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National Wildlife Federation®

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**Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana
Spring 2006, Waste Reduction**

BACKGROUND

Campus Profile

Ball State University (BSU) is situated on 940 acres in Muncie, Indiana, and serves approximately 19,000 students (45 percent male and 55 percent female). Seven academic colleges offer 120 undergraduate programs, 80 master's programs, and 20 doctoral programs in 46 departments and schools. Approximately, 750 faculty members, 550 professional staff members, and 1,500 support personnel compose the employee base.

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GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goals

The goal is to participate in the national Recyclemania Program, thus competing with other schools to see "who can collect the largest amount of recyclables from residence halls, on-campus apartments, and dining halls in 10 weeks."

More specifically, a fair and friendly recycling competition will accomplish the following:

- Increase recycling participation by (on-campus) students and staff members.
- Heighten awareness of the school's waste management and recycling programs.
- Expand economic opportunities while addressing environmental issues in a positive way.
- Lower the waste generated at BSU by reducing, reusing, and recycling materials.
- Organize the event successfully so that it can be repeated and expanded in future years.

Accomplishments

The BSU team placed eighth among 93 universities participating in this year's competition. That ranking is based on a 35.24 percent overall recycling rate.

Challenges and Responses

A total of 93 universities in 33 states participated in the competition, which was structured to identify strata of achievement. Those strata included the Per Capita Classic category (most recyclables per person by mass), the Waste Minimization category (lowest waste per person including recyclables and trash), the Grand Champion category (highest overall recycling rate from recyclables and trash), and the Targeted Materials category (highest recycling rate for a particular waste product).

The questions at hand involved building motivation by (a) narrowing the scope of the competition to students living within campus residence halls, and (b) encouraging hall leaders through working with Residence Hall Association (RHA) representatives in Housing and Residence Life to distribute information up the dormitory tree to residence assistants and students by using creative publications such as informative flyers, advertisements in the campus paper, *Daily News*, and related articles.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

The primary backing organization for this initiative was the Students for a Sustainable Campus. Other assistance came from members of the Environmental Action Team, who sponsored and helped coordinate the inter-dormitory competition; the Housing and Residence Life group, which aided the promotion of the event by helping to distribute information and materials; the Facilities Planning and Management staff members, who reported weekly waste-stream figures from the contracted campus waste hauler; and finally, the RHA without whose commitment this project would not have been possible.

Funding and Resources

Modest costs were associated with the implementation of the program, including reproduction of flyers and publications. Those costs were absorbed in departmental budgets.

Community Outreach and Education

A PowerPoint show summarizing the structure of approach was prepared and shared with the members of the Council on the Environment. It is now posted on the council's website for use in promoting this initiative during the coming academic year.

Climate Change

This effort has an effect on global climate change in that recycling technical nutrients reduces both the net energy investment and the resulting carbon load from processing materials in the source stream.

National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology® Program

General reference to various Campus Ecology publications was helpful in establishing the importance of this initiative. Most important, BSU's ongoing membership in NWF's Campus Ecology program and the routine interaction with NWF staff members were essential as we at BSU developed ideas for motivating campus participants.

CLOSING COMMENT

We at BSU will continue to share our initiative in public presentations; we hope citation in the *NWF Campus Ecology Yearbook* will bring additional interest from colleagues and collaborators in higher education. Certainly, publication of the work through the RecycleMania network will have a lasting benefit. Because BSU participated for the first time, placing eighth nationally was considered a significant achievement.

