

Iowa Recycling Awards

2005 Best School Recycling Program



Iowa State University

Iowa State University, located in Ames, is ranked among the nation's top 50 public universities by U.S. News & World Report. Awarded its charter in 1864, ISU has grown from the nation's first land-grant institution to a broad-based university of international stature with students from all 50 states and over 110 other nations.

An important part of the culture at ISU is the campus-wide recycling program, serving some 26,380 students, 2,139 full-time employees and 226 part-time employees. The program that started in 1993 with just white office paper has expanded to include newspaper, corrugated cardboard, and phone books. Document destruction services are now provided at 43 buildings, generating an estimated 3.5 tons of recycled paper.

Large gaylord boxes and wheeled totes are used to recycle an estimated 275 tons of "fiber" annually from 109 campus buildings. The materials are baled by Mid America Recycling and sent to end-users throughout the U.S. and Mexico.

Additional materials are closely monitored for reuse and recycling options, including: wood and pallets; yard waste; ash; auto batteries, motor oil and tires; chemical glass bottles; excess equipment for reuse/resale; fats/solids;

ferrous scrap metal; fluorescent light bulbs; pop cans; clothing, non-perishable foods, and reusable lumber; and toner and ink cartridges.

Education remains a major component of the recycling program. A website lists detailed instructions on recycling specifics, as well as waste reduction and reuse tips.

Involvement with the Buy Recycled Business Alliance and IRA has helped the recycling committee pave the way for innovative programs, such as utilizing the campus' trash at the "waste-to-energy" plant in Ames; composting animal waste from the barns and plant materials from greenhouses and landscaping; and using ethanol in campus cars.

From the recycling industry organization involvement to the large campus Earth Day fairs frequented by over 1,000 students annually, springtime cleanouts to the equipment reuse and resale, Iowa State University proves its tireless dedication to the campus waste reduction and recycling program. Through expansive educational efforts and constantly refined goals, ISU will continue to have a self-sustaining and effective waste reduction and recycling program for many years to come.

