

Waste Reduction and Recycling Division recognized for Environmental Excellence



In 2002, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Division received the **Environmental Excellence Award** from Bridging the Gap. Bridging The Gap is a Kansas City environmental nonprofit whose mission is to encourage local and global understanding of interconnectedness and to develop this understanding through community education and action. Bridging the Gap is a coordinating hub for many diverse environmental projects, from waste prevention to environmental education, from recycling to picking up litter and keeping cities beautiful.

Bridging The Gap recognizes individuals, schools, businesses, government and community organizations annually with Environmental Excellence Awards for outstanding efforts to protect the environment. The City of Lawrence received an Environmental Excellence Award for its comprehensive efforts in reducing waste, recycling, buying recycled products and achieving a 30% recycling rate within the community.

Taking a "targeted approach" to waste diversion, the City of Lawrence recycled over 8,000 tons of material, avoiding disposal cost of over \$156,000 and obtaining a recycling rate of thirty percent. The division's efforts also resulted in ninety three percent of all city paper purchased included recycled content. Additional efforts that contributed to the award are the city's hosting its first Home Energy Conservation Fair and purchasing a fuel-efficient hybrid vehicle. City employees had been involved with the sponsoring of a "commit to recycle" day. Employees had also pledged to consider the City's Environmental Procurement Policy when making purchasing decisions.

Applicants were evaluated on the strength of their evidence of commitment, measurable outcomes, creative solutions, technological improvements, employee participation, and community involvement. The Waste Reduction & Recycling Division demonstrated its commitment in 2001 with achievements such as participating at the Boys and Girls Club, schools, Earth Day Parade, Home and Garden Show and Eagles Day. Participation increased at the Household Hazardous Waste Collection, in small quantity generator program with emphasis on silver and in Compostable Yard Waste Pilot Program. Increases also occurred in fibers recycling in use of the City Environmental Procurement Policy.



Left to right: Recycling Specialists Ritisha Amin and Michelle Crank.