

WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

By Chrissy Kadleck

Third grader wins Colo. Association for Recycling's calendar contest

Three happy red wiggler worms in baseball caps talking about the tastiness of compost were the stars of Cassidy Noeldner's grand prize winning entry in the Colorado Association for Recycling's annual calendar contest.

The third grader from Fort Collins, Colo., captured the endearing message complete with composting do's and don'ts and will be featured in the organization's 2011 calendar along with 11 other winning students from throughout the state.

Last month 10 judges representing the state association met at Alpine Waste & Recycling's Altogether facility to review 218 recycling posters entries created by students from 28 schools in Colorado, said Brent Hildebrand, vice president of Alpine's recycling division.

"Judging was very hard," Hildebrand said. "The creativity in the students is just amazing, and I wish we could have had 218 winners. Unfortunately there are only 12 months of the year."

This was the first year Alpine hosted the judging event.

"It gave us another chance to connect with the community and really underscore our commitment to the environment, especially being the largest local waste and recycling company in the Denver area," Hildebrand said.

Student entries were judged based on four age groups: kindergarten to third grade; fourth through sixth grade; seventh through ninth; and 10th through 12th grade. There were three winners selected in each group. Schools with winning entries will receive a recycled-content tote bag filled with recycling educational materials, and the school of the grand prize winner receives a free staff development workshop for their school district. Each winning student will have their name, grade and school printed on the page of the calendar that holds their artwork.

"After we chose the winners, we were shown the name of the student, their school and what city they were from, and it really did encompass the whole state, from Pueblo down in southern Colorado all the way up to Fort Collins in northern Colorado, and it even hit the western slope in Avon," he said.

Marjorie Griek, executive director of the state recycling organization, said the contest has grown each year, with more schools involved and more posters submitted.

"We liked the concept of engaging the schoolchildren," Griek said. "One of the things that we in this industry need to be aware of is that these are the folks that are coming along, and we want to get them excited about recycling and have it have meaning for them as well. This seemed like a really great way to do that, to get in to the schools and have kids talking about environmental issues like recycling and why it is important, and about compost and other things that they might not necessarily learn about in school."

And the end result is a tangible, colorful work of art.

"The calendar is just really cute, and they are so much fun," she said. "I have one at my desk, and it always reminds me that here are these wonderful children with these great ideas, and they are so creative and inventive. It's just really wonderful."

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