SWDA RECYCLING NEWSLETTER

SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY RECYCLE





TERRI GRAHAM, CEO

A Message From Our CEO

As we close out September, I'm grateful for the progress our community has made together. This past month brought meaningful engagement, growing participation, and several accomplishments that highlight the positive impact of shared environmental responsibility.

Our curbside recycling outreach continued to expand, helping more residents understand how small, everyday actions contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable community. We also saw tremendous success during National Battery Take Back Day, where community members joined us in keeping hazardous materials out of landfills and reducing fire risks associated with improper battery disposal.

We are proud to share that our team was one of five recipients of the PEP Environmental Stewardship Award, recognizing our new Materials Recovery Facility and its efforts to reduce landfill waste and strengthen community education. This award is a tremendous honor.

As we look ahead to October, which is Fire Safety Prevention Month, we will be focusing on sharing information that helps keep households safe. Fire safety remains an important topic, many home fires each year are caused by preventable hazards, including the improper handling of batteries. Our goal this month is to equip our community with simple, practical steps that can make a meaningful difference in reducing risks and protecting families.

October will be a busy and exciting month as we continue to be out in the community at events, workshops, and outreach activities. We look forward to seeing you there and partnering together to build a safer, cleaner, and more informed community.

Stories of Impact

National Battery Take-Back Day Recap

How Baldwin County achieved safe battery disposal

The Fairhope and Orange Beach CHaRMs proudly participated in National Battery Take-Back Day, a nationwide event organized by the National Waste & Recycling Association (NWRA) in partnership with the National Forest Association. This coordinated effort brought communities across the country together to promote safe battery disposal and reduce hazardous materials in the waste stream.



NWRA provided participating locations, including ours, with a suite of helpful resources to make the event successful. This included branded educational items to distribute on-site, as well as a dedicated national website where residents could easily locate battery drop-off sites. That site, BatterySafeNow.com, remains active, ensuring that residents, even after the event, can continue to access information about battery safety and proper disposal. NWRA also granted participating communities permission to use the likeness of Woodsy the Owl, helping draw attention with a familiar, trusted environmental mascot.

Locally, we amplified the message through our own outreach efforts. Our team appeared on local TV stations, promoted the event across META platforms, and helped introduce many new visitors to our CHaRM facilities. The impact was clear: Fairhope welcomed 57 customers, and Orange Beach, our newest CHaRM, greeted 20 customers, many of whom were visiting for the first time and eager to learn about responsible battery recycling.



Together, thanks to national coordination and strong local engagement, we collected nearly 1,000 batteries in a single day. This achievement not only keeps hazardous materials out of landfills but also strengthens awareness around safe disposal practices. National Battery Take-Back Day demonstrated how effective national partnerships, paired with committed local action, can create meaningful environmental progress for our community.

What's Ahead

SWDA Joins Fire Prevention Month

October is Fire Prevention Month in Baldwin County, and this year the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has again spotlighted the risks of lithium-ion batteries under the theme, "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower".

Across the county, fire departments are teaming up with organizations like ours to raise awareness and educate residents on safe charging habits and fire safety practices. Local fire crews are actively visiting schools, libraries, and community centers offering live demonstrations, covering topics from proper device charging and warning signs of a damaged battery.

Together, we're helping Baldwin County residents learn how to reduce the dangers associated with lithium-ion batteries and stay safe all year round.

FIRE & SAFETY

If your device start overheating:

- Unplug it immediately.
- Move it to a fire
- resistant surface away
- from flammable objects.

Signs of Battery Failure:

- Unusual swelling or bulging of the battery.
- Excessive heat even when not in use.
- A strange smell or smoke coming from the device.

If a battery catches fire:

- Do NOT use water. Lithium-ion battery fires require a Class D or lithium-ion fire extinguisher.
- If safe, use sand or a dry powder extinguisher to suppress flames.
- Call 911 immediately if the fire spreads.

SKIP THE BIN | PROPER BATTERY DISPOSAL

Tape the Terminals
Cover the ends of your batteries with clear tape, especially the contact points. This helps prevent sparks and keeps everyone safe.

Make a Plan
Different batteries may need different return options. Visit our drop-off locations:

- 15101 Terra Bella Dr. Summerdale, AL 36580
- 20609 Bishop Rd Fairhope, AL 36532
- 22510 Russian Rd Gulf Shores, AL 36542

Turn them in.
Now that you know where to go or how to return them, it's time to take action! Drop off your taped batteries at a nearby battery return site.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LITHIOM ION BATTERIES

Batterysafety.org | baldwincountyswda.org

National Fire Protection Association - NFPA.org



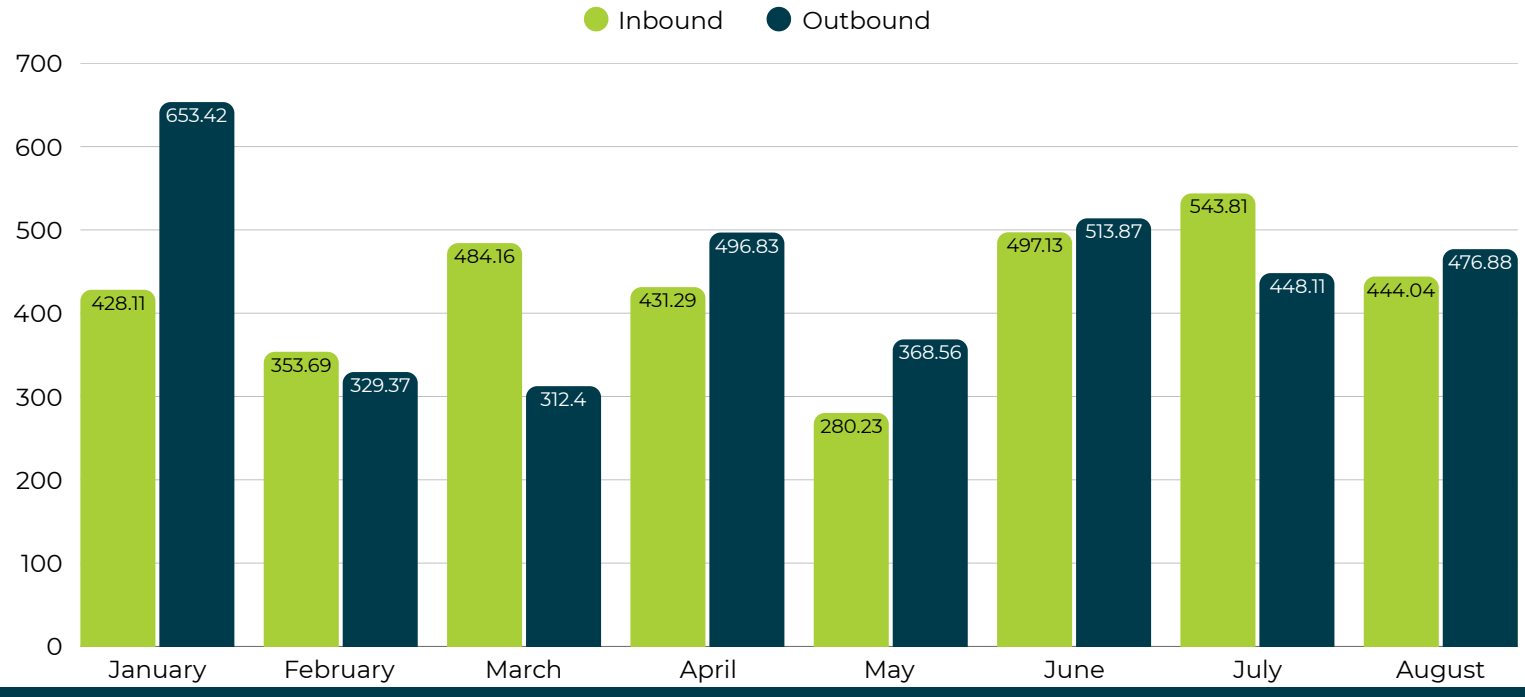
Material on the Move
Green Machine Tonnage Update

In 2025, we collected 3,655.06 tons of recyclable materials and sent 3,277.25 tons outbound for processing, resulting in a recovery rate of approximately **89.6%**. This reflects solid participation across the county and consistent effort from our staff to capture as much material as possible.

So far in 2026, we've collected **3,462.46 tons of materials** and sent **3,599.44 tons outbound**. This is a major step forward compared to the **2,260.66 tons collected by this time last year**. Reaching this level by August shows just how much momentum our program has gained. Residents are recycling more, and our team continues to strengthen sorting and processing efforts, making our overall operation more efficient and effective.

We've also seen gains in individual material streams. In 2026, we collected 1,928.95 tons of OCC (cardboard) compared to 1,894.11 tons last year. Likewise, plastic collections increased significantly, from 342.31 tons in 2025 to 437.55 tons so far this year. These jumps show that residents are doing an outstanding job separating materials and placing the right items into their recycling carts.

Overall, the county continues to move in a positive direction, outperforming last year's totals and strengthening our recycling program across the board.





Recycled Material Snapshot

JANUARY 2026 - AUGUST 2026

Plastics

437.55

PET (Plastic #1): 247.36 Tons
HDPE (Plastic #2 Natural): 39.02 Tons
HDPE (Plastic #2 Color): 87.28
PP (Plastic #5): 45.81
Mixed Plastics (#7): 18.08

Fiber Materials

3,036.72 Tons

Cardboard: 1,9278.95 Tons
Mixed Paper: 1,107.77 Tons

METALS

125.17 Tons

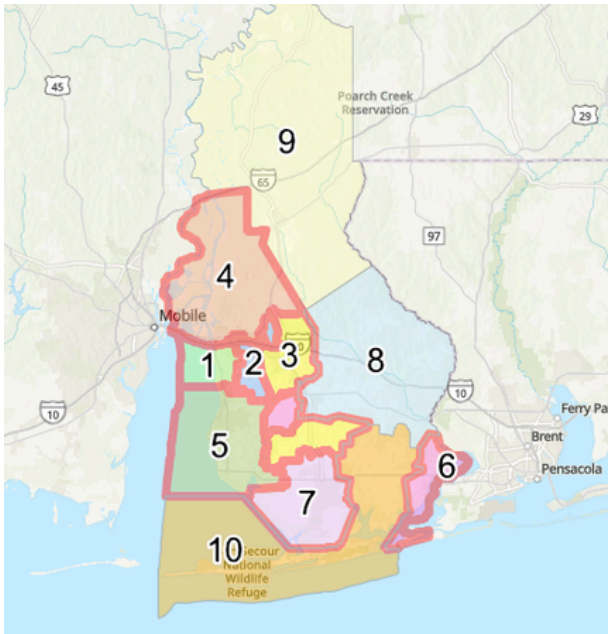
Aluminum: 80.41 Tons
Steel: 44.76 Tons

Curbside Recycling

We're nearing the finish line for our countywide curbside recycling rollout. Pod 9 is scheduled to begin collection on October 3, 2026, followed by Pod 10 on December 7, 2026, bringing us close to full program coverage.

So far, we've received 3,307 applications, representing 5% of all potential customers contacted. Of these, 40% come from residents who are not currently part of SWDA's garbage collection service, showing strong interest beyond our existing customer base.

Once the rollout is complete, the level of coverage will make recycling more convenient, reduce contamination at drop-off sites, and increase the overall volume of materials we can divert from the landfill.



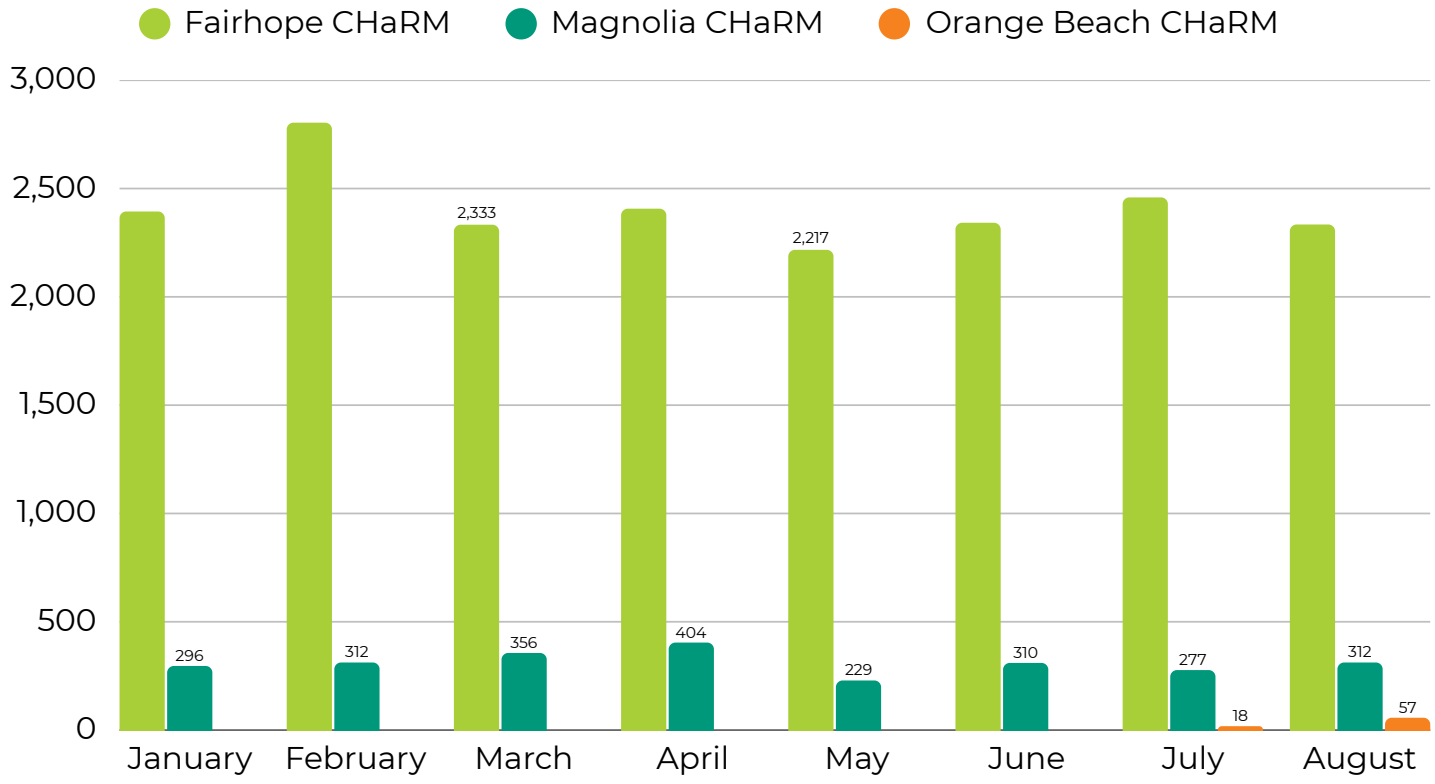


CHaRM Participation Highlights

From January through August, Fairhope CHaRM continued to see strong and steady use, consistently welcoming between roughly 2,000 and 2,800 visitors each month. Magnolia CHaRM showed reliable activity, with monthly visits ranging from about 266 to 404. Orange Beach CHaRM, our newest site, saw lighter traffic as expected for a new facility, with monthly visits between 18 and 57.

Overall, these numbers show that Fairhope remains our busiest CHaRM, Magnolia continues to serve a solid base of returning customers, and Orange Beach is steadily growing as more residents learn about the services offered there.

CUSTOMERS VISITS



Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming Events

We're committed to staying actively involved in our communities and engaging the public to strengthen recycling awareness and participation. Here's where you can find us in September.

OCT 3 — City of Bay Minette | Eco Partner Trash Pick Up

Bay Minette | 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM | Halliday Park | 600 McMeans Ave

OCT 15 — PEP Reverse Tradeshow

Mobile | 1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. | Fort Whiting Auditorium, Mobile, AL

OCT 17 - 18 — Jubilee Festival of Arts

Saturday, October 17 | 10:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. | Lott Park, Daphne

Sunday, October 18 | 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. | Lott Park, Daphne

OCT 17 — Big Rigs at the Library

Foley | 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. | Foley Recreation Department.

OCT 24 — Baldwin County Heart Walk

Foley | 8:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. | OWA



Stories on the Walls



We participated in Stories on the Wall, an evening with Alabama muralist Banks Compton at the Foley Community Library, where we represented our team. Our Director of Marketing joined a panel discussion and Q&A moderated by Gulf Coast Media. We were especially proud to see the showcase of the mural project Banks completed for our team, along with his collaborations with the Strickland Youth Center and the children's area of the new Foley Community Library.

The outdoor exhibit of our SWDA Mobile Adventure Trailer, something Banks helped bring to life, was another highlight. It was a wonderful evening celebrating how art, recycling, and community come together, and we are grateful we were part of it.





Gulf Coast Heavy Equipment Road-E-O

Our team attended the Gulf Coast Heavy Equipment Road-E-O, where members ofof our staff members proudly competed in this year's events. We also had our SWDA Education Trailer on site, giving visitors a chance to learn more about recycling, waste reduction, and the programs we offer. It was a great day of learning, competition, and community engagement.

SWDA ReceivesTop Honors

Recipient of PEP's Environmental Stewardship Award

We were recently honored as one of five organizations to receive the PEP Partners for Environmental Progress Environmental Stewardship Award, a recognition of our commitment to responsible resource management and community-focused sustainability. We earned this award through our work to serve Baldwin County's growing population with reliable, efficient, and environmentally responsible recycling services. Our state-of-the-art MRF transforms waste into valuable resources, recovering thousands of tons of fiber, plastics, metals, and glass each year and supplying high-quality recyclable commodities to manufacturers across the region. Combined with strong public education efforts, guided tours, and partnerships with local governments and industry, our facility has created a high-performing, community-supported recycling system that reduces landfill dependency, protects natural resources, and supports long-term environmental and economic sustainability for Baldwin County.





CONTACT US

For marketing questions or community outreach, please contact Kathryn Fuller at kathryn.fuller@baldwincountyswda.org or Jennifer Doan at jennifer.doan@baldwincountyswda.org

If your business is interested in recycling opportunities or partnerships, Susan Kilby-Aaron is your point of contact. You can reach her at skilby@baldwincountyswda.org.

Are you interested in integrating recycling into sports tourism initiatives? Contact us to begin the conversation.