The Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP) is a campaign designed to empower motivated stakeholders from kindergarten students to leading businesses to create communities of change agents. The common goal: to make plastic film packaging a commonly recycled commodity with a strong and ever-growing recycling rate. The campaign is looking for companies to join brands like Ziploc, Sealed Air and Wegmans and recognize the ways their customers value recyclability.

Wisconsin is the incubator for WRAP. Residents from both rural and urban areas have asked to be involved in the state initiative to increase film recycling. Cynthia Moore, recycling program coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources says local coordinators in Wisconsin appreciate having something tangible they can offer to their community to make a difference. “Film recycling seems to be reinvigorating local programs,” she says.

Why use film?
Producers choose film to package all types of consumer goods - largely because of its dramatic ability to lightweight. Film packaging can play a critical role in reducing fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Well-meaning people sometimes get stuck at “plastics are bad because they are made from fossil resources” and never make it to “plastics may be good because they reduce the use of fossil resources through dramatic light-weighting.” Most choices require tradeoffs and packaging is loaded with them. If the primary goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, plastic compares favorably to alternatives. However, when the recycling rate is low or plastics become litter, consumers question if they are making the best choice environmentally. Consumers strongly associate recyclability with environmental performance. And many consumers are unaware of how much household film packaging can be recycled in plastic bag collection bins.

Sidebar 1 | Key Elements of WRAP:
The program is a multifaceted educational campaign involving social media, community-based social marketing, and a change agent such as the pass-it-forward mechanism with visible tracking, incentives and a feel-good component. It includes:

- Defined levels of engagement
- A map displaying growing population of WRAP participants and activities
- Tools to encourage quality and efficiency in new programs
- Signage
- Tip sheets
- Directories
- Recognition program for WRAP Recyclers following quality standards
Where is the film?
Every household has plastic film packaging (e.g., bathroom tissue overwrap). But even motivated recyclers are all too often unaware they can recycle plastic film – in addition to bags – through participating store drop-off programs. And there is no shortage of opportunities with nearly 18,000 film drop off locations in the U.S. Access is not the issue. Rather, it is lack of awareness, at least for the motivated recycler.

Plastic film can also be found in every business, and in much greater quantity than in households. But, unlike in the residential case, access is a significant barrier. Most small- to mid-sized businesses lack an efficient way to collect valuable material and get it to market.

In 2011, film recycling reached the billion pound mark. However, significant growth in recovery has been slow. In 2012, film recycling increased by a meager 1 percent. Both barriers – awareness and commercial access – must be overcome in order for film recycling rates to increase at a respectable rate. One key question: Can a public/private initiative like WRAP produce significant results?

Getting film recycling on the map
Bringing together companies representing the plastic film recycling value chain, the American Chemistry Council formed the Flexible Film Recycling Group (FFRG) to unlock opportunities for dramatic growth in post-consumer plastic film recycling. The FFRG has developed resources and programs to facilitate plastic film recycling – beyond bags. But a single group needs broad support to bring about dramatic growth in recycling.

The FFRG has therefore created WRAP so that a wide range of interested stakeholders can build a campaign to increase plastic film recycling. There are highly motivated people across the country who visit plasticfilmrecycling.org...
WRAP provides the platform for motivated stakeholders to find their role in the collective effort to raise awareness of plastic film recycling. Early adopters can help motivate the less-motivated recycler.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Green-Blue’s Sustainable Packaging Coalition, FFRG and, just recently, the Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers are working together to develop the groundwork for model programs. The FFRG has produced foundational tools to help facilitate plastic film recycling beyond bags. Will a broad coalition of organizations offering resources and pilots bring about dramatic growth in...
The founding organizations invite many more stakeholders to get involved at the ground level and help get WRAP on the map. For example, a recycler can get recognized as a Champion on plasticfilmrecycling.org by simply reviewing FFRG best practices for handling film and listing in the recycler directory. Recyclers can reach Partner status by undertaking the following efforts in support of plastic film recycling:

- List in the plasticfilmrecycling.org Recycler Directory
- Participate in pilots
- Share data from pilots

Retailers can get Champion status by simply listing in the Drop-Off Directory on plasticfilmrecycling.org. By using the FFRG signage and participating in educational campaigns, retailers can obtain Partner status. Using effective signage will likely improve quality and quantity of recycled material, which may result in more revenue.

The FFRG has a bale audit underway to evaluate the effect of using FFRG signage. The group is also testing whether the availability of film recycling in a store affects its foot traffic.

**Potential WRAP stakeholders**
- Regional, state and local governments or communities
- Brand companies
- Retailers and dry cleaners
- Shopping malls
- Resin companies
- Converters
- Schools
- Trade associations and nonprofits
- Recyclers
- Distributors
- General public

**Change agent**
Even with strong stakeholder engagement, WRAP needs a change agent such as a pass-it-forward mechanism with visible tracking, incentives and a feel-good component. Change happens at a grassroots level through one-on-one exchanges of ideas and actions. A movement happens when others can observe small changes adding up.

If you’re attending the 2014 Plastics Recycling Conference in Orlando, you may have the opportunity to participate in an experiment to track the exchange of ideas and good deeds to support plastic film recycling. FFRG will test the pass-it-forward concept using cards with QR and alphanumeric codes for online logging. The cards will be used during informational exchanges such as, “did you know you can recycle paper towel overwrap in plastic bag recycling bins?” or after spotting someone recycling, picking up litter, or reusing a bag. The person sharing the information or observing a good deed logs the exchange. After logging the action, the recipient then has the opportunity to pass the card forward and track what happens to that card. Participants can observe their own ripple effect. The key is to keep the spread of information and positive actions moving forward while logging the exchange. Moore Recycling Associates will track the activity online for FFRG with a visual display of exchanges about plastic recycling.

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**Custom Polymers, Inc.**
Custom Polymers is one of the world’s largest recyclers and reprocessors of all types and forms of post-consumer and post-industrial plastic scrap.

Our team of experienced professionals, solid financial base, and dedication to customer service have allowed Custom Polymers to develop and maintain long-term partnerships with both customers and suppliers.

If you’re ready for a different kind of recycler, contact us at 704.332.6070.
Can the sharing of good ideas and good deeds become contagious? If the pass-it-forward cards are not merely left in pockets or on the bar during cocktail hour and people actually log and pass the cards along, there may be an opportunity to launch the concept in a bigger arena. Organizations might sponsor the program in specific communities such as schools, towns or at other conferences. Schools could compete for a grant from sponsors by generating the highest exchange of information or collecting the most plastic film for recycling if, for example, they are part of a T rex schools program.

The recycling industry has many great leadership programs underway such as the T rex Company and its schools program, Emerge Knowledge with Re-TRAC Connect, Curbside Value Partnership’s innovative educational campaigns, Keep America Beautiful’s RecycleMania, the APR’s Recognition and Grocery Plastic Recycling Programs, SPC’s How2Recycle label and many more. Cohesion among the programs is necessary for significant results. A pass-it-forward concept in which stakeholders can connect, create incentives and view their activity could become a key program element in an era when public/private partnerships are more popular than mandates. The next steps for WRAP are to define the levels of engagement, develop a tracking system and determine the best change agent. Check plasticfilmrecycling.org for new developments and more information.

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