SWDA RECYCLING NEWSLETTER

SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY
RECYCLE

A Message From Our CEO


TERRI GRAHAM, CEO

October was an incredibly active and fulfilling month for our team, filled with moments that reminded us why our mission matters and why the people behind it make all the difference. We kicked off the month by celebrating Customer Service Appreciation Week, taking time to recognize the hard work and dedication of the staff who support our customers each day. We also honored Breast Cancer Awareness Month, standing together in support of survivors, families, and the ongoing fight for awareness and early detection. It was a month marked by both purpose and connection, a time when we celebrated one another while also stepping out into the community.

October was also Fire Safety Prevention Month, and alongside partners throughout the county, we used this time to highlight proper battery disposal, a cause especially important to us.

Safe handling of batteries protects our employees, our facilities, and our broader community. It also reinforces the vital role our CHaRM facilities play. As we continue to see increasing volumes of materials entering our Materials Recovery Facility, proper disposal practices make the work we do at the CHaRMs more essential than ever for maintaining safety and preventing fires.

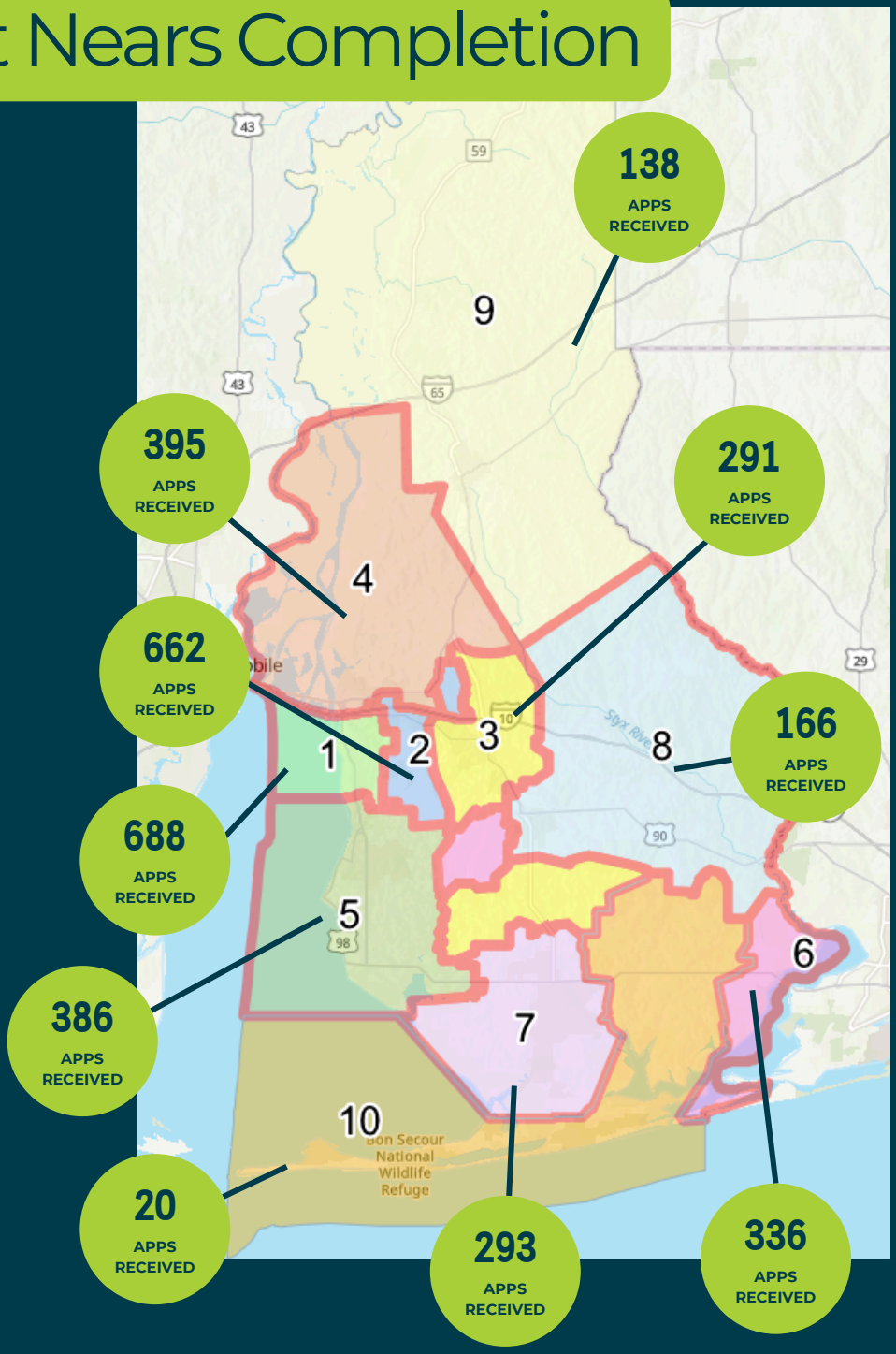
Finally, October marked a season of new beginnings as we launched a new fiscal year. The excitement across our organization is real. With fresh goals and renewed momentum, we are ready to build on our accomplishments and continue advancing the impactful work we are proud to do every day.



Curbside Rollout Nears Completion

Our community is approaching an exciting milestone as we near the completion of our curbside recycling roll-out, a project that has steadily grown in both scale and participation over the past year and a half. What began as a phased effort to bring convenient recycling access to every corner of Baldwin County has evolved into a clear reflection of how committed our residents are to sustainability.

Applications have been coming in from every POD, large and small, and together they tell an encouraging story. With 3,383 applications submitted so far, the response shows that curbside recycling is becoming not just a service, but a shared community priority. Existing SWDA customers make up 2,053 of these applications, and another 1,330 new customers have joined the program, expanding our reach and demonstrating growing interest from households previously not engaged with our services.

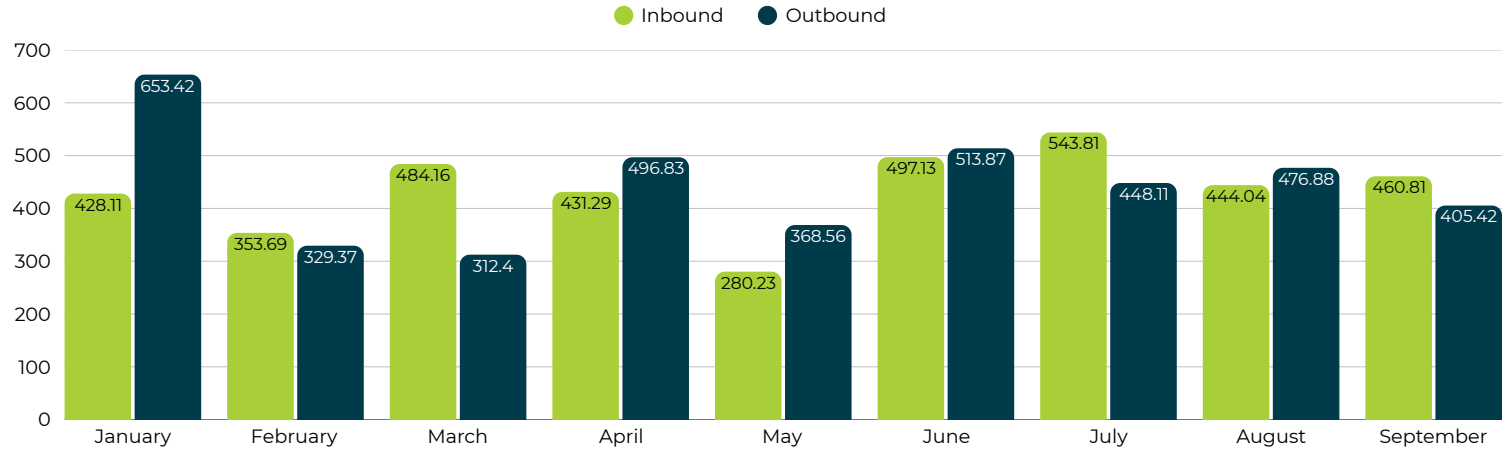


This progress is more than numerical; it represents a growing culture of environmental awareness and shared responsibility. With every new application, we move one step closer to a cleaner, more sustainable future for Baldwin County. The finish line is in sight, and together, we are building a program that will benefit our community for years to come, one POD at a time.



Material on the Move
Green Machine Tonnage Update

The Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) continues to see strong growth in recycling participation, reflected clearly in this year's inbound tonnage. In October 2025, the MRF received 384.16 tons of recyclable materials, contributing to a 2025 annual total of 3,655.06 tons. This year, however, community engagement has surged even further, by September, inbound materials had already reached 3,923.27 tons, surpassing last year's total with three months still remaining. This upward trend shows that more residents are recycling consistently, and the impact is already visible in the increased volume moving through our facility.



Recycled Material Snapshot

JANUARY 2026 - SEPTEMBER 2026

Plastics
481.38

PET (Plastic #1): 269.02 Tons
HDPE (Plastic #2 Natural): 61.19 Tons
HDPE (Plastic #2 Color): 87.28
PP (Plastic #5): 45.81
Mixed Plastics (#7): 18.08

Fiber Materials
3,356.63 Tons

Cardboard: 2,113.32 Tons
Mixed Paper: 1,243.31 Tons

METALS
166.85 Tons

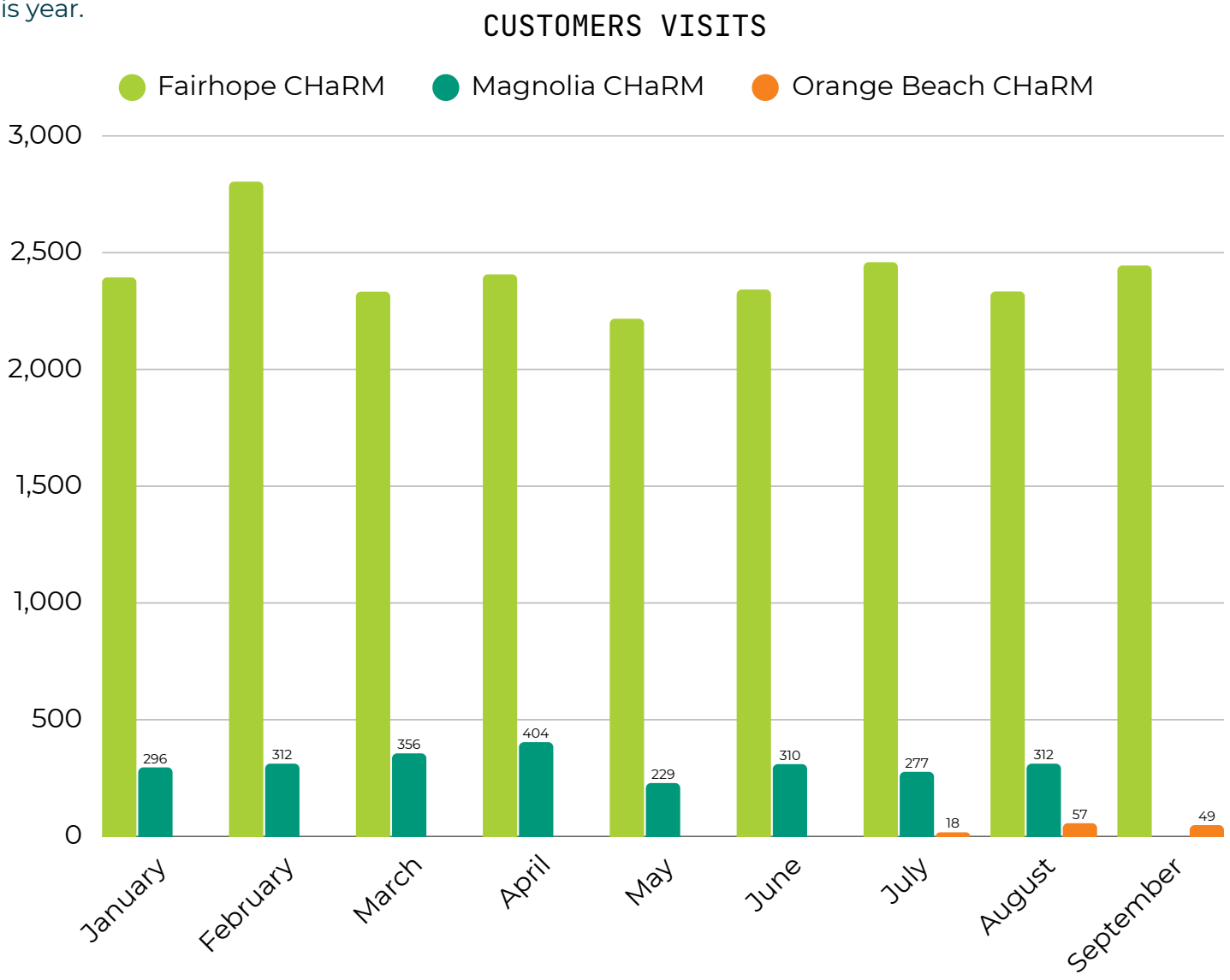
Aluminum: 100.15 Tons
Steel: 66.7 Tons



CHaRM Participation Highlights

The Fairhope CHaRM saw an increase in activity this September, recording its second highest number of visitors for the year, supported in part by National Battery Take Back Day. Monthly visits have remained consistently strong throughout 2026, and September's turnout highlights growing community engagement and awareness around proper recycling and battery disposal.

Orange Beach CHaRM also experienced a strong month, recording its second highest number of visitors this year.



SWDA at Jubilee Festival of Arts







We were proud to serve as the Game Day Fan Zone Sponsor at the Jubilee Festival of Arts in Daphne at Lott Park, where we had the opportunity to engage with families, share recycling education, and support one of the County's most celebrated community events. Our team enjoyed meaningful conversations with attendees, answered questions about local recycling programs, and helped introduce more residents to the services we offer.



In addition to the festival, we were also present at several other notable events this month, including the **PEP Reverse Tradeshow** and the **Baldwin County Heart Walk**. These events allowed us to connect with business leaders, community partners, and residents from across the county, reinforcing our commitment to outreach and environmental stewardship.

SWDA Attends RCon® 2026

Our SWDA team represented Baldwin County at RCon® 2026 in St. Louis, where they spent the week engaging in hands-on learning, exploring new technologies, and connecting with industry peers. Throughout the conference, our team participated in sessions covering safety, sustainability, recycling innovation, landfill operations, and workforce development, bringing back valuable insights to support our ongoing work.



They also took part in tours, training courses, roundtables, and explored a sold-out exhibit hall showcasing the latest tools and solutions in waste and resource management.

Their involvement reflects SWDA's commitment to continuous learning, professional growth, and staying ahead of emerging trends that support our mission here in Baldwin County.

Jennifer's Sustainability Spotlight





Sustainable Celebrations: Tips for a Greener Holiday Season

As we approach the holiday season, there are plenty of fun and simple ways to make our celebrations a little more sustainable. From Halloween to Thanksgiving and into Christmas, small choices can add up to a big positive impact on our environment. Here are a few ideas to help you enjoy the festivities while reducing waste and conserving resources.

Halloween

- Choose reusable or DIY costumes made from items you already have.
- Carry reusable trick-or-treat bags instead of disposable plastic pails or sacks.
- Opt for decorations that can be reused year after year, or craft your own from recycled materials.
- Consider handing out treats with minimal packaging or sustainable alternatives.

Thanksgiving

- Food waste increases 25% during the holidays! Compost your leftovers and scraps instead of tossing them.
- Use reusable dishware instead of disposable plates, cups, and utensils.

Christmas

- A huge amount of cardboard is used during Christmas for shipping boxes, gift packaging, and product containers. Break down all cardboard boxes, remove any plastic or foam, and place them in your recycling bin. Flattening boxes saves space and makes collection more efficient.
- If you use a real tree, you can dispose of it by recycling it for mulch or by using one of our designated drop-off sites. We will have more information about this soon.

Interested in Waste & Recycling Education?

If you are interested in tours of our Waste and Recycling Adventure Center, scheduling a visit from our Mobile Adventure, or accessing education resources for your school or civic group, please contact me at jennifer.doan@baldwincountyswda.org.

If you are interested in learning more about our education and outreach, please visit our website at https://baldwincountyswda.org/education-outreach/

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.

NOV 14 America Recycles Day

Participating SWDA Locations | 9:00 A .M. - 1:00 P.M.

Baldwin County Recycling Center
15101 Terra Bella Drive
Summerdale, AL 36580

Fairhope CHaRM
20609 Bishop Road
Fairhope, AL 36532

Orange Beach CHaRM
22510 Russian Road
Gulf Shores, AL 36542

DEC 12 - 13 North Baldwin Chamber Christmas Fest

Bay Minette | Friday, 12/11 - 10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

Bay Minette | Saturday, 12/12 - 10:00 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Safety Tip of the Month

Before recycling batteries, always tape the terminals with clear tape or place each battery in its own plastic bag. This prevents them from sparking during transport or processing. Store used batteries in a cool, dry place until drop-off, and never throw them into your household recycling bin, special handling keeps everyone safe and ensures the materials can be properly recovered.



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.