

UW Oshkosh catches RecycleMania

by Jaime Hunt - Monday, February 11, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/442/uw-oshkosh-catches-recyclemania/>

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is joining 400 other colleges and universities that are striving to promote recycling and waste minimization by participating in a national college recycling competition known as RecycleMania. The University will provide RecycleMania organizers with a weekly report of the weight of recycled paper, cardboard, cans and bottles from the campus.

The RecycleMania competition began in the spring of 2001 as a friendly challenge between recycling coordinators at two schools in Ohio -- Miami University and Ohio University. From the outset, the competition was meant as a way to get students and staff more excited about participating in recycling efforts. Miami University won the first year, collecting 41.2 pounds of recyclables for each person on campus. The following year Miami and Ohio were joined by two more schools, Bowling Green State University and Harvard University, with Bowling Green winning the title with 48 pounds per capita. Since then the competition has continued to grow in popularity. This is the first year that UW Oshkosh has participated.

"As a first time participant, we hope to show our sister institutions that we can be competitive in this arena," said Steven Arndt, director of facilities management for UW Oshkosh., who points out that several other UW System schools are participating in the program. "We need the active participation of every member of the campus community if we are to succeed. We ask that individuals make sure they recycle appropriate items in the labeled recycling containers."

Though many schools have had recycling and waste prevention programs for years, studies have found that large volumes of recyclables still end up in the trash. RecycleMania motivates campus communities to recycle more often. By framing recycling in competitive terms, RecycleMania taps the same intercollegiate spirit that drives sports rivalries.

"The ability to increase awareness of recycling while tapping into the friendly competition between schools is the magic of RecycleMania. Quantifying how much material can be collected for recycling and composting from a campus community enlightens not only the students and faculty but can help the administration understand the positive environmental and economic impact a change in recycling behavior can have on a university," says Kate Krebs, executive director of the National Recycling Coalition (NRC).

The RecycleMania competition is organized by collegiate recycling coordinators from various universities, and is administered by the NRC. The competition is endorsed by NRC's College and University Recycling Council and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WasteWise program.

To learn more about RecycleMania and follow UW Oshkosh's progress, visit <http://www.recyclemaniacs.org>.