

Celebrating 15 Years: Learn Our Top Innovations with PSU (Video)

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How can you set the standard for excellence in waste minimization at airports? Teaming up with Portland State University is a great start.

Since 2003, we've partnered with PSU's Community Environmental Services, giving nearly 40 student interns hands-on experience with reducing waste in a large airport setting. Through the program, student consultants work for one- or two-year terms alongside our team to gain experience solving real-life waste and materials management problems.

With more than 10,000 employees and 19 million travelers each year, Portland International Airport needs big strategies to reduce waste. Student projects and research are at the heart of advancing solutions.

Learn more in this video, courtesy of Portland State University, and check out the top waste management innovations PSU students have supported (below):



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/CBG3dsHLdZo>



Beverage Collection Stations at Security Checkpoints – In 2008, we installed beverage collection stations at PDX security checkpoints to remove liquids from the waste stream. They prevent liquid-filled containers from being sent to garbage or recycling, reduce costs in janitorial service and allow passengers to reuse their containers post-security. In 2012, the students conducted behavior change research to redesign stations, dramatically increasing use.



Tenant Outreach – Students have engaged with PDX tenants over 15 years, conducting waste audits and using data to produce customized feedback to design more efficient waste management systems. Students provide outreach and training to managers and employees and develop reward programs, creating a culture that embraces waste and materials management. As a result, concessions tenants have a remarkable 63 percent waste diversion rate!



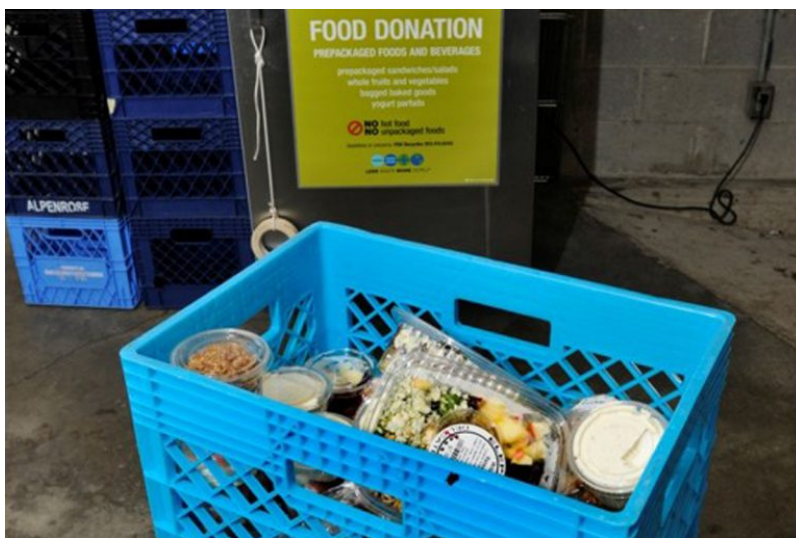
PDX Central Waste Area – Through waste audits, students have gained a precise understanding of the PDX waste stream. In response, the airport’s central waste area provides customized recycling options tailored to tenant needs and includes cardboard, mixed recycling, glass, food compost, oil and grease, plastic buckets with a bucket washing station, lightbulbs, Styrofoam and more.



Spring and Fall Cleanups – Regular spring and fall cleanup events allow all airport tenants and operators to drop off unwanted items, such as retail displays, chairs, signage, equipment and decorations for donation or safe disposal. These events prevent tons of material from going to the landfill. At a recent event alone, students diverted 20 tons of material in partnership with local reuse agencies.



Zero Waste Plan – In 2014, students developed the ambitious Five Years to Zero Waste plan to set a path forward for us to reach zero waste. The plan set a framework to achieve the goal with specific actions, priorities and targets across all our facilities.



Food Optimization – Students researched the causes of wasted and surplus food by conducting interviews and surveys with airport restaurants. The resulting study guides future outreach efforts to engage restaurant employees and managers in more efficient practices.

