



CUSTOMER STORY | The Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County (RRRASOC), MI



In the heart of Southeastern Michigan is the **Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County (RRRASOC)**, an intergovernmental and municipal solid waste authority.



With the help of their digital recycling communication tools, RRRASOC has saved an estimated 200 calls per day.



One study had even shown a roughly estimated 50% decrease in recycling contamination at RRRASOC's drop-off centers as a result of their continuous recycling education efforts combined with their digital tools.

For more than three decades, RRRASOC has worked to establish and operate intergovernmental solid waste management projects and services that are environmentally responsible and financially sound.

It provides nine communities—including Farmington, Farmington Hills, Milford, Milford Township, Novi, South Lyon, Southfield, Walled Lake and Wixom, Michigan—with waste and recycling programs such as recycling drop-off centers, household hazardous waste collection events, curbside pickup, and others.



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Michael Csapo,
General Manager
-RRRASOC

Since its inception in 1989, RRRASOC has worked hard to improve and expand its programming and capabilities through public and private partnerships, upgrading its equipment, tweaking its processes, and more. Their operations were in pretty good shape a few years ago when they were first introduced to digital recycling communication tools. RRRASOC already had some web and social media presence, said General Manager Mike Csapo, and “we really weren’t looking for any new digital tools.”

But the more he learned about digital recycling communication tools, the more he realized how RRRASOC could utilize them to meet their goals.

It “kind of won me over,” he said.



Adding more tools to the toolbox

Once RRRASOC added the [Waste Wizard](#), the [Collection Calendar](#), the [Waste Sorting Game](#) and the [Mobile App](#) to its suite of tactics, “we realized that there was a lot of value here—a lot of applicability to our needs.”

Meeting customers where they are is a never-ending facet of RRRASOC’s work, and it is always up for the challenge. They regularly must consider how they can create a multimodal, multimedia approach to conveying information and gather feedback, Mike said.

This is where ReCollect fit in nicely with the progress RRRASOC had already made.

And the data backs it up.

Mike noted some “pretty big spikes” in user session material views this spring and last winter, and he was thinking about what could have caused more people to research what materials should be disposed of where. He recalled when RRRASOC had realized last winter that many of its communities’ young adults lived in apartments—a demographic of folks who likely want to turn to an app or website to answer questions. So RRRASOC crafted a direct-mail piece about the tools and sent it to multi-family homes, providing new exposure for its tried-and-true recycling communication tools.



More tools mean fewer calls

Not only can the folks at RRRASOC count on their tools to deliver information to its communities when they need it, they know it alleviates stress on employees, too.

“We’re a small authority,” Mike said, adding that their now-remote offices consist of himself and a secretary, plus independent contractors such as Sandra Porter, Project Manager

Iris Waste Diversion Specialists, Inc. -- a consulting firm that has partnered with RRRASOC, specifically Mike, for over 10+ years.

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She is responsible for public education and outreach to member communities while also responding to resident queries. Now that employees are working remotely, calls to RRRASOC are diverted to the secretary's cell phone.

And “she gets a lot of calls,” Mike said.

RRRASOC was curious about the hours they've saved since deploying their digital tools, so they took a look at user sessions for their digital tools and did a little number crunching.

“The numbers are remarkable,” Mike said.

Assuming each resident who has used the tools would have otherwise phoned the Authority, Mike figures RRRASOC has saved themselves from about 200 calls per day. If each person spent a minute to a minute and a half on the phone, Mike said, that adds up “to about five hours on the phone every day.”

“That, to me, is a tremendous figure,” Mike said.

“The tools are obviously having an impact on our homeowners and our residents,” Mike said.

“But it's also having an impact on us institutionally because it's relieving us of a great deal of work,” whether that's fielding phone calls, dealing with contamination issues after pickups, and more.

Saundra also has seen a reduction in the number of emails she receives since employing the tools. Saundra said residents used to email with questions about how to get a new bin, or how to handle a missed pickup. Now, these questions and concerns may be addressed in the app.

This is a double win, Saundra said. Not only does she have fewer emails to return, residents no longer have “to wait for me to answer the email; the information is at their fingertips with our digital tools.”



‘Hit them where they live’

Mike said RRRASOC wants to make it as easy as possible for homeowners and residents to find the information they need whenever they need it. “It's not just that we want them to get the right information. ... We want it to be convenient,” he said.

“We want to hit them where they live; we want to give them the information in a manner in which they want to get it.”

For a growing number of residents, that means tools like an intuitive app and an easy-to-navigate website. For others, that might mean other avenues, so the Authority continues to call on direct mailers when needed.

Either way, RRRASOC has enjoyed the variety of options it now has at its disposal, and getting their member communities involved, too. For instance, when RRRASOC added the **Waste Sorting Game** to its lineup, Sandra said it gave the Authority the “chance to reach out to another group of residents: the kids.” While adults play the game, too, it positioned RRRASOC to encourage member communities to share the game with area schools, libraries and other organizations that may find it useful.



More tools, less contamination

Mike has had a first-hand look at the difference their tools have helped to make. Since adding the tools and other tactics to RRRASOC’s education efforts, residents seem to be gaining a better understanding of the recycling process and the items they can recycle. One study had even shown a roughly 50% decrease in recycling contamination at RRRASOC’s drop-off centers as a result of their recycling education efforts combined with their digital tools, Mike said.

In the future, Mike says RRRASOC will continue to determine how it can best structure its approach to education and outreach, including taking a look at the ways in which it can make its website more functional and aesthetically pleasing while hopefully attracting new users, too.

It also will call on its digital tools to help its member communities to integrate education and messaging into their programming. The tools “make it easy for them,” Mike said, adding that ReCollect graphics can easily be added to municipality newsletters, widgets can simply be added to websites, and more.

The tools also help communities and RRRASOC streamline their messaging, Sandra said. “I like that the tools are consistent for each of RRRASOC’s member communities.”

RRRASOC is also trying to spread the word to other surrounding communities who could benefit from the tools, too. Even if they are not RRRASOC members, materials recovery facilities take in items from all jurisdictions, and ReCollect can help “spread information in a more uniform way,” Mike said.

“We see a lot of value in that as well.”

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.

