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Brad Mertz  
801-368-2266  
recyclebrad@msn.com  
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## **Recycling Coalition of Utah Honors Utah's Top Recyclers for 2020**

Every year, Utahns are throwing away the equivalent of 23 Vivint Smart Home arenas filled top to bottom of municipal waste. On the recycling side, just 2.75 Vivint Smart Home Arenas full of recycled materials were actually recycled from curbside and drop off recycling programs.

The Recycling Coalition of Utah (RCU) hosted its annual RCU America Recycles Day Recycling Conference, last month, on **November 20, 2020**. During the virtual conference, RCU recognized various recyclers throughout the State of Utah with the Thomas A. Martin, Utah Recycler of the Year Award for their extraordinary contributions in recycling. These organizations and individuals have gone beyond what the average person or organization is typically willing to do. Brad Mertz, Executive Director for RCU said, "This year's awardees are truly making a difference and setting an amazing example for others to follow." Awards are given to in the following areas: Government, Nonprofit, Individual, Business, Multi-Family, and Innovative Recycled Product.

### ***Business/ Nonprofit: Intermountain Health Care (IHC)***

IHC has recycled over 6 million pounds of material in the past year (from October 2019-2020) which amounts to 24.39% of their entire waste stream. IHC calculates that their recycling effort translates in to an annual savings of 112,863 gallons of oil and 662,206 hours of electricity.

Recently, IHC found a new recycling waste stream that wasn't getting measured so they anticipate their numbers to go up even more this next year to go up in 2021.

The team at IHC has used some unique methods to get the word out on their recycling program. One of those methods is utilizing screen savers with additional recycling information during Recycling Week November 16-20<sup>th</sup> throughout the organization.

IHC's mission is to help people live the healthiest lives possible. They are not only doing that with the health care they provide but by talking trash and growing their recycling program internally every day.

Brad Mertz, Executive Director of RCU had this to say about IHC, "Glen Garrick and Steffani LeVels are truly leading the way in how large organizations in Utah are considering their responsibility and stewardship for Utah's environment. Their actions and efforts speak volumes about the impact they are having not only on

the environment but IHC's bottom line. In a year where healthcare is at the forefront of our minds and conversations, IHC is not talking about making a difference, they are actively getting it done and they are not done yet. I look forward to hearing more of the great things IHC is implementing on the recycling and sustainability fronts. IHC, Glen and Steffani are very much deserving of this year's Thomas A. Martin, Utah Recycler of the Year award. Congratulations to them and the entire IHC organization!"

***Individual: Sara Melnicoff, Moab Utah***

Sara Melnicoff's dedication towards active environmental stewardship through the non-profit organization, Moab Solutions, has brought countless benefits to the residents and businesses of Moab, Utah. Sara's dedication to recycling is evident in her daily travels throughout the Moab community collecting recycling from private businesses and local non-profits for free. Sara takes the material she collects daily and delivers the (source-separated recyclables) to the Moab Community Recycle Center (CRC).

Sara does not accept payment for her services. In fact, the local Food Coop Moonflower Market, provides Sara with a monthly gift card for her services and the local newspaper provides discounted advertising; all of which she then donates to the local Solid Waste District to promote the Community Recycling Center and other sustainability initiatives. Sara's long-term commitment, passion, and advocacy for the local CRC is admired and deeply appreciated by many in the community. By following her philosophy of zero-waste activism, the rural community of Grand County will continue to achieve a thriving environment for future generations. It is people like Sara who are committed to recycling that make a difference through their actions in our communities.

Brad Mertz, RCU Executive Director had this to say about Sara, "Sara Melnicoff is an inspiration. Not only does she believe in being a steward of the environment, she is an example of going above and beyond in her daily collections of recycleables, all of which she does for free. When she is offered gifts or recognition as a thank you, she thinks of others by using those tools to promote recycling even more. Sara is the kind of person who reflects positively on our industry and is well deserving of the Thomas A. Martin, Utah Recycler of the Year Award!"

***Local Government: Grand County Solid Waste Special Service District #1's Community Recycle Center***

The Grand County Solid Waste District has made incredible improvements at the source-separated Moab Community Recycle Center (CRC) towards correcting chronic operational deficiencies that have historically plagued the public recycling facility. Impressive overhauls of all aspects of operations, from administrative to educational outreach, has increased the overall perception and positive public opinion of this almost 30-year-old community gem. Along with upgrading and optimizing the recycling collection and storage system



through creative reuse, redesign, and logistical improvements, the CRC has grown and expanded its electronics and universal waste commodities that are accepted for recycling to include items for which there were previously no outlets for in rural Grand County (e.g., waste antifreeze, mercury containing devices).

The CRC has also hosted several recycling events in partnership with local businesses and non-profit organizations to celebrate worldwide sustainability efforts, promote America Recycles Day, and educate the community on the reduce, reuse, recycle hierarchy of integrated solid waste management philosophies as well as waste diversion techniques and strategies.

The CRC is led by District Manager, Evan Tyrrell and his team who have made huge advancements for the public recycling center in Moab. His leadership has turned the community recycling center from an underutilized facility to easily the best run and well-maintained recycling center in the entire State of Utah. Evan's leadership has been a huge improvement and bonus for recycling in Moab and Grand County.

Brad Mertz, RCU Executive Director stated, "I have been involved with the Recycling Center in Moab in one way or another for over 20 years. I have never seen it running better than it is under Evan's leadership. It is truly one of the best, if not the best such operation in the entire State of Utah. Given all the materials, the amounts, and the uncertainty in our industry, Evan and his team have been able to create an amazing resource for recycling in Grand County. I hope the residents of Grand County realize what an absolutely incredible asset this recycling facility is to their community. Congratulations to Evan Tyrrell and his team!"

### ***MultiFamily Housing: NXT Property Management***

Nxt Property Management company has endorsed and has committed to multifamily housing recycling in a truly extraordinary way. Their commitment to recycling is among the very top in the Multifamily Housing Industry!

Several organizations came together to form this larger organization in 2017. Immediately the leadership at Nxt Property Management moved straight ahead with their vision for multifamily housing recycling and instilled this importance and effort throughout the Nxt Property Management organization.

Few multifamily housing organizations have made let alone endorsed this type of commitment to recycling as well or as adamantly as Nxt Property Management.

Travis Baker, Vice President of Operations Nxt Property Management along with his regional and property management team has been instrumental in helping to guide this company in this very pro-active recycling endeavor. Brad Mertz, Executive Director stated, "it is organizations like Nxt that are single handedly moving recycling forward as an essential service to multifamily residents. With the growth in multifamily housing, residents can thank Nxt for their vision and commitment to recycling by providing recycling services to their properties. Recycling at apartments is not always easy to support, let alone implement but Nxt has made it a part of their DNA and we are excited to recognize their leadership and efforts to increase recycling in the State of Utah."

***Business: Deer Valley Resort (DVR)***

Julie Schultz has been at Deer Valley for 26 years working on the sustainability efforts at Deer Valley. She has been involved in the recycling program for the last 12-15 years. Last winter DVR diverted 50% of their solid waste.

This past year, DVR had a zero waste VIP tent at the World Cup race which DVR hosted. (Note: please see the following link <http://blog.deervalley.com/clean-up-the-competition/> for more information about the event). This zero waste venue for the World Cup was recognized by a number of organizations including the ski community. The event was a total success. With Julie and her assistant Madelyn Carter's efforts, everything with the exception of a very small bag of waste was recycled. All from Julie, Madelyn and the DVR administration's commitment to recycle and compost virtually most everything.

Winter and the ski season is not the only thing that keeps Julie and her staff of one busy. During the summer concert series, they will have upwards of 5,000 people attend the concerts. Julie will have people on-site to help with recycling for the concerts. Anywhere there is trash, there is a recycling and compost bin. The compost containers have been a great resource at summer concerts.

Some of the other things Julie and DVR are doing concerning recycling include the following:

- Recycling everything including bicycle inner tubes.
- Ensuring there are recycle bins on all lifts where there are trash stations.
- Working with the DVR restaurants where 12 of the 15 total restaurants are capturing food waste for composting. The compost produced at DVR stays local typically going to Peoa's, Wild Harvest Farms.
- Utilizing utensils that are washable and avoiding using paper products all together
- Plastic bags are delivered to Recycle Park City which then go to Morgan.
- Collecting Styrofoam. At DVR, seafood still comes in styrofoam. They have been actively trying to get vendors to move away from styrofoam and are seeing smaller amounts come through as a result.
- Making a conscience shift to trying to go to all aluminum instead of glass.
- Collecting e-waste which DVR pays to recycle. They have a three year cycle of over 300+ computers.

With the ability to compost, DVR is able to participate in different purchasing practices. All the food they purchase is compostable. It really has come down to purchasing decisions which allows DVR to negate waste on the front end so they are not dealing with it on the back end.

It is not uncommon for Julie and Madelyn to go dumpster diving through the trash since end users don't often follow directions. This has changed recently due to Julie's efforts to train DVR's 2,500 winter and 700



summer employees. Not only training but seeing to it that there is extensive signage at employee dining rooms. Julie spent many hours following up with employees and the DVR employees and public did get better at it as a result.

DVR has been consistently ranked #1 ski resort in North America for a number of years and that comes with a lot of visitors every year. Julie says it is really like running a small town.

Brad Mertz commented, "it is truly impressive when you consider the work Julie Schultz has put in to making Deer Valley Resort one of the premier sustainable resorts in the nation. When someone like Julie will not hesitate to dive in to a dumpster to pull out recycleables, you know they are committed to recycling. This kind of commitment starts at the top and the leadership at DVR is truly making a difference and leading the way. Julie's efforts are amazing and I am honored to recognize the incredible efforts and commitment of Deer Valley Resort and Julie Schultz to recycling. They are truly deserving of this year's Utah Recycler of the Year award."

#### **About RCU**

The Recycling Coalition of Utah (RCU) is a coalition of municipalities, businesses, institutions and individuals committed to improving recycling in Utah. As the State of Utah's official resource on recycling, RCU will provide value to existing and new members committed to increasing and improving recycling, conservation and solid waste reduction in Utah.

For additional information please visit [www.utahrecycles.org](http://www.utahrecycles.org) or contact Brad Mertz at 801-368-2266 or via email at [recyclebrad@msn.com](mailto:recyclebrad@msn.com) or [brad@utahrecycles.org](mailto:brad@utahrecycles.org).

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