

**SOLID WASTE/AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE**  
**URT (Universal Recycling Technologies)**  
**Tour of URT's De-manufacturing Plant**  
**Summary – April 15, 2011**

Committee: Don Reese-Chair, Lloyd Zastrow-Vice Chair, Jennifer Hanneman and Carlton Zentner

Staff: Sharon Ehrhardt-Program Assistant

Guests: Don Smith-Manager Waste Management, Allie Simon-Waste Management, Patrick Rowe-Sustain Jefferson, Jeff (Buck) Smith-Sustain Jefferson, Carl Jaeger Jr.-Town of Ixonia, Norbert Willing-Town of Ixonia, Lee Schmeckpeper-Town of Ixonia Recycling, Vic Karaliunas-Ixonia Recycling Chairman

Tour guides: Scott-Production Manager and Tim Ryan-Account Manager

Scott showed how they bar-coded and tagged each pallet that comes in for de-manufacturing at the plant. Skids are placed at each line and taken part at work stations. Scott said the average employee takes a part about 400 pounds in five minutes, but they have an employee who does about 700 pounds in five minutes. This includes TVs, PCs, and monitors. Scott said he could show us how to do the job in 5-10 minutes, but each employee is trained and works with a mentor for one week before left alone to do the job. They want all employees to be properly trained so the job is done correctly and safely. Safety is a large part of doing the job well. URT has rewards and incentives for their employees.

Scott took us through aisles of dismantled products ready to be shipped. They try to find lots of sources of each material, so they can be more competitive. For every 10 vendors they find, only one can be used. Each second-and third-party vendor must meet the e-Stewards standards. This is an audit process that makes sure that the products are handled properly and recycled in a proper matter. Even if the end product is sent to a foreign county they are audited so people who handle the end product and the environment are not compromised. In the e-waste business, meeting the e-Stewards standards is a prestigious honor. They also expect their vendors, including foreign vendors, to meet these high standards.

Products that have metals in them are easier to find recyclers for than glass that has lead in it. Wood is another product for which they have trouble finding a good recycling resource. Wood comes from the old console TVs and stereo units. They said plastic is baled and sent to recyclers, glass is broken down and the film taken off the glass. Circuit boards are also baled and sent to smelters. All cords and plugs are taken off and sent to a recycler. Only about 4% of a PC can't be recycled. They are working with vendors who could possibly develop a product to use the 4% waste that now is landfilled. They are always doing development and research to find new items to recycle and then find new products being made from recycled materials.

Scott showed the group the difference between LED and LCD screens and now they are taken apart. The plastic is recycled and the light tubes that have mercury in them are sent to a glass recycler.

Scott explained that the only reason for URT's profitability is because of the volumes of materials they can recycle; in any recycling business you need large quantities of materials because the de-manufacturing is labor intensive (handling, sorting, etc.) To get the volumes they need they have contracts with manufacturers to recycle their end-of-life products. They have a contract with UW-

Madison to handle all their end of life e-waste. Each entity has different requirements that URT can accommodate.

The headquarters for URT is in Janesville and they have about nine locations in other states for de-manufacturing. It is more efficient to have site in other states because of shipping and fuel costs.

The tour was interesting and informative. URT answered all questions the Committee asked. One question that Sharon gets a lot is what happens to my hard drive. Scott explained that all the hard drives from residents of Jefferson County are shredded. They consider the three collection sites as end-of-life sites so everything is taken apart and recycled. Scott also told the Committee we should refer residents to their web page [www.universalrecyclers.com](http://www.universalrecyclers.com). The web page explains the responsible and ethical cradle-to-grave recycling practices used by URT.

Patrick Rowe took pictures of our tour and they will posted on web page.