



**iapd**

international association  
of plastics distribution

## media release

Date: October 29, 2014  
Contact: Liz Novak, Director of Marketing and Communications  
+ 913.345.1005, [lnovak@iapd.org](mailto:lnovak@iapd.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **IAPD Announces 2014 Environmental Excellence Award Recipients**

OVERLAND PARK, Kans. — The International Association of Plastics Distribution (IAPD) is pleased to announce the following recipients of its annual Environmental Excellence Award:

Best New Program — Polymer Industries

Best Recycling Program — Cope Plastics, Inc.

Best Overall Program — Laird Plastics

The recipients were honored at the opening general session at the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual IAPD Convention today in Chicago, IL, USA by IAPD Vice President and Convention Chair Kevin Short and IAPD President Jane Saale.

**Polymer Industries** was selected for its exemplary efforts to reduce the company's carbon footprint. Starting with waste management, Polymer Industries implemented programs that reduced its waste from 4 million pounds annually to 400,000 pounds. The company has saved more than 3 million pounds recyclable materials from going into landfills, all while being on an annual production growth path of double digits year over year for the past 10 years. In addition to the environmental benefits of this program, the cost savings have been what the company calls "staggering." Their program started with bailing cardboard, aluminum and paper, then they purchased a line that converts saw shavings from sheet extrusion and converts them into pellet form and, ultimately, into a viable sheet product that can be sold and reused. They have repurposed 400,000-500,000 pounds of what was at one time waste high density polyethylene (HDPE) into a utility grade of HDPE for resale. Scrap that they cannot convert themselves is sold to a recycler, which averages 60,000 pounds per month. Beyond waste management, the company worked with local government officials to bring natural gas to their community, which is a cleaner and more efficient fuel than liquefied petroleum gas, which had been in use previously. This switch resulted in significant cost savings as well. In addition, the company has established a buy-back program for designated customers and they purchase approximately 200,000 pounds annually of ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene (UHMW-PE) products and 500,000 pounds annually of HDPE. They also repurpose approximately 100,000 pounds annually of post-consumer HDPE, such as recycled milk jugs. This is above and beyond the postindustrial regrind operations they engage in on a daily basis. The most recent environmental improvement is an energy-efficient lighting project throughout their operations.

**Cope Plastics, Inc.** has expanded its recycling program to include 36 different grades of plastic, which make up nearly 90 percent of the material distributed through or consumed by the company. This increase resulted from opening a supply scrap channel for five different polyvinyl chloride (PVC) types. This new PVC outlet is forecasted to keep an additional 200,000 pounds of PVC scrap out of landfills annually. In 2012, Cope began a concentrated effort to regain scrap from customers. The past 12 months have begun to show the fruits of those efforts. Cope received 141,575 pounds in the 12-month period from July 2012 through June 2013. From July 2013 to June 2014 that number increased to 604,053 pounds and the number of participating customers increased by 129 percent increase.

In July of last year, Cope added a single-stream recycling program for employees to recycle cardboard, post-consumer plastic, steel and aluminum cans and glass and paper containers. This program offers recycling to more than 100 Cope employees who live in communities too small to offer curbside recycling. This program is responsible for an additional 200,000 pounds of post-consumer waste being diverted from area landfills.

Cope has continued its programs to recycle scrap metal, electronics, bulk paper files, oil and coolant, batteries and light bulbs generated through industrial processes. It has also begun recycling old or broken wood pallets through a local pallet manufacturer that takes these unwanted and unusable pallets and turns them into mulch. This program diverts about 9,000 pounds each month from being burned and creates about 100,000 pounds of mulch annually.

Despite the increased resources required to move an additional 600,000 pounds of customer scrap as well as the costs to sustain the equivalent of three more employees, Cope's environmental program is economically self-sustaining. The Processing Center has continued to be profitable and contributed positively to the bottom line at Cope Plastics, Inc. The salvage program that started in 2012 was designed to recover material that might be upcycled and used for prime consumption rather than recycling. Cope has identified and upcycled more than 120,000 pounds of material this year. The salvage program has also contributed thousands of dollars in profits from local sales.

**Laird Plastics** is in its sixth year of environmental stewardship and continues to devote significant resources to a business unit dedicated solely to sustainable supply chain management and domestic plastics recycling. The Laird Plastics business unit is responsible for the collection and analysis of environmental data and report these findings back to corporate leadership, customers and manufacturers. Recent accomplishments include recycling for 50 of its facilities and hundreds of customers throughout North America, recycling for customers in 47 states and seven Canadian provinces, recycling more than 12 million pounds of plastics in 2013, significantly reduced contaminated materials in their recycling stream, and continuing to promote its environmentally friendly corner guard, which is being used through its network as a replacement for cardboard.

"IAPD is proud to honor the accomplishments of these three companies with the Environmental Excellence Award. Life cycle analyses show that plastics are often the most environmentally friendly material to use for applications and as shown in the examples from these four companies, the manufacturing of those plastics can also be done in an environmentally responsible manner," said Susan Avery, CAE, IAPD Chief Executive Officer.

Any IAPD member company is eligible to apply for the IAPD Annual Environmental Excellence Awards. Applications are collected online and the IAPD Environmental Committee determines the recipients via secret ballot.

6734 W. 121st Street, Overland Park, KS 66209 USA  
phone: +913.345.1005 fax: +913.345.1006  
www.iapd.org iapd@iapd.org  
*Susan E. Avery, CAE, Chief Executive Officer*

In addition to the awards program, the IAPD GreenScene™ program honors all member companies that are engaging in environmentally friendly practices. IAPD GreenScene™ members have been determined based on their award application and their participation in the committee's biannual environmental survey.

### **About IAPD**

The International Association of Plastics Distribution (IAPD), established in 1956, brings together distributors, fabricators, manufacturers, manufacturers' representatives, recyclers and service providers in an environment which encourages a free flow of ideas and information that help members build their businesses. Every program and service we provide is designed with the simple goal of helping our members increase profitability. Membership in IAPD is an affordable business investment. IAPD provides training, connections with customers and suppliers and information about developments that impact the industry. What makes IAPD unique is a commitment to educating customers and other key end-users about plastics. In other words, IAPD works with members to build the demand for plastics. Central to this effort is the reinforcement of the value of distribution. For more information, visit [www.iapd.org](http://www.iapd.org).

Connect with IAPD:



###

6734 W. 121st Street, Overland Park, KS 66209 USA  
phone: +913.345.1005 fax: +913.345.1006  
[www.iapd.org](http://www.iapd.org) [iapd@iapd.org](mailto:iapd@iapd.org)  
*Susan E. Avery, CAE, Chief Executive Officer*