

MAY 2021

TENNESSEE GREEN STAR PARTNERSHIP MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



Tennessee Recycling Coalition

Lifting Recycling As the Standard Since 1990

By: Caleb Powell

The Tennessee Recycling Coalition (TRC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting recycling and sustainable materials management practices in Tennessee. TRC's membership is comprised of a coalition of industries, companies, and individuals networked together to educate and encourage recycling in Tennessee. Recycling further enhances the personal wealth of all Tennesseans through cost avoidance of landfill tipping fee charges. Ultimately, it also protects the environment by keeping the materials out of the landfill. TRC's goal is to provide a platform where experts in waste management, recycling, and sustainability from across the state can connect with government and industries to share ideas and knowledge on better ways to manage materials. TRC works in partnership with the local, state, and federal governments to provide resources, education, and outreach to endorse the recycling message.

The mission of TRC is to:

- Promote the state-wide adoption of waste reduction and recycling.
- Provide recycling information and education.
- Partner with companies, industries, and people to address waste issues in the state.

Currently, the TRC Board of Directors is made up of 12 board members, who represent all facets of the recycling industry. The variety of expertise and recycling know-how that the board contains is beneficial to anyone that has questions about recycling in the state. Starting in 2021, the TRC board hired an Executive Director to propel them into the next level of executing their mission. TRC's Executive Director, Becky Caldwell, is a nationally recognized expert in the field of solid waste resource management and solutions. The current President is Lincoln Young, the owner of Rockwood Sustainable Solutions.

Starting in 2020, the Coalition began hosting educational webinars that bring experts together in a virtual, seminar-style classroom to teach the audience about recycling programs and innovations. Often, these trainings also provide information relating to different recycling options beyond the big three commodities (metal, cardboard, and plastic). Typically, there is a webinar every quarter and they are free to all TRC members.

FEATURED THIS MONTH

- Established 1990
- Made up of:
 - An Executive Director
 - 12 Board Members
 - Various Sponsors and Members
- [TRC Website Link](#)



The Board of Directors at their annual meetings.

If you have a success story for hard-to-recycle materials or experience with zero-waste that you would like to present on, please contact TRC to suggest an upcoming webinar. The webinar registration and previous recordings can be found on the Upcoming Events section of their website.

TRC's premier event is an annual conference that brings the recycling sector together for informative sessions featuring dynamic speakers that highlight up-to-date trends, legislative announcements, and allow for networking opportunities. They have recently partnered with the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry to establish a joint conference. This partnership brings more networking and state-wide collaboration to the recycling sector than ever before between industries and companies with like recycling issues.

Recognition is a powerful thing. Each year, TRC gives out the sought-after Recycler of the Year Awards. TRC's Recycler of the Year Awards recognize individuals, governments, organizations, schools, and businesses in the State of Tennessee that have demonstrated a commitment and outstanding achievement to waste prevention and recycling. Historically, there have been many Tennessee Green Star Partners (TGSP) that have received an award in one of the categories. The winners are generally announced at the annual conference during a formal awards dinner. The categories for the awards are:

Business Recycler of the Year
School (K-12) Recycler of the Year
Non-Profit Recycler of the Year
Video Entry Award of the Year

Government Recycler of the Year
Higher Education Recycler of the Year
Tom Hattle Memorial Award of the Year
Innovator of the Year

If you have questions about becoming a member of TRC or would like recycling help from one of the Board of Directors, please reach out to Caleb Powell, caleb.powell@tn.gov.

The [Tennessee Materials Marketplace](#) is a collaboration between industries, facilitated by an interactive online materials exchange, to recycle, repurpose, and return material discards back to Tennessee's economy. TRC has been a major advocate of the marketplace and continues to assist with its success.



"The key to survival in this market is the generator of the recycled commodity must see themselves as a supplier. They are creating a product for purchase from a buyer. They have to turn the switch in their mind from an entity that is packaging trash to a supplier that is making a product."

- Lincoln Young, TRC President

[The Tennessee Green Star Partnership \(TGSP\)](#) is a voluntary environmental leadership program designed to recognize industries in the state that are committed to sustainable practices. TGSP and TRC work very closely to find solutions for hard-to-recycle materials in the manufacturing sector. If you are interested in joining other sustainable industries in Tennessee by becoming a member, please contact us.