

Eglin builds new partnerships and initiatives In its Recycling Program

Introduction

Fiscal Year 2007 marked a year in which the Eglin Air Force Base recycling program opened up new arenas of recycling within in the program. For the first time in the program's history, it collected and recycled brass, spent smoke grenades and even aircraft drones from new waste streams. All told, these new initiatives contributed to a non-hazardous solid waste diversion rate of 65.35 percent, the highest rate in the program's history that blasted through Eglin's annual goal of 40 percent solid waste diversion rate. Eglin recycling officials beat the streets to ensure the base populace and workcenters were aware of all the materials that could be recycled through the base's recycling center. As a result, the Eglin Recycling Center also processed 300 more tons of material in FY07 than in FY06, 2,200-plus tons in FY07 from 1,943 tons in FY06, respectively. As a result, Eglin's Recycling Center had a \$214,000 increase in revenue.

Bringing in the Brass

The U.S. Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal is a tenant unit on Eglin charged with the mission of training officers and enlisted personnel of all military services, certain Department of Defense civilian personnel and select international military students on the most current procedures for the location, identification, render safe, recovery, technical evaluation, and disposal of conventional surface and underwater ordnance, both foreign and domestic. Through their training, the Navy was generating 900 pounds a month of spent brass. Eglin's recycling team has worked closely with the school's training staff to collect the brass for pick-up by Eglin recycling personnel.

We'll take your Tanks!

Upon learning that 13 steel underground storage tanks were going to be removed and replaced with more effective tanks, Eglin's recycling team quickly seized the opportunity. The team worked with the storage tank program manager and the units that owned the old tanks to determine if they could be recycled versus disposal. This effort led to cost avoidance of \$100,000 in storage tank removal and disposal fees.

Dragging in Drones

Our Gulf Coast neighbor to the East, Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, is the home of the 82nd Aerial Targets Squadron. Their mission is to provide safe and effective aerial targets support for Department of Defense weapons test and evaluation programs. For the last 15



Figure 1 - An unmanned QF-4 drone flies over the over Gulf of Mexico. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Matthew Simpson)

years, 82nd ATRS officials were searching for an environmentally sound way to dispose of drone aircraft (**Figure 1**) that no longer had a training mission. In FY07, the 82nd ATRS had to dispose of five excess drones. Through a proactive effort to find the right people to tear

apart the aircraft, Eglin's recycling team partnered with the Red Horse unit at Hurlburt Field, Florida, to get the aircraft parts to Eglin's Recycling Center. Through this partnership, the aircraft were demilitarized and disassembled. The aircraft parts were processed through the Eglin Recycling Center. This partnership gave Tyndall a less expensive alternative to using the aircraft as reefs in the Gulf of Mexico. This initiative also generated \$75,000 in revenue for Eglin's Qualified Recycling Program and saved Tyndall \$50,000 in barge transport costs.

Similarly, the Eglin AFB Fire Department had one F-4 drone aircraft and one iron F-4 mock-up that the unit used for a variety of aircraft firefighting and rescue exercises. The training mission for these aircraft had run its course, which brought about the need for new training aids.

Realizing the opportunity, Eglin's recycling team came to the aid of their firefighting brethren by demilitarizing and disassembling the aircraft. The aluminum parts from the 28,000-pound drone and the iron from the 7,000-pound F-4 mock up were processed through the Eglin Recycling Center. Strapped for cash to fund new training equipment purchases, this recycling initiative saved the firefighters \$11,000 in breakdown and haul-off costs. The Eglin fire department used these savings to fund the purchase of new training aids.

Lob your Library books at Eglin!

Eglin's recycling team also started the initiative with all the surrounding community libraries (from Fort Walton Beach, FL to Freeport FL; a 40-mile radius) to recycle their old library books. Periodically, up to 1,000 pounds of library books are brought to the Eglin recycling center for processing.

Outreach/Quality of Life

For the third consecutive year, the Eglin Recycling Center sponsored an aluminum can recycling contest in observance of America Recycles Day to increase recycling awareness and participation from the Eglin populace. Winners are determined by total weight of cans collected divided by the number of personnel in the organization who participated. First, second and third place organizations got cash prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 respectively.

In FY07, there were 17 participating organizations in the contest, an increase from last year's total of 13 participating organizations. This year, these organizations collected a total of 1,715 pounds of cans, more than doubling last year's total of 728 pounds. The contest receives endorsement and support from the 96th Air Base Wing Commander Colonel Eric Pohland (our "mayor"), (**Figure 2**), and other leaders of Eglin's 22,000-person workforce.

The timing of this annual contest isn't by mistake—recycling officials believe the cash awards are perfect incentives to get organizations to participate as Airmen search for a means to fund their units' holiday parties. This has become a popular use of the cash prizes. So, not only does the contest positively affect recycling on Eglin, the Recycling Center's sponsorship of this contest significantly boosts morale, quality of life and competition within Eglin's units.

Another FY07 quality-of life initiative Eglin's recycling team was instrumental in was the purchase of 26 tables (made from recycled materials nonetheless) for Eglin's new beach club facility. Eglin recycling officials worked with 96th Services Squadron personnel, the unit that is charged with the mission of providing recreation for Eglin's populace, to transfer \$30,000 from the Eglin Qualified Recycling Program account to purchase the tables.

Through use of the base newspaper, Official Bulletin, electronic marquee, the Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health Council and Eglin's 99 Unit Environmental Coordinators, the push to recycle more on Eglin is always on the tips of our tongues.

Also, on a quarterly basis, Eglin's recycling team advertised and sponsored clean up events on Eglin's enormous weapons test and training range. The Eglin range covers an area three times the size of the D.C. beltway at approximately 464,000 acres. The emphasis of conducting these events was to give the Eglin populace other avenues to beautify the base as well as to positively contribute to the solid waste and recycling programs. Dozens of Eglin active-duty military members, civil servants and many other volunteers turned out to assist. In FY07, 1,300 pounds of scrap metal were gathered from Eglin's beaches and forest and processed through the Eglin Recycling Center.

Conclusion

Fiscal Year 2007 was a banner year for Eglin's Recycling program in a lot of different respects. Eglin's recycling team forged new recycling partnerships within the surrounding military and local communities that will perpetuate a bright future for Eglin's recycling program.

Figure 2 -- Colonel Eric Pohland, 96th Air Base Wing commander, holds the \$500 first place check with Staff Sgt. Andrew Gamache, 33d Maintenance Group quality assurance inspector.

