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CONCERNING DROP IN SIOUX FALLS RECYCLING: LOCAL PROCESSOR RESPONDS

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. – Against a backdrop of continued growth in Sioux Falls, a July 2023 Dakota Scout article, titled “[As area population grows, recycling rate falls](#)”, has shed light on a concerning trend: recycling rates in the Sioux Falls area are declining. Millennium Recycling, Inc. (Millennium), the regional single-stream processor, is highlighting this issue to encourage action from city leaders and residents.

A Growing City, A Growing Concern

Sioux Falls has experienced record growth, bringing prosperity and new opportunities, but it has also presented a significant challenge. With population and businesses thriving, the amount of municipal solid waste (MSW) has surged by 16.2% since 2017. Unfortunately, during the same time period, the recycling tonnage has remained stagnant, and the [recycling rate](#) has declined by 4.1%. This trend warrants action as it affects landfill capacity, impacts the local economy, and threatens the environment.

Understanding Our Waste Landscape

Sioux Falls follows an open/subscription waste management model which is uncommon for a city of its size, involving private recyclers, private waste haulers, and a public landfill. Waste haulers transport trash and recyclables to their designated facilities. Recyclables are processed at Millennium, the privately-owned recycling facility in Sioux Falls operating since 1999. In 2007, Millennium began processing single stream recyclables, and is now a nationally recognized leader in the industry, utilizing state-of-the-art technologies and accepting a wide variety of items compared to other cities. The city-owned landfill serves as the primary disposal site for non-recyclable waste generated within the five-county region. As highlighted in the recent Dakota Scout article, the lack of enforcement of mandatory recycling ordinances has led to recyclables being landfilled, undermining the efforts of residents.

Taking Action - A Call for City-Wide Commitment

City government and residents must prioritize recycling and enforce existing ordinances to reverse this downward trend. Comprehensive and consistent recycling education is essential to overcome lack of awareness and misinformation. Millennium advocates for a united effort to ensure proper recycling practices and maximize waste diversion. By spearheading a waste diversion nonprofit, [BINfluencer](#), investing in educational campaigns, and continuing to collaborate with the City of Sioux Falls to advocate for recycling, our goal is to improve how waste is managed in our community.

Empowering You to Make a Difference

Recycling is one of the simplest ways individuals can contribute to sustainability. According to the City's recent Sustainability Survey, over 92% of respondents support the City increasing recycling efforts. Millennium urges every Sioux Falls resident to join this call to action. Here's how you can make a difference:

- **Check Your Recycling Guide:** Refer to the recycling guide provided at SiouxFallsRecycles.org for clear instructions on what goes in your recycling bin.
- **Report Landfilling:** If you believe your recyclables are being landfilled, report it to the City of Sioux Falls to investigate and ensure materials are being disposed of correctly.
- **Keep it Loose:** Ensure that you keep your materials loose in the bin, avoiding bagging recyclables, as bagged materials cannot be recycled and may end up in the trash.
- **Go Beyond the Bin:** Instead of simply placing everything in the recycling bin, take the time to learn where items should go if they can still be reused or recycled outside of your bin. Things like car parts, clothing, toys, electronics, batteries, wood waste, and more all have a place. Check out BINfluencers.org for help.
- **Be a #BINfluencer:** Educate yourself and influence others about proper recycling and waste diversion. Spread awareness about the importance of recycling and encourage others to join the cause.

Together, Sioux Falls can rise to the challenge to make recycling an essential part of daily life. By taking these actions, we have the power to prevent our landfill from filling up faster than expected, conserve valuable resources, and contribute to the well-being of our city.