Safe and Secure Recycling Solutions
for Georgia Schools' Electronic Waste

Introduction

Is your school district interested in a **community partnership** that **educates students**, safely and securely **disposes of your outdated IT equipment**, **helps a nonprofit create jobs** for people with disabilities, and **protects the environment** all rolled into one? Cobb County Schools Superintendent Fred Sanderson suggests that you check out this exciting program the Cobb County School District (CCSD) has participated in since August 2010.

Recycletronics…at Tommy Nobis Center is the electronics recycling program of a Metro Atlanta nonprofit organization, the Tommy Nobis Center which provides job training and employment for youth & adults with disabilities. "The team has worked with all elements of CCSD's system to **solve a problem facing us all as school superintendents: safely and securely disposing of our electronic waste in a responsible way,"** said Fred.

The Story

CCSD's story began when Mike Daniels, *Recycletronics* COO, and Ronnie Doane, *Recycletronics* technical operations manager, began a dialogue with Chris Ragsdale, Cobb County Schools chief technology officer and Howard Siggelko, assistant director of Cobb County Schools' Kennesaw Warehouse Records Management.

Mike asked specifically about the district's IT replacement policies and its need to ensure that the equipment is disposed of properly. Their key concern was removal of confidential data on the hard drives, but Mike assured Chris that his team uses U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) 5220.22-M software to wipe the drive clean. Or, they will shred the hard drive using a 3-stage destruction process, ensuring that all data is permanently removed and unrecoverable. The latest technology, NIST Purge-Secure Erase, also is available.

CCSD already was in the process of bidding out the disposal of its surplus technology equipment and asked *Recycletronics* to bid. "Franklin Lawson, senior buyer, Procurement Services Department, conducted the procurement of these services and made the award to Recycletronics for providing the best value for our needs," said Fred.

Next, Mike, Ronnie, Chris and Howard met at the school district's warehouse where they discussed the process for consolidating the equipment at the warehouse and how much would be consolidated before contacting *Recycletronics*. Chris and Howard explained the process for checking in equipment upon delivery from individual schools, and the process when materials are transferred to the 150,000-sq-ft *Recycletronics…at Tommy Nobis Center* facility in Kennesaw, Ga.

Mike invited the three players – technology, warehouse and procurement – to the *Recycletronics* facility to see first-hand how items are processed upon delivery. As an example, let's follow a laptop computer through the entire process:

Step 1: *Recycletronics* employees weigh the laptop upon its arrival at the loading dock, and take it to the initial secured storage area to verify the serial number. This process generates a Certificate of Indemnification, Recycling and/or Destruction depending upon the outcome for the item.

Step 2: Next they remove any asset tags for CCSD from the laptop.

Step 3: The laptop is moved into the secure data wiping area. Here the Hard Drive is wiped using the DoD software and processes or the latest NIST Purge-Secure Erase process. If the Hard Drive does not boot, this means the drive cannot be wiped and it is then removed to be shred through a 3-stage destruction process, ensuring that no data can be recovered.

Step 4: The laptop is tested once more to ensure no data survived and that the system is fully functional. An employee cleans the laptop case to give it the best appearance.

Step 5: The laptop is marketed for resale (NOTE: CCSD is guaranteed a specific price per laptop, depending on Pentium processor type. The District also receives a percentage of the resale value if it sells for more than the guaranteed price.)

Chris, Howard and Franklin have now seen first-hand the secure disassembling and destruction *using the most advanced eRecycling processes in the southeast*. Monitors and TVs are disassembled by hand to ensure no contamination of plastic, steel, aluminum or other commodities. (Automated destruction systems can contaminate all the materials with traces of lead, mercury and other hazardous materials.) They also have seen the 60+ individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment who now have success in the workplace. Fred explained, "The three were convinced that partnering with *Recycletronics…at Tommy Nobis Center* was the ultimate solution for CCSD and should be considered for Georgia's other school systems. They were ready to bring the idea to me, as superintendent."

"As part of my analysis, I invited Connie Kirk, *Recycletronics…at Tommy Nobis Center* President and CEO to my office," said Fred. "We discussed some of my policy questions concerning the process, especially regarding proper and secure disposal of equipment. After all my concerns had been put to rest, I was curious to hear from Connie just how this process helps the Tommy Nobis Center.

"She explained the **triple benefit** that this social enterprise brings: **environmental**, **social** and **economic**. 'This process not only helps divert electronic equipment from landfills,' she said,

'but it is a vehicle for Tommy Nobis Center to provide jobs for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment. The economic impact on the community is huge, turning tax *consumers* into tax *payers* and full participants in the community.' I was convinced that this is a win-win partnership that can resonate with us all," Fred explained.

Contacts

Fred suggested, "I encourage each of you, as stewards of your Georgia school districts' resources, to contact *Recycletronics…at Tommy Nobis Center* and learn how they can assist you with these same challenges you may face. Feel free to contact Chris Ragsdale or Howard Siggelko at CCSD or Mike Daniels at *Recycletronics…at Tommy Nobis Center* to assist you in addressing this problem." You may reach them at:

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