Promoting sustainable recycling in the Southeast by connecting local supply and regional demand of recovered material.
Southeast Recycling Development Council

The Southeast Recycling Development Council (SERDC) has played an integral role in making recycling work not only in the region but nationwide.

The organization has grown from an idea of representing 11 Southeastern states and the region’s recycling industry to working with national stakeholders including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), The Recycling Partnership (TRP) and the National Recycling Coalition (NRC). SERDC does this through presentations, webinars, special focus events, legislative days, technical assistance, research and more.

The mission of SERDC is to:

⇒ unite industry professionals, organizations, government agencies and individuals engaged in the business of recycling;
⇒ foster communications among those groups;
⇒ promote sustainable recycling programs; and
⇒ coordinate education and public awareness activities related to recycling.

SERDC’s primary vision is to:

⇒ increase recovery of quality of recyclable material;
⇒ foster economic development through the recycling industry; and
⇒ create a greater awareness of the recycling industry’s impact in the Southeast.

Funding

SERDC is a 501 © (3) non-profit organization. The organization is funded through membership and sponsor support; state agency partnerships and grants; and EPA grants.

SERDC’s state members

Alabama     Georgia     Mississippi     Tennessee
Arkansas     Kentucky     North Carolina     Virginia
Florida     Louisiana     South Carolina

Acknowledgements

The SERDC staff and board would like to thank membership and those who support the mission and work of the organization.
“Being the Leader”
In Promoting Sustainable Recycling in the Southeast

2019 Annual Board of Directors Retreat establishes energetic goals

The board committed to....

⇒ creating a strategic plan for the next 20 years to provide a long-term vision
⇒ increasing the working relationship with the 11 state agencies and state recycling associations
⇒ influencing state recycling goals and supporting state recycling organizations
⇒ advocating the standardization of messaging and measurement
⇒ sharing localized successes and challenges
⇒ promoting economic impact and expanding end-market growth
⇒ increasing partnerships between states and other industry-related organizations through education, consistent messaging, research and grants
⇒ promoting sustainable recycling, including the hub and spoke recycling collection model, infrastructure improvements and universal access,

Southeast Recycling Development Council (SERDC)

Executive Director: Will Sagar  Director of Outreach and Member Services: Jen Dabbs

Executive Committee:

SERDC Chairman: Nicole Smith - Coca-Cola
SERDC 1st Vice Chairman: Kurt Schmitz - Pratt Recycling
SERDC 2nd Vice Chairman: Rusty Angel - Machinex
SERDC Treasurer: Derric Brown - Evergreen Packaging
SERDC Secretary: Dawn Gaines - Self

Board at Large:

Richard Chesley - South Carolina DHEC
Bobby Fanning - Arkansas Recycling Coalition
Andy Johnson - KW Plastics
Dave Keeling - Self
Dexter Matthews - Liberty Tire
Will Newsome - Sonoco
Jim Nordmeyer - Owens-Illinois
Hal Risher - WestRock
Susan Robinson - Waste Management
Sam Still - Federal International
Wendy Worley - NC Department of Environmental Quality

Ex Officio Committee:

Barbara Alfano - EPA Region 4
Gavin Adams - Alabama Dept. of Environmental Management
Jerry Thornton - Waste Management
Stephanie Baker - KW Plastics Recycling

Thank you to our Retired 2019 Board Members:

April Carlock - Greif;  Kelly Johnson- Trex;
Michael Power- American Chemistry Council;
Shawn State- Pratt Industries;  Mark Williams- MS DEQ
Outreach

SERDC staff were part of more than 45 meetings, conferences and webinars. At most of these, the message was reiteration of the fact that recycling is not dead, in spite of what is covered in the media.

Presentations referenced the SERDC recycled feedstock manufacturing map and the more than 360 end-users that are operating in the Southeast. Specific economic forces causing price volatility were explained. Several speaking engagements also covered market development efforts and methods.

Among the 2019 locations were two trips to Washington, DC to speak to the congressional staff about recycling needs. Executive Director, Will Sagar was also a presenter at the EPA Administrator’s Round Table on America Recycles Day. Interviews were given to reporters from PBS, NPR, and the Atlanta Constitution Journal.

“SERDC participated in more than 45 conferences, webinars and meetings in 2019 including presenting at a US Senate staff meeting on current status of the recycling industry.”

These provided additional opportunities to communicate that, while recycling is experiencing troubled times, it is alive and there are end-users for the material in the region.

A series of three recycling workshop were produced in Tennessee, focused on tools and issues for local governments.

SERDC presented to a US Senate staff meeting on the stresses and opportunities that the recycling industry is currently facing. The meeting was organized by Senate staff and EPA Headquarters. Other participating organizations included SWANA, ISRI, KAB, P&G, and New York City.

SERDC was asked to assist the Senate staff in securing speakers for a second hearing that included local government presentations. SERDC arranged for Orange County, NC and Athens/Clark County, GA to be represented.
SERDC’s recycling manufacturing map has identified over 360 companies in the Southeast that rely on recycled feedstock for production. www.serdc.org/maps
The annual meeting, held at Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, SC, gathered 129 attendees. Cheryl Coleman, director, Resource Conservation and Sustainability Division, provided an update on EPA’s focus on recycling, and a panel on markets and moving forward in the current conditions convened. State leaders from the Southeast gave updates on challenges and successes. The afternoon was focused on messaging with successful implementation tactics and how to utilize cart tagging programs to fight contamination.

SERDC was cited in national industry articles on nine occasions

⇒ **Low aluminum prices add to MRF woes**  
  Posted on January 15, 2019 by Colin Staub

⇒ **The power of a plan**  
  Posted on February 11, 2019 by Susan Bush

⇒ **Coca-Cola continues voluntary producer responsibility approach with $5.4M in new recycling grants**  
  Posted on March 14, 2019 by Cole Rosengren

⇒ **What recycling end market development looks like in 2019**  
  Posted on May 8, 2019 by Katie Pyzyk

⇒ **Kentucky city’s suspension of paper recycling ripples through region**  
  Posted on May 22, 2019 by Katie Pyzyk

⇒ **How recycling industry is boosting demand across sectors**  
  Posted on June 18, 2019 by Colin Staub

⇒ **Mississippi’s largest city ends recycling, extends Waste Management landfill contract**  
  Posted on Aug. 19, 2019 by Cole Rosengren

⇒ **Pair of projects offer hope for glass markets in South**  
  Posted on September 10, 2019 by Jared Paben

⇒ **How recycling has changed in all 50 states**  
  Posted on Nov. 15, 2019 by Cole Rosengren
Glass Recycling Coalition

Will Sagar chaired the Coalition’s Interventions Committee. The committee developed a scoring tool to determine where Coalition funds could be best expended. Awards were made for two projects, one public and one private, both in the SERDC region.

America Recycles

SERDC worked with Region 4 to develop the curriculum for a webinar to be presented for America Recycles. Executive Director Will Sagar suggested that the webinar feature four speakers, one for each of the EPA America Recycles Action Items and also suggested which regional state leader could speak to each topic, as it relates to their program rather than the work of the Action Item teams. That webinar was held November 20, 2019.

Sagar spoke at the America Recycles Day celebration held at EPA headquarters in Washington DC and hosted by EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler.

Sagar also presented at an EPA Region 2 webinar on market development. The webinar had nearly 500 attendees.
Tennessee Technical Assistance

Recycling Workshop Series
Three regional workshops were held in Tennessee-Oak Ridge, Memphis and Montgomery Bell State Park. The purpose of the workshops were to collect recycling operational concerns from the local communities for future workshop development and technical assistance.

The workshops also introduced the Recycle Right Tennessee campaign, which was created after researching local and regional online messaging being provided to participants.

Technical Assistance
Provided to Madison and McNairy counties in planning program improvements.

TN Training Academy
SERDC maintains a website which serves a center location for continuing education and meeting notices for several material management related organizations in Tennessee. More information can be found at: www.tntrainingacademy.org
SERDC was tasked with improving the information and terminology associated with community recycling programs to reduce contamination and increase participation.

SERDC researched how easy or hard it was to search for online information through local government online messaging relating to recycling programs, both curbside and convenience center based. MRF (Material Recovery Facility) data relating to community participation and materials they accept for recycling was gathered.

Other recycling messaging resources were evaluated, ranging from other state campaigns to online DIY signage tools and social media kits.

Based on that research, SERDC developed the Recycle Right Tennessee (RRT) campaign. RRT creates uniform content and branding for recycling programs.

Different from most resources available, it offers a clear **online** messaging solution that is paired with printed material branding:

- based on Yes, Check Local and No layouts
- balance of text and images
- option for grid and maps for multiple locations
- Recycle Right Tennessee logo on page for consistent recognition
- printed versions provided as a pdf for downloading/printing

The full report with the messaging platform was introduced to the regional workshops. From that feedback, work began on V2, to make information and participation seamless for communities.
In 2019, after review of five applications, three recycling Infrastructure grants were awarded.

- Canton, NC: Transition from blue bags to recycling carts and education programming material for 1900 households.
- Clyde, NC: Transition from blue bags to recycling carts and education programming material for 565 households.
- Marion, SC: Purchase of 965 recycling carts and education programming material.

All three communities began implementation in the last quarter of 2019. Approximately 2,800 carts have been distributed for residential collection. More are expected for 2020.

Grant funds were provided to SERDC for distribution through the Coca-Cola Foundation.
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