

# READY, SET, RECYCLE!

A Newsletter of the *Mississippi Recycling Coalition*

Get news and updates on Mississippi recycling issues and efforts!

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## MDEQ RECEIVES EPA RECYCLING GRANT AWARD

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has announced the receipt of over \$592,000 in Federal Grant Funding in September of 2023 through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) Grant Program. The funds received by MDEQ were awarded through the Grants for States and Territories Category of the SWIFR Grant Program.

MDEQ has indicated that the grant funds will be used to conduct a study of the state's recycling industry, local government programs, current and future economic impacts of recycling activities in the state, and opportunities to advance recycling and material recovery.

Upon completion of the study, MDEQ will evaluate and assess the results and work to identify the best opportunities to implement the study recommendations for advancing recycling in the state.

MDEQ also plans to engage various stakeholders in the state in conducting the study and in implementing its recommendations.

In acknowledging the grant award to MDEQ, Acting EPA Region 4 Administrator Jeanne Gettle stated: "Recognizably, the work done under this grant will serve as a powerful example of what we can do together to protect our planet and our communities."

According to a release by the U.S. EPA, the grant funds were made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which provided \$275 million total from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2026 for grants authorized under the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act - the largest investment in recycling in 30 years. The recycling grants are supplemented with additional funding provided through EPA's annual appropriations.

MRC is excited for our members to be able to participate in the MDEQ study. We look forward to the results and benefits to come to Mississippi from this grant award.

For more information on the grant and the state recycling study, contact Jennifer Wells, State Recycling Coordinator at MDEQ.

### A NOTE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

*Greetings MRC Members! I hope that 2024 has started off positively for each of you.*

*The previous few years have been extremely challenging for recycling in our state for both public programs and private businesses. However, as you will read in this newsletter, there is much to be excited about as we start 2024.*

*We look forward to seeing the growth of new recycling industries and new funding for recycling efforts. In addition, there is renewed support for recycling on the part of local, state, and federal government agencies working alongside our recycling businesses and industries.*

*Regardless of your role in recycling in Mississippi, we encourage you to keep up the good work in 2024 and encourage all Mississippians to recycle. Stay tuned for more updates from MRC this year as we work together to recycle more and better in 2024!*

*Mary Love Tagert,  
MRC President*

# MRC PARTNERS WITH MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

The Mississippi Recycling Coalition has entered into an agreement for 2024 with *On the Mark Consulting Services* of Madison, Mississippi for assistance in managing the organization’s activities and services. On the Mark is headed by Mark Williams, formerly with the MDEQ waste management programs where he served for 35 years. Mr. Williams is a former Board member and officer with the Mississippi Recycling Coalition and was also a Board member with the Southeast Recycling Development Council. *On the Mark* will assist the organization with member services and growth, public information services, meetings and training activities, program services and various other promotional efforts with recycling in the state. MRC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works to promote and grow recycling across the state of Mississippi.

## SERDC CEASES OPERATIONS

***The Southeastern Recycling Development Council had been a key player in recycling efforts across the southeast for the past 18 years. On November 13, 2023, the SERDC Board of Directors voted to dissolve the organization.***

The Southeastern Recycling Development Council has ceased operations after a vote of its Board on November 13, 2023, to dissolve the organization. A notice was sent to members in early November indicating the forthcoming plans of the Board to dissolve and inviting members to share their comments on the proposed action.

That notice indicated that SERDC was founded in 2005 to foster economic development in the recycling industry, to increase the recovery of material, and, importantly, to create a greater awareness of the recycling industry’s financial impact in the Southeast. According to the letter shared with members, the Board indicated that the organization had accomplished a tremendous amount in these past two decades toward its goal.

The Board’s letter indicated that the challenges facing recycling have

changed. According to the letter, SERDC’s focus had been on the economics of recycling and how to make more material available for manufacturing rather than for disposal. In their notice, the SERDC Board shared that the current primary needs for recycling included clearer messaging, increased public education and the restoration of faith in the recycling process. The Board further indicated that other recycling organizations are now better positioned to address these issues. The Board further indicated that with these challenges the SERDC organization was facing insurmountable funding challenges and that it was time for a realignment of resources.

SERDC’s presence and support will be dearly missed by the recycling community. MRC is indebted to the staff and members of SERDC for their many years of support.

*MRC Membership and Sponsorship invoices will be emailed in March! We look forward to your support for MRC in 2024 as we work to advance recycling in Mississippi!*



MRC Members on a tour at the 2008 SERDC Regional Recycling Conference



# MISSISSIPPI WELCOMES NEW ALUMINUM MILL

*In October of 2022, the Mississippi Legislature approved a \$2.5 billion economic development package for a new aluminum rolling facility in Columbus, Mississippi*

Construction of the new aluminum rolling facility began in March of 2023. The facility is being built by Steel Dynamics Inc. and will operate under the name Aluminum Dynamics. The facility will focus on the production of aluminum sheet for cans, vehicles, and industrial applications. News reports indicate that the integrated hot and cold rolling complex will have a production capacity of 650,000 tons of aluminum strip per year.

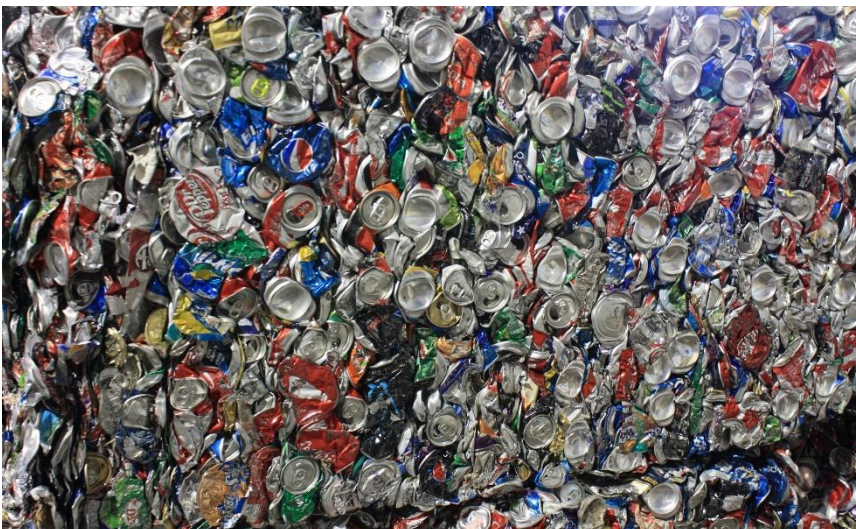
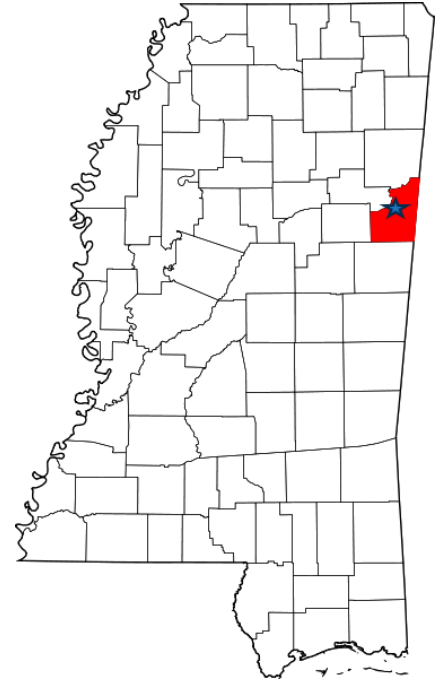
The good news for the recycling community is that the new facility will use a significant amount of aluminum scrap, provided by Steel Dynamics metals recycling platform Omnisource, the largest nonferrous metals recycler in North America. Omnisource is expected to supply 100% of the scrap

aluminum for the Columbus operation.

According to recent news reports the company is planning to hire up to 750 employees for the mill which is set to begin operations in the summer of 2025.

MRC welcomes the new Aluminum Dynamics plant to Mississippi and looks forward to a successful launch of the Company's operations in the next calendar year.

MRC will host a webinar on **Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.**, in which a representative with Aluminum Dynamics will present on the planned operations for the new mill. Registration details for the webinar will be made available soon.



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
*Recycling aluminum requires only about 5% of the energy that is required to produce aluminum from bauxite ore!*

## NEWS AND NOTES:

MDEQ's **Solid Waste Assistance Grants** can be used to help support local government recycling programs. The next competitive SWAG grant application deadline is April 1, 2024. The non-competitive County SWAG grant deadline is April 30, 2024. For more information, contact MDEQ Solid Waste Grants Staff at 601-961-5171.

MRC is discussing plans to offer the organization's **School Recycling Grants** for the 2024-2025 school year! MRC will provide more information on the availability of these grants in the near future.

EPA recently completed its 1st **EPA Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Research Project community workshop** in Vicksburg, MS on December 7th, 2023. EPA officials indicated the turnout and participation was strong. Three additional meetings will be held in Minneapolis, Baton Rouge, and St. Louis in March. A 2<sup>nd</sup> Vicksburg meeting is also planned for March 28, 2024. We look forward to helping promote recycling as a key activity and industry to help fight plastics pollution.

**REMINDER:** If your recycling business is a registered LLC or Corporation with the **Mississippi Secretary of State's Office**, you must file an **annual report online** with that office before April 15 each year. Also, if your business purchases scrap metal you are required to register with the Scrap Metal Division of the Secretary of State's Office every 2 years. Scrap Metal Businesses are also required to maintain records on purchases of regulated scrap metals in the state.

**The Recycling Partnership** has released a recent study entitled: **"State of Recycling: Present and Future of Residential Recycling in the U.S."** The study indicates that only 21% of residential recyclables in our country are being captured for recovery. The report also indicates that Mississippi is one of five states (along with Louisiana, Alabama, Montana and Nebraska) with a residential recycling rate below 10%. For more information on the study and its recommendations visit: [recyclingpartnership.org](http://recyclingpartnership.org).

## Recycling is Our Policy in the State of Mississippi

*Mississippi Code Annotated,  
Section 49-31-5 states:*

*"The Legislature declares it to be the policy of the State of Mississippi that the generation of waste should be reduced or eliminated at the source, whenever feasible; waste that is generated should be recycled or reused whenever feasible; waste that cannot be reduced or recycled should be treated in an environmentally safe manner; and disposal or other permitted release into the environment should be employed only as a last resort and should be conducted in an environmentally safe manner."*

### Contact us at:

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