

26th Annual Recycling Conference Rocks the House

COOPERSTOWN, NY – The 26th Annual New York State Recycling Conference and Trade Show, held at the Otesaga Hotel in Cooperstown Nov. 5 and 6, explored “Approaches for Reducing Waste and Conserving Resources Through Sustainable Materials Management.”

On Nov 4 a special one-day workshop “Resources Not Wasted” focused on food recovery. This included sessions and speakers covering topics about reducing “wasted food” such as reduction and donation from residents, commercial or institutional settings and some of the legalities of food donations.

Some of the conference highlights included plenary speaker NY State Senator Thomas O’Mara, 58th Dist., who covered what is happening in Albany and some of the key challenges facing legislators on environmental issues and Dan Lilkas-Rain, NYSAR3 Board member and chairman of the Textile Committee. He gave an update on the progress of the NYSAR³-sponsored Textile Recovery campaign “ReClotheNY.”

The Annual Conference is a great opportunity for participants to network with other recycling professionals, decision makers, recycling coordinators, state and business representatives from across New York, neighboring states and various recycling associations. Sessions included such topics as re-use, bio-solids, deconstruction, organics, diversion rates, and the quality of MRF output.

The conference also included the NYSAR³ Annual Meeting and Election of the At-Large Board Members; 2015 Recycling Leadership Awards Presentation; and the “NY Recycles” Poster Contest Awards Presentation. Break out meetings were set up with the Emerging Professionals group, Organics Council, and the Textile Committee.

Some of the social activities included a morning yoga class led by Melissa Young; upcycled apron contest; awards luncheon and a cocktail reception at the exhibit hall followed by private show featuring the Swamp Divers Band. This unusual group of four musicians play a unique blend of rock and blues on instruments they construct out of salvaged, recycled and upcycled materials.

"This is one of the most successful and lowest cost recycling conferences in the country," commented Debbie Jackson, Conference Chair, on the feedback she received from conference-goers. Plans are already underway for the 2016 Fall Recycling conference, tentatively set for Nov. 2-4.



Members of the Swamp Driver's Band pose with conference attendee Jim Zecca, center, at the 2015 Fall Recycling Conference. The band uses recycled (“upcycled”) instruments made with a whimsical variety of items. Note the “bedpan bass” on far left.



Left: an interactive session at the conference provided valuable leadership skills and exercises.



Right: Pre-conference workshop facilitators Gary Feinland and Melissa Young kick off discussion on food waste recovery.



A Jack Daniels tin and two broom handles are combined to create a one-of-a-kind guitar.



Left: participants in the Upcycled Apron Challenge show off their creations.