

Community Education & Tackling Misinformation



SWAA Winter Training, March 11, 2025

Agenda

1. General communication tips

Andrea McKennan, program supervisor – communication, outreach and education
Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy

2. Recycling Exists campaign

Alisa Reckinger, environmental education and communications supervisor
Hennepin County Environment and Energy

3. Expanding on a collaborative campaign

Beth Carreño, program supervisor – outreach and engagement
Ramsey County Environmental Health

Communication Tips



Empathy

- Start with connection – connect on an emotional level before sharing facts
- You can't fight feelings with facts!
- Data doesn't change behavior, emotions do
- Use positive messaging

Opposing or Inaccurate Views

- Include others' valid points in your framing and communication
- Allow your critics to exaggerate – time spent trying to counter exaggeration makes you seem defensive

Stories

- Our whole brains light up when we hear stories (as opposed to only a few parts of our brains when we just hear facts)
- Stories provide "scaffolding" to help us retain information – people remember and understand more when information is conveyed via a story
- Stories and data – need both! - not either/or
- The best stories activate all our senses

Google "Ted Talk Karen Eber" for a great (and short) presentation about why stories are so powerful!

Engage

- Vary content types – informational, educational, entertaining
- Work with partners to tell your story – you can't reach all audiences by yourself
- Recurring, recognizable faces are engaging on social media
- Show, don't tell

Industry Specific Tips

- Acknowledge that there is a lot of confusion around recycling
- Acknowledge where there are problems in the system
- Emphasize the recycling is local
- Encourage pride in our system
- Tell the story of our system

Recycling Exists



News and messaging that plastics recycling doesn't work



INVESTIGATIONS

Recycling plastic is practically impossible — and the problem is getting worse

OCTOBER 24, 2022 · 6:31 PM ET

HEARD ON ALL THINGS CONSIDERED



Laura Sullivan



4-Minute Listen

TRANSCRIPT



"Is my recycling
actually getting
recycled?"



Developing regional messaging

- The materials you put in your recycling bin, as long as they are accepted, are being recycled
- We have strong local and regional markets to make your recyclables into new products
- It's important to recycle the right things
- Recycling isn't a perfect solution, so we need to focus on reduction

Building on past messaging/campaigns

Recycle more



Recycle right

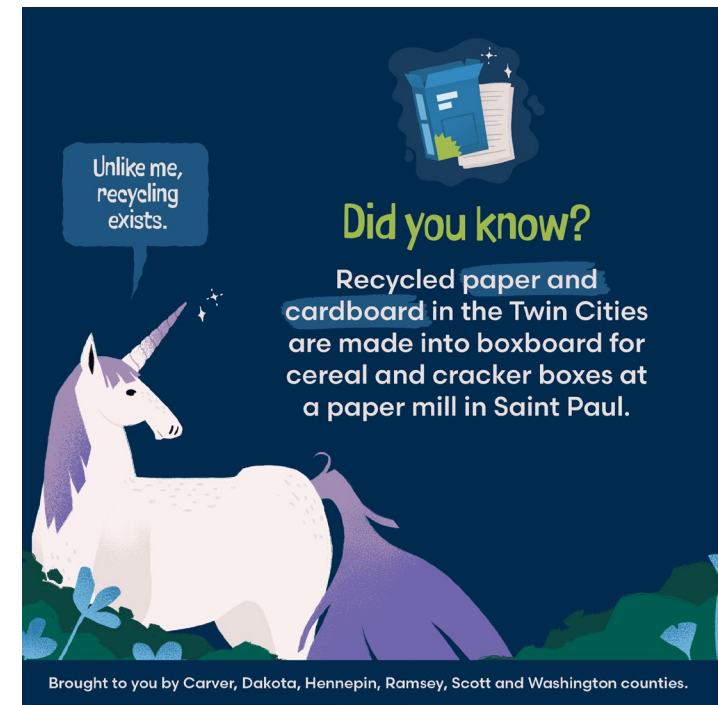
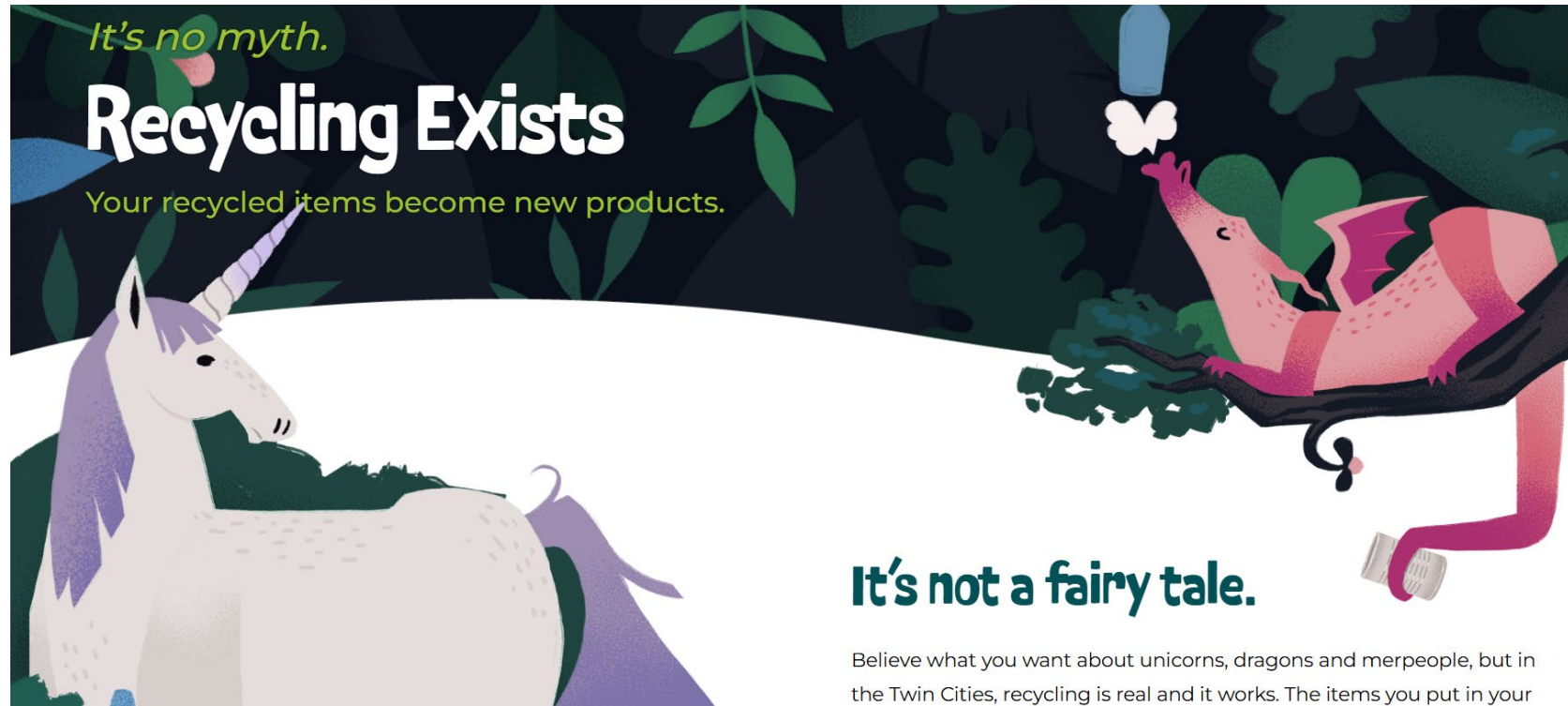


Recycling works

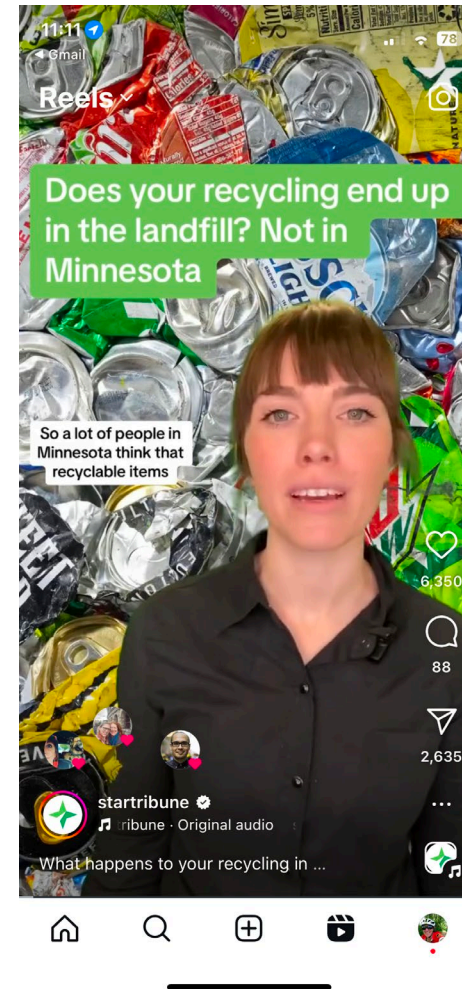


Campaign creative

- Juxtaposes mythical creatures that are not real with something we can all agree on – recycling is real
- RecyclingExists.com, static graphics, animated videos



Launched with joint news release



Ad and content channels

- Phase 1 (Dec. 2023 – April 2024)
 - Social media: Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube
 - Streaming TV, including Spanish language TV
 - Local influencers
- Organic
 - County and city newsletters, social media
 - News release
- Phase 2 (Oct. – Nov. 2024, March – April 2025)
 - Gopher Athletics partnership
 - Radio – KDWB plus small and culturally specific
 - Billboard
 - Grocery store and restaurant TV

Metrics and outcomes

- Phase 1: Over 12.5 million impressions; 33,000 clicks on digital media, and 28,000 visitors to RecyclingExists.com
- Phase 2: Over 24.8 million impressions and 3,500 visitors to RecyclingExists.com
- Opportunities to have discussions and respond to resident questions
- Residents have more trust in paper, glass, and metal recycling, want to know about plastics

Expanding on a Collaborative Campaign

Ramsey County

- Building on the partnership's investment
- Additional ad buys
- Social media
- Materials for tabling

2025 Media Plan

- Bus shelters and the Green Line
- Billboards
- The WILD
- Hmongtown Marketplace
- Expanded list of in-language resources

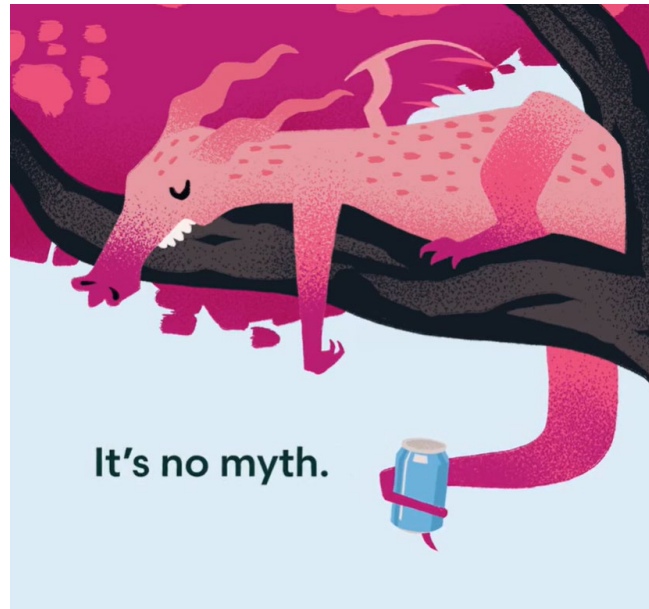
My Talk Radio



- One month endorsement
- Coincide with Earth Day
- Additional ads

Seasonal Social Media

- Ability to share with partners

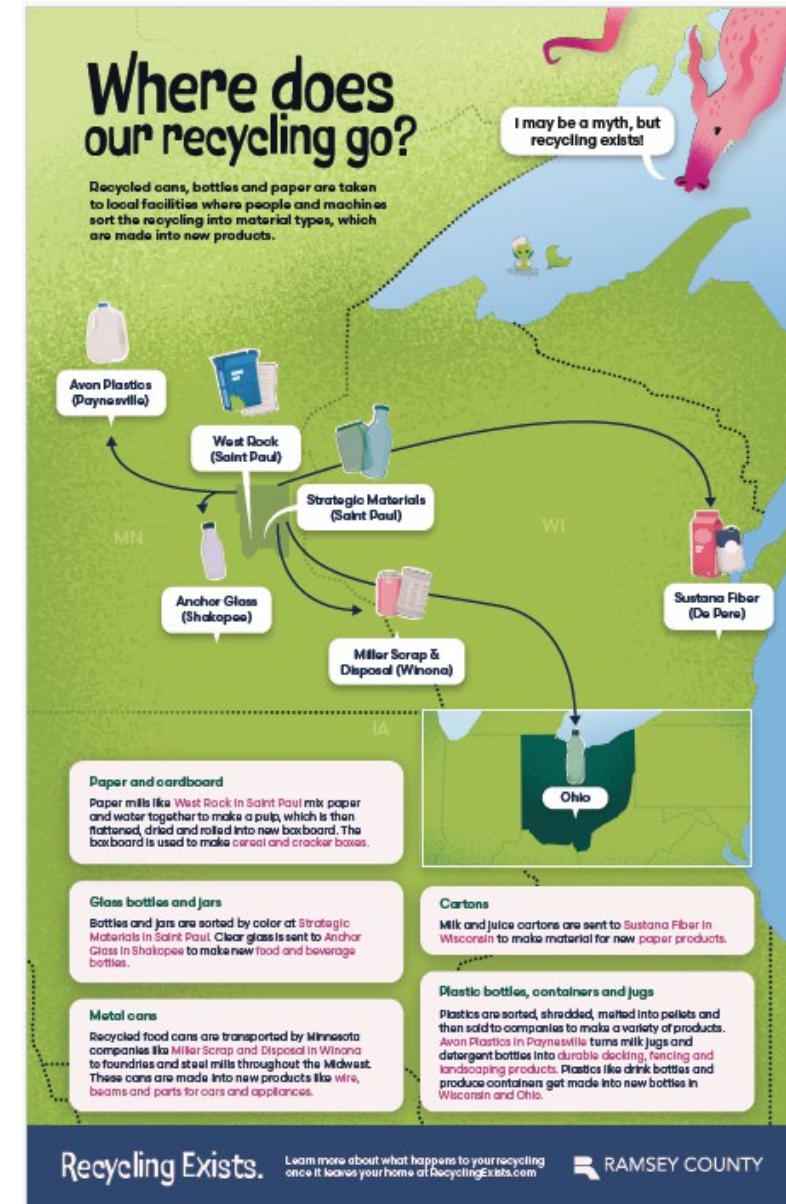


This Valentine's day, show some love the environment. Learn the right way to recycle and recycle whenever you can.

Learn more at RecyclingExists.com

Events and Tabling

- Tabletop castle
- Activity book
- Posters
- Stickers
- Considering costumes



Collaboration Matters

- Consistent regional messaging
- Wider reach
- Dollars go further
- Efficient
- Residents benefit from it and want it

Recycling and Waste

Activity Booklet

Recycling is
no myth!

Explore the World of Recycling and Waste! Learn how to reduce, reuse and recycle to help protect our planet and our homes.

What's Next?

- Continuing assessment
- Refreshing materials
- Partner conversations
- Setting future of campaign
 - Permanent part of the brand
 - Possible kids campaign
- Continued county collaboration beyond campaign

Thank you!

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