



Waste Management, Snohomish County win 'Recycler of the Year' honors

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash. – In partnership with Snohomish County, Waste Management has been named Recycler of the Year for public education by the Washington State Recycling Association (WSRA).

The award, presented by WSRA at its annual conference in Spokane, recognizes the Snohomish County and Waste Management partnership for innovative public education work that delivered impactful results in 2018.

This work targeted two of the industry's most daunting challenges: recycling contamination and reducing food waste. To tackle recycling contamination, Waste Management studied the behavioral impacts of placing tags on residents' carts with tips to improve recycling habits.

The study results were surprising, revealing that simple messaging is more effective than feedback tags with specific instructions on how to improve recycling. In fact, cart tags with simple messaging resulted in a remarkable 50 percent reduction in plastic film contamination in recycling.

"Snohomish County appreciates the opportunity to partner on this kind of practical research," Snohomish County project specialist Polagaya McLaughlin said. "Research results are not always what we expect, and getting unexpected answers can give us new ways of thinking about how to solve old problems."

As an innovative way to reduce food waste, Waste Management and Snohomish County developed a series of educational events to reach people through farmers markets. The WM Scrap Happy Kitchen events featured a professional chef to engage market attendees and demonstrate how to make healthy and delicious meals by using food items that are often thrown away.

"With a strong partner like Snohomish County, we're able to find new and innovative opportunities to educate and make an impact," said Joel Kohlstedt, recycling education manager for Waste Management. "Together, we're changing behaviors and advancing sustainability throughout the county."

Each year, WSRA presents Recycler of the Year awards to individuals, businesses, government agencies and community organizations that are strengthening and expanding recycling and waste prevention practices across the state.



ABOUT WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste Management is the leading provider of comprehensive recycling and environmental services in North America. We provide innovative sustainability solutions for 21 million customers – from curbside collection with clean air trucks to waste reduction programs that turn food scraps into compost for healthy gardens. For more information, go to www.wmnorthwest.com.

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