

UW-River Falls receives 70 recycling bins through Public Space Recycling Bin Grant Program

February 9, 2017-- Keep America Beautiful and The Coca-Cola Company have awarded 70 recycling bins to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Keep America Beautiful and The Coca-Cola Company are working together to address one of the primary barriers to recycling in public spaces by making access to recycling bins more readily available and convenient through the 2016 Coca-Cola/Keep America Beautiful Public Space Recycling Bin Grant Program.

The bins awarded will be utilized in the public areas in the campus academic buildings. Primarily, the bins will be utilized outside classrooms to further the pilot project of removing trash containers from the classrooms and implement side-by-side collection locations in the hallways complete with improved signage.

In a waste minimization survey sent to all UW-River Falls students, faculty and staff during the spring 2015 semester, 85 percent of survey respondents were supportive of this initiative. Survey respondents also noted that better signage and consistency in bins would improve recycling understanding and participation.

“Recycling containers can be very expensive which significantly affects UWRF’s ability to have containers everywhere needed on campus,” said Mark Klapatch, UW-River Falls sustainability and custodial supervisor.

This is the second time Klapatch has received this grant on behalf of UW-River Falls and he noted that the recycling collections in the academic building public spaces is only possible through this grant as other funds are extremely limited. Klapatch was thrilled to receive this grant and looks forward to seeing the increase in recycling on campus.

In total, the Coca-Cola/Keep America Beautiful Public Space Recycling Bin Grant Program will provide 3,522 recycling bins to colleges and universities, along with 996 bins to local governments and nonprofit organizations. The recycling bins are made possible through a grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation, the philanthropic arm of The Coca-Cola Company.

More than 45 percent of the bins are designed specifically for permanent, ongoing use in public spaces such as athletic fields, K-12 schools, fairs and festivals, special events and park settings, with the remaining 55 percent to be used by students in college residence hall settings. The 2016 program is expected to result in an estimated 1 million pounds of recyclable materials collected during their first year in use.

“The number one thing we can do to get people to recycle is make it convenient,” said Brenda Pulley, senior vice president, recycling, Keep America Beautiful. “With Coca-Cola’s continued support, the grant program addresses that need by creating thousands of new opportunities for people to recycle in public areas across the country.”

“At Coca-Cola, we are working with partners across the country to invest in, and support a strong recycling system,” said Bruce Karas, vice president of sustainability, Coca-Cola North America. “Through partnerships like the Keep America Beautiful and the Public Space Recycling Bin Grant program, we can help reduce overall waste by making it even easier and more convenient for people to recycle both at home and in public spaces.”

The Coca-Cola/Keep America Beautiful Recycling Bin Grant Program addresses lack of convenience by providing a significant number of bins in strategic locations. More than 49,000 recycling bins will have been placed in 925 communities nationwide since the programs inception in 2007. In addition to the grants, Keep America Beautiful provides technical best practice guidance to grant recipients and organizations about setting up effective away-from-home and on-the-go recycling programs.

Grant recipients were chosen by Keep America Beautiful based on their potential to collect the most cans and bottles as well other considerations such as the extent of their need, recycling experience, and their ability to sustain the program in the future. A full list of the 2016 Coca-Cola/Keep America Beautiful Public Space Recycling Bin Grant recipients, as well as Keep America Beautiful’s best practices guide, “Designing Effective Public Space Recycling Programs,” are available at <http://bingrant.org>.

Behavioral research has shown that two of the primary barriers that stop people from recycling are the lack of convenient opportunities and confusion about what and how to recycle. A 2009 study conducted by Keep America Beautiful showed only 12 percent of surveyed public locations had infrastructure to recover recyclable items. This lack of recycling opportunities is reflected in a separate national survey conducted for Keep America Beautiful in 2013, in which 92 percent of respondents said they recycle at home while only 41 percent indicated that they typically recycle in public spaces. In addition to providing more convenient opportunities to recycle, the Coca-Cola/Keep America Beautiful Public Space Recycling Bin Grant helps to address the issue of confusion by providing bins that incorporate recognized best practices for bin design and labeling.

For more information about UW-River Falls recycling efforts, call Klapatch at 715-425-4333 or email mark.klapatch@uwrf.edu.

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Photo: UW-River Falls sustainability and custodial supervisor Mark Klapatch stands by recently delivered recycling bins awarded to campus through the Public Space Recycling Bin Grant Program. The 70 donated bins will be utilized in the public areas in the campus academic buildings.