can make it difficult to find a time to call.



All of this matters to Eureka, especially because they can "meet people where they're at," Stone said, no matter when or what people want to know. "If you're wondering about 17 kinds of plastic, you can look them all up, one at a time. And if you just want to know one thing? That's OK."



The versatile, customizable tools help Eureka stay relevant, Lund said, especially recently when there has been so much uncertainty. Eureka is used to planning for winter weather, and it appreciates the ability to send notifications to residents through the Collection Calendar to keep them informed about any collection delays.



Step by step

About two years after adopting the Collection Calendar and the Waste Wizard, Eureka Recycling added the **Waste Sorting Game** to their tool kit, too. This allows customers to play **Ready, Set, Sort!**, which Eureka uses to teach customers about recycling in a fun, interactive way.

"I think we signed up for it at the perfect moment," Stone said. The team added the tool just as schools were closing due to COVID-19 and families were hungry for more opportunities to learn at home.

"It's gotten some really good traction, and people are enjoying it," she said.

Lund said Eureka also was able to place handouts about the game in Saint Paul's school's take-home lunches, helping them cast a larger net of reach. It was a "huge hit," she said.



There's a rep for that



Setting up their tools and getting the most of it has been a breeze, thanks to ReCollect Customer Success Manager Terri Quist. "She helps make some detailed data really understandable," Lund said. She also helps Eureka "understand the potential of the tool" so they can get the most out of it.



Eureka also appreciates that they know they have backup whenever they need it. "Terri is always really responsive if we do need something, but it doesn't happen very often because your tool's so user-friendly," Stone said.



Happy employees, happy customers, happy planet



Since adopting digital tools from ReCollect, in addition to fine-tuning its truck fleet, hosting additional training for drivers, and more, Stone said call volumes have definitely decreased.



"It's just been wonderful; it feels good," Lund added. "Eureka is progressive and a leader in our own right. We're always pushing the frontier on different ideas... so it feels good to be able to lead in this way, too."



Lund said Eureka also is excited about the future of their work, and how they can use ReCollect's tools to help it continue to meet its goals. For example, not only does Eureka plan to use the Waste Wizard to show its customers what they can and cannot recycle, it hopes to include more background information on why and why not, too, for "a more comprehensive context for these things," Lund said.

"We do have big dreams for this Waste Wizard..."

About ReCollect

ReCollect Systems is a technology company specializing in digital solutions for the waste management sector.

With a focus on meeting and surpassing the expectations of residents, ReCollect has the proven experience to deliver digital products that also meet the needs of waste managers, communicators, IT specialists and governmental officials.

Launched in 2009, today ReCollect is used by millions of residents across North America. From small villages to large urban centres, from municipal services to private haulers, ReCollect is ready to make your waste management programs more efficient and successful.



ReCollect Systems Inc. | recollect.net | (888) 402-6936