

# Minnesota Waste Wise 2020 Annual Report

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Prepared by:  
**Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation**

400 Robert Street North, Suite 1500  
Saint Paul, MN 55101  
651.292.4650

[WWW.MNWASTEWISE.ORG](http://WWW.MNWASTEWISE.ORG)



Minnesota Chamber of Commerce  
**WASTE WISE**



## Executive Summary

**537** site visits

**608** businesses received Waste Wise assistance

**1,379** instances of technical assistance provided

**1.28 million** pounds of waste diverted from the landfill

**\$50,032** saved annually

**288** businesses applied for **\$2.25 million** in grant funding

2020 was an unprecedented year for Minnesota Waste Wise as the business community dealt with a multitude of challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the social unrest following the killing of George Floyd. These challenges frequently shifted businesses' focus away from waste management, and while Waste Wise continued to respectfully and tactfully communicate with participants, responsiveness and participation was limited much of the year as the business community dealt with more immediate and pressing issues.

Even with all of these challenges, Waste Wise was able to adapt our engagement strategies and worked with 608 businesses, nonprofits, multi-unit properties, and institutions across a wide range of industries to start, expand, and enhance their recycling programs. Beginning remote site visits and establishing safety protocols for in-person visits allowed for 537 total visits across Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties this year. By sharing recycling best practices, identifying strategies to reduce waste, assisting businesses in procuring services and infrastructure, and providing implementation assistance and training, much of which was through our newly created online education content, Waste Wise saw 288 businesses apply for local county recycling grants, securing \$2.25 million in funding designed to decrease waste and optimize recycling programs. As a result of this work, the local business community diverted nearly 1.3 million pounds of waste from landfills and incinerators and saw a combined \$50,032 in estimated cost savings.

In closing, 2020 was a challenging year, but through the passion, dedication, and creativity of our team, Waste Wise lent a helping hand to hundreds of businesses. We are proud of what we have accomplished this year, and this report summarizes the new and lasting impacts made and the results achieved over the course of the year. We are prepared to continue to play a vital role in assisting businesses and anticipate 2021 to be a productive year. Waste Wise is more adept than ever to meet the recycling needs of Minnesota businesses and feel fortunate to be a part of this important work!



# Waste Wise on the Map

Delta ModTech,  
Ramsey



Lighthouse Lofts,  
Forest Lake



Chick-Fil-A,  
Maplewood



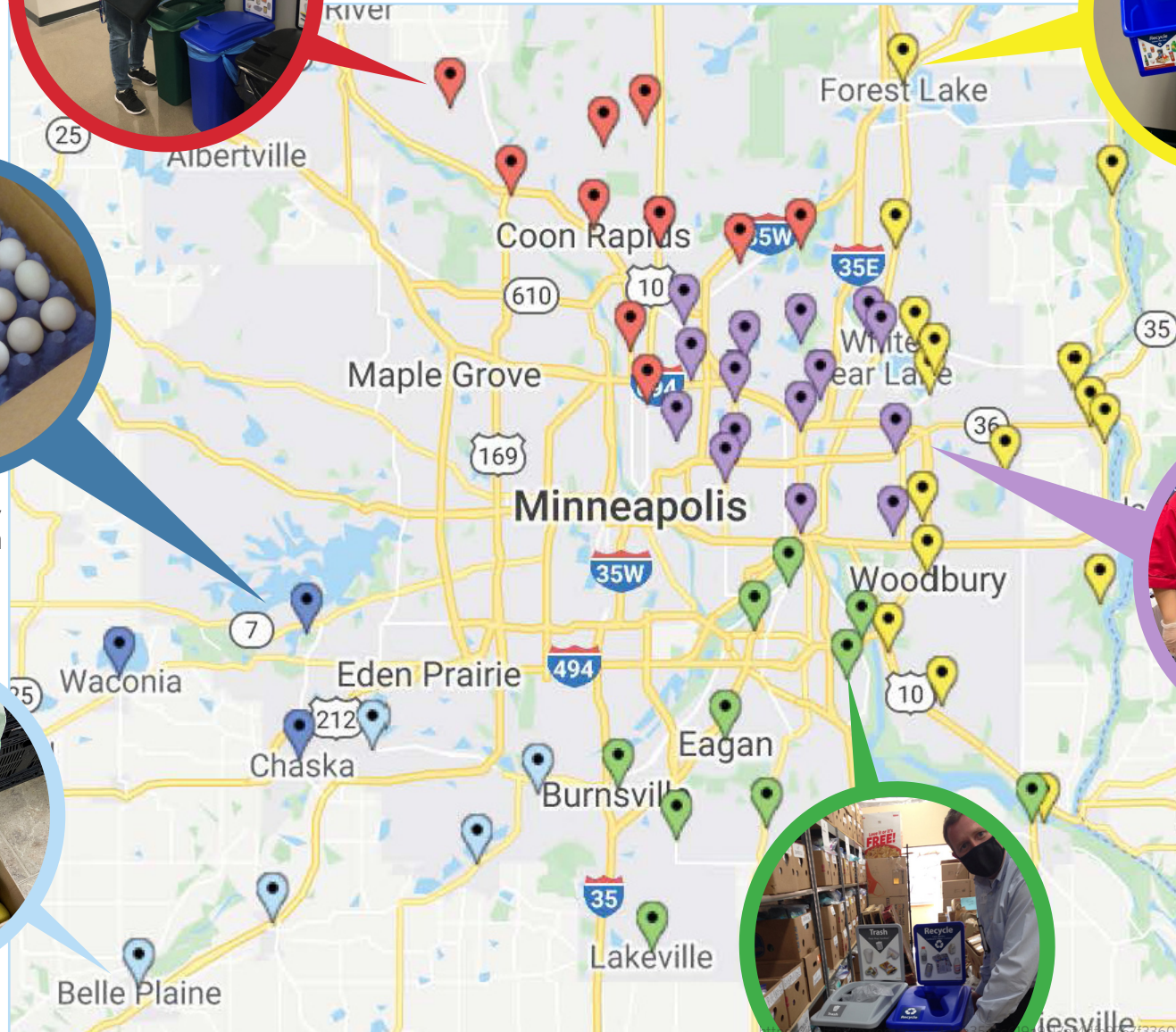
Neighbors, Inc.  
South St. Paul



Belle Plaine  
Area Food Shelf,  
Belle Plaine



Humanity Alliance,  
Victoria



# Results

Waste Wise was on site with businesses 537 times in 2020 and covered a territory of nearly 2,400 square miles. These visits included initial site consultations or 'walk-throughs' as well as any other follow-up assistance necessary to address waste and recycling issues such as project planning, bin placement and labeling, staff education, and program evaluation. The map on the previous page highlights every city Waste Wise worked in over the course of 2020.

Waste Wise works with all businesses that have implemented program changes to gather and track diversion associated with waste reduction initiatives. Waste Wise utilizes service charges, estimates of dumpster fullness, and EPA and industry standard volume-to-weight conversions to estimate waste diversion as a result of implemented reduction, reuse, and recycling activities. Across the metro area in 2020, our work diverted nearly 1.3 million pounds of waste from either a landfill or an incinerator. This annual diversion is ongoing and expected to continue in subsequent years.



**1,287,729** total pounds of waste was diverted from landfill and incinerators, including:



**688,001** pounds of single stream recycling



**410,057** pounds of organics recycling



**2,550** pounds of paper/cardboard only



**8,667** pounds of specialty plastics



**159,469** pounds of other miscellaneous material

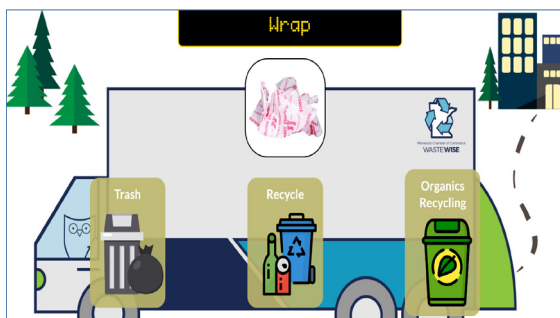
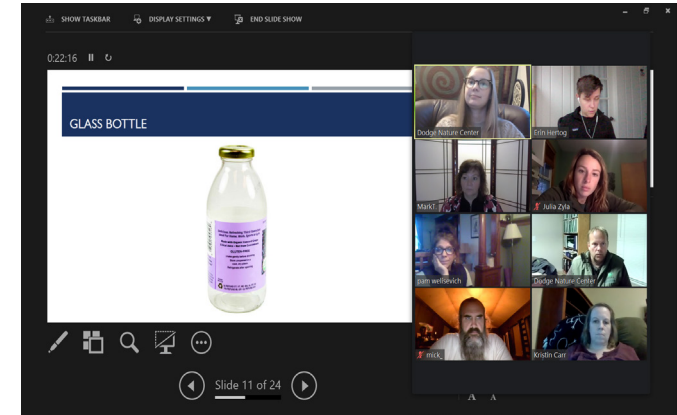
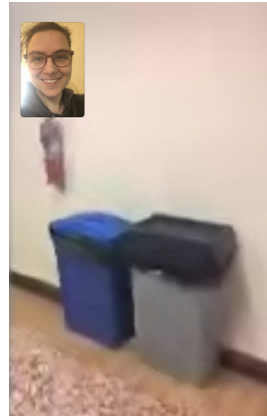
**985** pounds of waste avoided (source reduction)

# What Was New in 2020?

COVID-19 left the biggest and most undeniable mark on 2020, leaving impacts on the number of participants able to engage in the program, the amount of waste diversion collected, and even the ability of Waste Wise to conduct site visits safely for all those involved. Despite this, Waste Wise quickly innovated to stay relevant within this 'new normal' and kept its finger on the pulse of the industry as it adapted to new changes and opportunities. Here's a highlight of some notable changes to our work at Waste Wise for 2020.

## Virtual Visits and Trainings

Waste Wise began offering virtual visits in addition to in-person visits. In-person visits were limited to no more than two representatives from the participant business. We also increased our virtual training offerings as a substitute for in-person staff trainings.



**UNDERSTANDING YOUR WASTE BILL**

Use this guide to better understand the common fees associated with your waste bill. Service fees vary by hauler and location. Terminology used as well as the overall 'look' of a waste bill can also vary widely. If you have questions about your bill, contact your hauler!

**BILL TO:** JANE'S JANITORIAL  
123 MAIN ST  
JANETOWN, MN

**INVOICE NO. 000011**  
**INVOICE DATE 02/01/2020**  
**ACCOUNT NUMBER 011123**  
**1 BALANCE DUE: \$764.95**  
**PAYMENT DUE: 2/20/20**

**1 BALANCE DUE:** Total amount to be paid for waste services by due date.

**2 DATES OF SERVICE:** May be listed as a monthly range or a single date for volume specific transaction or service dates.

**3 PAYMENTS MADE:** Bill may show payments made for previous months of service.

**4 CONTAINER SIZE:** Waste and recycling containers serviced by a hauler are typically measured in cubic yards for dumpsters and in gallons for carts.

**5 SERVICE FREQUENCY:** How often haulers pick up containers can range from once a month or every other week to multiple times a week. For customers with large containers or roll-off dumpsters, "On Call" may be used and the customer contacts the hauler once a container is full and needs to be changed. Service frequency may also be written as "1st per week".

**6 QUANTITY:** Refers to the number of containers provided to the hauler.

**7 FUEL SURCHARGE/ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY FEE:** Fees charged by haulers to cover costs and equipment to operate collection, transfer, landfill, and recycling operations in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

**8 RECYCLING PROCESSING FEE:** Fees charged by third parties for processing of materials. May also be written as "Recycling Material Offset", "Recycling Commodity Adjustment", etc.

**9 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT (SWM) TAX:** The State of MN has a commercial trash service at 17%. This fee applies to trash service and is charged only and does not apply to recycling or organics services.

**10 COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGE (CEC):** A fee assessed on trash by individual counties. This charge does not apply to recycling or organics services. See table to the left for CECs in the 7-County Metro Area.

**OTHER FEES:** can show here may be included on your waste bill. Including drop off fees for new containers when service is added, service when you use additional demonstration fees, or contamination fees.

COUNTY	STATE TAX ON TRASH (commercial)	COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGE	TOTAL TAX ON TRASH
Anoka	17%	-	17%
Carver	17%	-	17%
Dakota	17%	21.5%	38.5%
Hennepin	17%	53%	70%
Ramsey	17%	-	17%
Scott	17%	35%	52%
Washington	17%	35%	52%

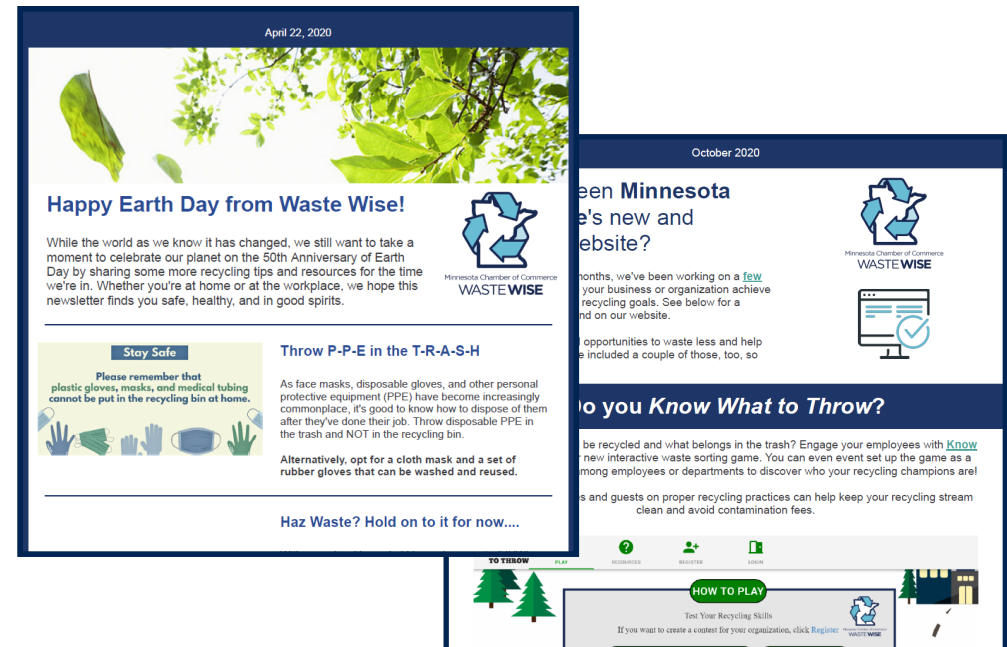
## New Resources

Waste Wise released a new interactive waste sorting game, two new recycling training videos, a single stream recycling guide, and a guidance document for understanding a commercial waste bill. These resources supplement Waste Wise's training approach and gives us the flexibility to meet businesses' training needs, particularly from a distance.



## Newsletters

Waste Wise began producing a bimonthly newsletter starting in spring 2020. The newsletter has been sent out to more than 1,500 current and past program participants across six counties to make them aware of new and ongoing grant opportunities, recycling best practices and tips, and other relevant waste reduction resources and tools.



## Recommendations Template

Waste Wise created a new, more attractive and educational recommendations document, which is personalized for each participant after a site visit. Recommendations are the most frequently provided assistance given to participants, so streamlining this tool has helped Waste Wise provide clear information to help participants understand suggestions for their business and be reminded of best practices and next steps. This template also serves as a reference tool that participants can use after implementing a program.

# Special Projects in 2020

## Emergency Food Donation Pop-Ups

Following the emergence of COVID-19 and the social unrest in late May and early June, Waste Wise worked to assist various food donation pop-up events. We provided assistance in identifying waste haulers, obtaining boxes and bags for food storage and donation containers, and even provided on-site assistance during these events to ensure that food unable to be donated and other packaging was disposed of appropriately. Waste Wise was honored to provide this assistance during a time of need and was eager to demonstrate our capabilities as a nimble and responsive member of the community.



## Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center

As the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center underwent renovations, the office areas of the building were left with a lot of furniture and other fixtures that were in good shape but no longer needed. Waste Wise worked with office furniture companies to ensure that most of this material was able to be donated and reused. After all the commercial donations were complete, Waste Wise came in and brought the remaining chairs, shelving, and wall hangings to Bridging.



## MN Waste Wise Staff

**Robert Friend**

Executive Director

**Jon Klapperich**

Program Manager

**Erin Hertog**

Program Coordinator

**Michelle Palm**

Program Coordinator

**Adam Mehr**

Sustainability Specialist

**Bonnie Nord**

Sustainability Specialist

**Elizabeth Walsh**

Sustainability Specialist

**Emma Jones**

Sustainability Specialist

**Maddy Hoensheid**

Sustainability Specialist

**Jasmine Jones**

Sustainability Specialist

**Hannah Bohn**

Sustainability Specialist



## Conclusion

As we look back at 2020, I am very proud of the work Waste Wise has accomplished supporting businesses as they rebuild and recover from the events of the past year. As we move into 2021, we recognize there is still plenty of work to be done and will continue to serve businesses by combining our proven model for success with some of the new and flexible strategies we learned over the course of the year.

Working with businesses, small and large, and across for-profit, non-profit, and public sectors, we continue to foster sustainability within the greater business community by offering individualized consultation in the areas of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. To help businesses reduce their carbon footprint, we provide them tailored recycling recommendations and assistance in accessing local County grants. These grants support businesses' efforts by providing necessary capital for waste improvements, investments that will continue to benefit the businesses for years to come.

We look forward to a new year and doing all we can to assist the business community in the metro and greater Minnesota in achieving their waste reduction and recycling goals. It is gratifying to serve so many businesses, collaborate with a growing number of partners and programs, and build an increasingly sustainable and resilient economy in Minnesota.





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**WASTE WISE**

400 Robert Street North, Suite 1500, St. Paul, MN 55101

651.292.4653

[www.mnwastewise.org](http://www.mnwastewise.org)

*The Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit affiliate of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce that provides environmental sustainability consulting for Minnesota businesses and organizations.*