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Recycling Director, Georgetown University

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With more than 15,000 students, faculty and staff in the Georgetown Community, this urban campus hosts a lot of foot traffic. Over the years, Georgetown battled with waste issues, increasing receptacles and collection frequency to ensure the historic campus stayed beautiful. By 2009, staff were emptying 110 trashcans 7 times per week – sometimes even more on warm, sunny days when everyone wanted to be outside. Even with staff diligently collecting these bins, the same issues continued to occur. “The traditional open lid trash can is inviting for rodents, and waste overflow can occur easily in our high foot traffic areas on campus,” observes Bill del Vecchio, Recycling Director at Georgetown University. “Additionally, they only hold 35 gallons of waste. Therefore, we needed to figure out a way to reduce staff bandwidth focused on waste collection, and provide a solution to reduce litter on the ground and animal infestation.”



A Shining Light

Georgetown found the solution in the BigBelly® solar compaction system. By automatically compacting trash at the point of collection, each BigBelly unit holds up to 200 gallons in its 32-gallon bin, while also providing an interactive recycling station for the community. The increased capacity of the system reduces collection demand, while the enclosed design keeps trash contained and animals out. “We chose 60 of our most troublesome waste receptacles and replaced them with 20 BigBelly Solar Waste & Recycling Kiosks,” says del Vecchio. “The results have been nothing short of incredible, with waste collection being reduced from seven times per week to two.” The benefits are substantial, as Georgetown will:

- Gain 1,560 man-hours annually to reallocate to more critical tasks on campus
- Eliminate 832 miles driven per year collecting waste from receptacles
- Save 1,307 lbs of CO₂ from being emitted into the air each year

Increasing Recycling Awareness with Every Step

In addition to reducing the frequency of waste collection, Georgetown University implemented a strategic recycling program with bottle/can and paper deposit locations attached to each BigBelly on campus, with a combined capacity of 2,000 gallons. “It was important to us that the BigBelly units on our campus had attached Recycling stations, as we want to be a leader not only in adopting clean technology, but also creating awareness & changing behavior on participation in recycling efforts,” states del Vecchio. “It is our hope that the community will interact with these units every day, and we will be able to increase knowledge on the importance of recycling, not just at home, but in their daily activities.”

Smart Receptacles are Efficient and Educational

“The fact this unit is powered by solar and is keeping the campus cleaner is a point of pride for our university,” says del Vecchio. “We are thrilled to also be the first University to have the Wireless Monitoring System on our BigBelly units. The wireless technology will allow us to monitor real-time waste levels on campus, so we will be able to solve any waste issue before it becomes a problem.” Del Vecchio concludes, “It is only fitting that we have a waste and recycling solution that is as forward thinking and educational as Georgetown University itself.”