

From scrap yard to recycling yard

A modern recycling yard has replaced an old junk yard

By Norman Gossett, Jr.
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Tucked over behind a wooded lot between Angier Avenue and the railroad is an old scrap yard known to the old-timers as Sid Rancer's scrap yard. One had to turn onto Briggs Avenue to find the gate to Sid's old place. Five years ago, the scrap yard was a nasty mud hole with old motor oil from junked cars seeping into the ground.

Returning to same location revealed something unexpected: a modern recycling yard. Where there had once been a nasty, muddy hillside there was now a concrete slab. Neat rows of recyclables were separated into ferrous and nonferrous metals. Stacks of scrap computers stood bundled and ready to ship.

Turning greasy, dirty recyclables into a green, environmentally friendly business is not an easy task to accomplish. It requires an incredible amount of effort just to sort and organize the various recyclables that must be clean of contaminants. As they say, one man's junk is another man's treasure.

Fran Rush, co-owner of Always Buying Scrap, said, "We've been here for about two years."

The amount of work necessary to improve the property to its current condition was incredible. "My husband, Dave, had a scrap yard in New York for 20 years," Fran Rush explained. "When the city claimed the property through eminent domain, we decided to move down here to be with Dave's parents."

Fran Rush stated that getting into



Dave Rush surveys his recycling yard as he keeps everything in its place (Staff photo by Norman Gossett, Jr.)

another scrap metal business "just sorta happened." We didn't have any plans to get back into recycling when we moved to Durham.

You could open you car door some day and the metal in it may have been collected right here. -Dave Rush

Dave Rush remembered the effort that went into stabilizing the muddy ground. "We had to invest an incredible amount of money to fill in the low areas with broken brick and concrete block." Then the lot was paved with concrete.

Dave Rush walked over to the nonferrous side of the yard to showcase the automatic payment machine, which better serves his customers. "It costs \$70,000, but without it you'd have to

write a check for every transaction dealing with nonferrous metals over \$100."

Nonferrous metals are worth much more than ferrous metals. Dave Rush explained, "Nonferrous metals are where you make your money."

There was a line of customers waiting to sell cans, aluminum, copper and other nonferrous metals. The recyclables were put on a small set of digital scales, which spat out a ticket with the transaction details. The computer was able to keep a current inventory right up to the last transaction.

In the large stacks of banded metal, regular domestic items such as a tire iron or the old lawnmower are waiting to be shipped to a processor to be melted into steel or aluminum ingots.

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Online Resources

Always Buying Scrap: <http://www.alwaysbuyingscrap.com>

Recycling Resources: www.epa.gov/osw/conserves/rrr/recycle.htm

Recycling 101: <http://earth911.com/recycling/>



Fran Rush, co-owner of Always Buying Scrap, reads a Durham VOICE article (Staff photo by Norman Gossett, Jr.)