What Happens to Recyclables?

PLASTICS

- In the U.S. market, **95% of plastic bottles are made from PET** (48%) **or HDPE** (47%), which are standard materials for bottle manufacturing.
- **56% of recycled water, juice, soda and sport drink bottles** are used to manufacture fiber products like carpet and clothing.
- **14% of recycled drink bottles** are transformed into new containers, including water bottles.
- **29% of recycled milk and laundry detergent bottles** are repurposed into new bottles, and **18%** is utilized in the production of plastic pipe.
- HDPE from milk and laundry detergent bottles is also made into lawn and garden products (such as edging), plastic lumber (used for decks, benches and picnic tables), film and sheet manufacturing (for plastic bags) and injection-molded products (such as buckets, crates and automobile parts).
- Although a plastic bench or picnic table may cost more upfront, it offers long life, weather resistance and easy maintenance.

CORRUGATED CARDBOARD

- Over **90% of all products in the United States are shipped in boxes**
- Encouragingly, **70% of all corrugated cardboard is recovered for recycling**, making it the largest source of recycled waste paper.
- Cardboard can be recycled numerous times without losing strength. Some is repurposed into pasteboard boxes, such as cereal boxes, but most is turned into new corrugated cardboard boxes.

NEWSPAPERS

- **30% of recycled newspaper fibers** are used for creating new newspapers, with additional utilization in cereal boxes, egg cartons, cellulose insulation materials, tissue paper and various other products.
- Recycled newsprint also has an export market, with many old newspapers being sent to Canada for the production of new newsprint.

MAGAZINES

- Magazines are repurposed into newspaper and pasteboard boxes.
- The clay used to make magazine paper shiny is sometimes used to help remove ink from other paper being recycled.

ALUMINUM and TIN/STEEL CANS

- **Over 50% of aluminum cans** are recycled extensively, with a rapid closed-loop process. A used aluminum can can be recycled and back on the grocery shelf in as little as 60 days.

- Aluminum is a durable and sustainable metal. **Two-thirds of all aluminum ever produced is still in use today**.
- Every minute, an average of 113,204 aluminum cans are recycled.
- **Producing new aluminum cans from used ones uses 95% <u>less</u> energy.** The energy required to make 20 recycled cans equals that needed to produce just one can from virgin ore.
- While most cans are recycled into new cans, they are also repurposed into sheet metal, car parts and various other products.

GLASS

- Glass is primarily recycled over and over into new glass bottles, with additional utilization in other glass products and fiberglass insulation.

W<u>HERE WE SEND OUR RECYCLABLES</u>

- **PRo Kansas primarily sells its paper** to International Paper in Wichita. **Mixed paper** usually is sent to Georgia Pacific in Muskogee, OK.
- **Plastic bottles** may be sent to Georgia to make carpeting, Ohio for new bottles, or other locations for clothing and other uses.
- **Plastic bags** typically go to TREX in Virginia for plastic wood (decking, fencing, etc.). ● **#5 plastic** has been shipped to many locations in the U.S. and can be used for anything from phone cases to bottle caps to cottage cheese tubs to plastic pipe and more.
- **Aluminum and tin cans** are sold to buyers in Wichita.
- **Glass** is sent to McPherson for fiberglass insulation manufacturing.

SO, a lot of what is collected stays pretty close to Wichita.

I<u>MPORTANT NOTE</u>

There is a lot of talk about places where recyclable material is received but then taken to the landfill. Please keep in mind that, very often, those bags, paper or other materials are dirty, wet or contaminated with food and dirt. OR, spoiled by bottles mixed in with bags mixed in with paper, etc., and it is too difficult to separate them.

That is why the PRo Kansas method works. We are monitoring the materials as they come in. Categories are separated at the beginning. Dirty material is turned away before it can ruin anything else. This way, the maximum amount of actual recycling can be achieved!

Mike Hastings, President, PRo Kansas Recycling April 2, 2024