



Businesses earn Rockland Recycles Award for their waste reduction and recycling efforts

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The Journal News*

RAMAPO - When it comes to local recycling, Wenger North America appears to be on the cutting edge.

The company, a top distributor of those famous Swiss Army knives so many people covet, has a major facility in Orangeburg.

It has been named a recipient of the Rockland Recycles Award, which has been given annually since 2005 to recognize businesses and organizations that successfully recycle and reduce their waste.

The other recipients are the IBM Palisades Executive Conference Center and Blue Hill Plaza in Pearl River.

The Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority sponsors the awards, which are presented through the Rockland WasteWise Program.

The program helps members identify and put into place creative waste management and recycling strategies that also reduce costs.

This year's recipients were chosen for their successful approaches, said Kerri Scales, director of the WasteWise Program.

"Their achievements demonstrate that recycling and waste reduction work without creating a detrimental effect on the bottom line," Scales said. "More importantly, their commitment to responsible stewardship of our limited resources and dedication to a cleaner environment are to be commended."

Dennis E. Piretra, vice president of marketing for Wenger, said that the strategies put in place by the company were meant to be simple, but lead to great change.

Overall, from 2006 to 2008, Wenger reduced its solid waste by an impressive 78.5 percent, from 1,740 yards to just 372.

Wenger went after recycling by switching to reusable biodegradable packing peanuts; by properly disposing of 30,000 watch batteries to hazardous waste facilities; and by eliminating paper cups and lids and requiring employees to bring their own reusable mugs.

The company also increased the recycling of cardboard; began recycling aluminum, glass and plastics; and recycled office electronics.

Wenger informed employees about recycling efforts through notices in their paycheck envelopes,

Piretra said the trash was directed away from landfills and to places that recycled the material. The company saw neither increased nor reduced costs, but expects to see significant savings when it begins an improved energy conservation program, Piretra said.

He also said that cost savings were just one measure of success.

"It's also great for the environment and that's our number one priority," Piretra said.

and used notice boards to keep track of progress, among other measures.

The IBM Palisades Executive Conference Center also shares an impressive recycling record.

Its Environmental Group estimated that 75 percent of the facility's refuse was recovered as recyclable through recycling efforts and by limiting the amount of non-recyclable materials purchased.

The center trained its staff, and educated both workers and guests about the advantages of recycling. It also placed recycling containers in guests' rooms and conference areas; minimized the printing of materials; printed on both sides when printing was needed; and used electronic communication versus paper.

The IBM center also has a "no idling" policy, monitors energy usage, and employs energy-use reduction procedures to be even more Earth friendly.

Blue Hill Plaza was also honored, with an award presented to its owners, Glorious Sun Robert Martin LLC, and Mack-Cali Realty Corp.

Since 1996, the amount of solid waste hauled from Blue Hill Plaza was reduced by 40 percent.

The plaza, which works with a sustainability consulting firm, has expanded its efforts to include electronic waste along with paper, cardboard, bottles and cans.

New office tenants are educated about the recycling procedures by the consulting company.

Both the IBM center and Blue Hill also provided bilingual recycling training materials for staff members, who play a major role in ensuring that recycling takes place.