

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Mick Barry, Mid America Recycling President, Elected to National Recycling Coalition Board of Directors

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Des Moines, IA – September 20, 2017 – The National Recycling Coalition (NRC) recently announced their 2017-2018 board of directors during the 2017 Resource Recycling Conference in Minneapolis. Mick Barry, Mid America Recycling President, is one of ten new and re-elected board members who will each serve three-year terms.

Barry has been actively involved in the recycling industry for nearly 30 years. In addition to his recent BOD appointment to the NRC, he has served on:

- National Recycling Coalition: BOD member (12 years), including vice president (3 years), treasurer (1 year), and co-founder of the State Recycling Organization Council
- Iowa Recycling Association: Co-founder in 1989, President (6 years) & BOD member (12 years)
- Colorado Recycling Association: BOD member (6 years)
- Puerto Rico Recycling Partnership: Member & Advisor
- Iowa Legislature's Committee: Updating Iowa's Deposit Law Task Force
- Iowa Governor's Comprehensive Recycling Task Force
- Iowa DED's Infrastructure Strategy Task Force: Iowa's Future Economy 2020
- Iowa Governor's Task Force: Incentives for expanding Iowa's Recycling Industry
- Iowa Governor's and DED Task Force: Attracting new end-user manufacturers to Iowa
- Iowa DNR Task Force: Landfill Compliance with Federal Law
- Iowa DNR Task Force: Recycling Jobs Development
- Colorado Governor's Task Force: Recycling and Renewable Energy
- Iowa State University Board: Associate Member

His involvement in various boards and task forces has given Barry an in-depth, comprehensive view of the recycling system over the past three decades.

“The biggest change to the industry has been the inclusion of the residential recycling programs, which have allowed every person to have a role and be able to participate in the recycling movement at home as well as at work,” Barry reports. “This has led to massive challenges for the industry since sorting equipment had to be developed, especially as curbside sorting was replaced with single stream recycling.”

Curbside sorting programs are known for their collection of high quality, low contamination recyclables coveted – and demanded – by end-users. However, in an effort to accommodate all the new residential users and make it easier and faster to recycle, the majority of communities have moved to a single stream collection system where everything is mixed together.

While single stream recycling is incredibly convenient for users, it has passed the burden of recovery and sorting of mass volumes of mixed materials to the material recovery facilities. These MRFs have had to adapt and create new processing systems to attempt to sort the materials back into acceptable raw materials for the end-user.

“The one concept to remain unchanged throughout the years is that we [material recovery facilities] are in the raw material supply business and must provide quality material to the end-user,” emphasizes Barry. “After our community converted from a curbside-sort program to single stream, we went from 5% contamination to 23%, with national figures being as high as 35%.”

Barry dubs this phenomenon “Wishful Recycling” – and considers it the most pressing issue in the industry today. Residents think that it may be recyclable and they really don’t want to just throw it away. But that type of thinking destroys the quality of materials being delivered to MRF’s as workers pull out vacuum cleaners, bowling balls, sporting equipment, Christmas lights, and more.

“As an NRC Board Member, my goal is to keep the dialogue open about what alternatives are available today for the industry to increase economic recovery of material for raw materials for reuse and the potential for recovery of captive energy,” says Barry. “Aside from burning – which I do not support – there are existing technologies to use our non-raw material quality recoverables and help us become less dependent on non-renewable energy sources.”

About the Company & Mick Barry

The owners of Mid America Recycling have more than 100 years of combined expertise in recycling, waste management, and business management, with an unsurpassed history in developing environmental networks.

Michael “Mick” Barry. Mr. Barry received his Bachelor of Science in Forestry from Iowa State University, and his MBA from Henderson State. He began his recycling career with Weyerhaeuser Corporation in 1973 and was president of CC&C Recycling. Mr. Barry was Vice President of Mid America Recycling 1998-2010. Mr. Barry has served as Vice President and board of directors’ member of the National Recycling Coalition (NRC). Mr. Barry also the co-founder and past President of the Iowa Recycling Association, past board member of the Colorado Association for Recycling and is currently serving on numerous advisory boards and task forces in Iowa and Colorado. Mr. Barry also serves as a board associate on the Iowa State University Alumni Association Board of Directors.

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