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Free School Computer Disposal Program Hits 25 Tons

Ogdensburg, NJ. Melanie Haga, CEO of Back Thru The Future Computer Recycling (BTTF), located in Ogdensburg, announced that a twenty-five ton milestone has been reached in her company's free Sussex County public school computer recycling program.

"We are amazed with the amount of equipment collected within just the first 5 months of this program. We suspected there might have been some storage of old computers going on, but the recycling of several thousand machines was not what we anticipated."

Haga adds, "The disposal of obsolete and defective electronics must conform to state environmental and data privacy regulations and it is a highly specialized activity. BTTF is recognized as one of the leaders in this rapidly emerging industry. Our school program is an outgrowth of our desire to help raise the awareness of proper disposal practices for electronics."

The BTTF program was designed to be both cost effective and convenient. While electronic recycling is offered by the Sussex County MUA, it has limitations. Free recycling events are offered four times per year, but only on Saturday mornings. Additionally, the amount of equipment that can be accepted from one entity is restricted under state of NJ regulations. While this may work for consumers and small businesses, schools needs aren't compatible with the MUA program. If a school were to bring the equipment to the MUA during the week, it would face the same quantity restrictions and also would have to pay 10 cents per pound disposal fees. Under the BTTF program, so far, county schools (with a 75% participation rate) have saved \$5,000.

Not in competition, but working with full cooperation of Sussex County Municipal Authority officials and school buildings and grounds professionals, BTTF established a pilot program.



Russ Masker, Director of Buildings and Grounds at Sussex County Technical School in Sparta embraced the project. He says, "Disposing of the school's obsolete electronics is my responsibility. It represents a continuing item on my list of things to do; I knew there were environmental and state regulatory issues. Given my other duties, I simply didn't have time to properly research a best disposal practice. Finding a local, convenient solution makes my life so much easier. I make a phone call, get a project number, load the truck and drive it down the road to Ogdensburg. After the project is processed, I receive by mail an EPA compliance certificate including project weights, so my paperwork is complete. It's free, it's convenient, and it's simple."

Under the program, BTTF reports tonnages of equipment collected to each municipality in which a participating school resides, as well as the county. This meets reporting requirements set forth by the state of NJ Department of Environmental Protection, which has revealed that it would begin a policy of strict enforcement in the coming months.

The program is a total success; a win-win across the board. Says Sussex County Freeholder Director Susan Zellman, "When BTTF advised me of its intention to expand the pilot project beyond Sussex County borders, I invited them to roll out the good news at the Sussex County meeting of the Six County Coalition." The coalition, in addition to Sussex, consists of representatives from Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Warren, and Passaic Counties. The group meets bi-monthly, rotating the meetings to each county, discusses best practices and innovations across the region in government administration, as well as promoting shared services among the six counties. ###

Back Thru The Future ("BTTF") is a recognized industry leader in the proper environmental handling of electronics and secure data destruction for hard drives, PDAs, cell phones, cds and backup media. Based in Ogdensburg, New Jersey with close proximity to New York City, BTTF is a Certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE). The company was founded by Melanie J. Haga in 1990 as one of the first computer recycling companies in the United States. BTTF clients include Fortune 500 companies, large law firms, pharmaceutical companies and hospitals, financial/accounting firms and federal, state and local government agencies.