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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Recycling Industries Congress showcases birth of a new industry in Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG—The Pennsylvania Recycling Industries Congress held last month in the Capitol helped called attention to the birth of an important new kind of industry in Pennsylvania, according to the event’s co-sponsors.

Tim O’Donnell, president of the Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association (PWIA), and Michele Nestor, chair of the Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center (RMC), said the first-of-its-kind event on Feb. 15 showed that recycling has now become an economically important industry in its own right in Pennsylvania and that the private sector is driving its growth.

“Many Pennsylvanians still have an outdated understanding of recycling,” Nestor said. “The environmental benefits associated with recycling are well recognized, but less well known is that recycling represents a growth segment in today’s marketplace.”

O’Donnell said, “Recycling in Pennsylvania has matured into a real business, a new kind of industry, and one that is growing in importance to the state’s economy.”

The two said the Recycling Industries Congress, which featured more than two dozen companies from around the state, helped show that that recycling now encompasses a spectrum of successful and growing businesses.

They said the event also demonstrated the connection between the supply and demand sides in recycling—that jobs are being created by more than just collecting and processing recyclables; that jobs are also being created by the use of these recycled materials to make new products and by the opening up of markets for these products.

A 2009 study by the Northeast Recycling Council said 3,803 establishments involved in or reliant on recycling or involved in reuse and remanufacturing generated 52,316 jobs with an annual payroll totaling of \$2.2 billion in Pennsylvania—while also bringing in gross receipts of \$20.6 billion.

A 2007 PWIA economic study of the private-sector waste industry in Pennsylvania, which overlaps with recycling, found that the industry generated nearly 31,500 jobs and contributed

more than \$3 billion a year to the Pennsylvania economy in expenditures, purchasing, and spending from industry wages. That impact has almost certainly grown since the study was finished four years ago.

Nestor and O'Donnell said both studies point to the same new economic reality of recycling, namely that the recycling industry is making a strongly positive impact on Pennsylvania's economy.

They pointed out that while state government played an important role in the early development of recycling in Pennsylvania—through mandatory community recycling laws and program grants—recycling has matured and is able to stand on its own as financially self-sustaining industry.

Both underscored the fact that in the past few years private-sector companies have invested more than \$66 million in Pennsylvania in new recycling facilities, high-tech sorting and processing equipment, and a variety of re-use and re-manufacturing ventures.

PWIA represents private-sector waste companies that run large recycling plants that are pioneering single-stream and other new processing techniques along with their traditional trash collection and landfill operations.

The Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center (RMC) supports recycling plants through research and development of new and innovative technologies to minimize market barriers for recycled material and works with manufacturers to incorporate new types of recycled materials and new recycled-content product lines.