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**Steel Recycling Institute Urges Consumers  
Go Green for National Recycling Month**

*Steel Maintains Title as Most Recycled Material on the Planet*

PITTSBURGH, Pa (April 12, 2010) – With the countdown underway to Earth Day’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Steel Recycling Institute (SRI) is helping identify ways that consumers can adopt green behaviors starting now, in April, during National Recycling Month.

Since 1970, Earth Day has targeted ways to sustain and improve environmental conditions. The Earth Day Network estimates that more than 500 million people and several national governments in 175 countries will participate.

“The North American steel industry commends Earth Day on its 40 years of advancing environmentally friendly behaviors,” Greg Crawford, SRI vice president, said. “During each of the 40 years of Earth Day events, for its part, steel has been recycled at a rate greater than 50 percent. Each year, more steel is recycled than paper, plastic, aluminum and glass combined. This is just one part of the steel industry’s long-standing commitment to sustainability and to global leadership for our sector.”

In fact, in recent years, the overall steel recycling rate has exceeded 80%. This is due in part to the increased participation by consumers via the nation’s nearly 8500 curbside recycling programs, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates. Nearly 97 percent of these curbside recycling programs accept steel cans, according to the Steel Recycling Database, which tracks national recycling options. Participation is very high for drop-off programs, too. An increasing number of communities are also accepting empty steel aerosol containers through their recycling program as well.

**- MORE -**

## **PAGE TWO/SRI URGES CONSUMERS TO GO GREEN**

This is fortunate as the demand for food and beverage packaging is anticipated to climb towards 300 billion containers by 2013. Steel food and beverage cans are made with a minimum of 25 percent recycled content and have the highest recycling rate among food and beverage containers: 65 percent.

“The prevalence and widespread recyclability of steel packaging makes it an easy way for consumers to purchase and recycle green packaging,” Crawford said. “Nearly 35 percent of steel cans are still thrown away during the act of cooking, but by being conscious of the benefits of recycling and keeping them separated from trash, consumers can begin making a difference immediately.”

Crawford said that SRI urges those who are not utilizing the quick and easy curbside and drop-off programs with their steel food cans, to be motivated by Earth Day’s anniversary and make the change TODAY! Those communities serviced by drop-off recycling programs should do the same, he said. For consumers that are uncertain if steel packaging is accepted in their curbside or drop-off program, the Steel Recycling Locator is searchable online at <http://www.recycle-steel.org>

“The Steel Recycling Database logs over 37,000 local recycling options and provides an instant snapshot of the national recycling infrastructure,” Crawford noted. “Beyond steel packaging, the Steel Recycling Database can also help consumers locate options to recycle steel products that are naturally too large for the recycling bin such as appliances.”

A recent Department of Energy government rebate program, called Energy Saver, asks for consumers to recycle their old, inefficient appliances for rebates on new EnergyStar® certified replacements. Each state program is different and your local details can be learned on the rebate website: [energysavers.gov](http://energysavers.gov). The Steel Recycling database on SRI’s website will also show the nearest recycling option for old appliances, which is often the appliance installer.

Similarly, consumers recycled their clunker automobiles last year as part of the Cash for Clunkers stimulus program. While automobiles are annually recycled at a rate of nearly 100 percent for their iron and steel content, many consumers do not realize they are recycling their automobiles when they drop them off at the scrap processor or auto dealership.

**- MORE -**

## **PAGE THREE/SRI URGES CONSUMERS TO GO GREEN**

Other types of construction and miscellaneous steel scrap are also recycled through these scrap processors. An easy way for consumers to determine if a product is recyclable is to see if a magnet sticks to it. If the magnet sticks, there is ferrous (steel) content and it is likely recyclable. An increasing number of curbside and drop-off programs are accepting miscellaneous steel scrap and other metals.

In addition to conserving the obvious landfill space, the increased consumer participation in recycling has had some notable energy and other sustainable benefits.

“The North American steel industry has been the only major industry to reduce energy demands while still increasing production,” Crawford said. “In fact, based on 2008 data, the U.S. steel industry has reduced greenhouse gas emissions since 1990 by 33 percent, and has improved its energy efficiency during the same period by 31 percent.”

According to the EPA, recycled iron and steel save the nation 74 percent of the energy that would have been needed to make new steel. That energy would be enough to electrically power about 1/5 of the households in the U.S. (or about 20 million homes) for one year.

“National Recycling Month and Earth Day are great opportunities to encourage consumers, not only to recycle and conserve, but also about the sustainable advancements that have come about because of these green behaviors,” Crawford said. “While the idea of saving the planet may seem overwhelming at first, a step in the right direction starts with the decision to recycle that first steel can.”

### **About the Steel Recycling Institute**

The Steel Recycling Institute (SRI), a unit of the American Iron and Steel Institute, is an industry association dedicated to communicating the sustainable efforts of the North American steel industry. The SRI educates the solid waste industry, government, business and ultimately the consumer about the benefits of steel’s recycling accomplishments and advancements in sustainability. For more information on the steel industry’s sustainable efforts visit: [www.recycle-steel.org](http://www.recycle-steel.org) or [www.sustainable-steel.org](http://www.sustainable-steel.org). Or follow the SRI on Twitter @EnviroMetal

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