UPDATED: Abandoned Baltimore warehouse is full of CRTs

By Jerry Powell, Resource Recycling

Last week E-Scrap News reported on several warehouses in Arizona and Colorado where large amounts of CRTs were left behind when the plants closed. Two firms — Dow Management and Luminous Recycling — shut their doors, leaving as much as 10,000 tons of CRTs and CRT glass.

Now E-Scrap News has learned of an abandoned warehouse in Baltimore containing approximately 3,000 Gaylord containers filled with CRTs. The plant was operated by CDM eCycling, which has gone out of business.

In an interview with E-Scrap News, Mike Fannon, one of the owners of CDM, explained how the firm got into the position of having to close. The company previously sent CRT glass to Samsung-Coming in South Korea, but that glass furnace closed. CDM then sent glass to TDM in Mexico, but when TDM stopped handling CRT glass for approximately a year, CDM ended up accumulating material. CDM then sold glass to two primary lead smelters, Xstrata in New Brunswick and Doe Run in Missouri, but eventually was unable to get purchase orders to ship additional material. "The piles kept snowballing," said Fannon.

At the same time, Fannon encountered management problems with his business partner, who eventually left the firm. To keep the company going, Fannon put his home on the line in order to make payroll. "All the problems added up to my eventually closing the facility in July 2012," he said.

The facility's landlord has sued for back rent, future rent payments and for the cost of removing the CRTs. Fannon has filed for personal bankruptcy court protection.

UPDATE:

Jay Apperson, deputy director of the Maryland Department of the Environment's office of communications commented:

The Maryland Department of the Environment inspected the Baltimore warehouse that is believed to have been leased by CDM eCycling and found containers of cathode ray tubes. As part of the investigation the Department is reviewing a plan from the owner of building to assess any environmental issues. The investigation is ongoing.

Tip of the Iceberg

This has been predicted for years by industry leaders who were roundly criticized as trying to frighten consumers. It has now come to pass that those experts were right. I wonder how the consumers who have CRT's in these warehouses with THEIR asset tags are sleeping right now. If EPA pulls the "Superfund" card on these sites, the people that used these irresponsible recyclers should be planning for their share of the clean up. Government officials know they can't get blood out of a rock and once these recyclers are out of business and in bankruptcy, there will be no money for clean up, leaving the customers with perceived deep pockets holding the bag. I could also see the owner of the building filing civil suits against the companies whose asset tags are found. Would it hold up in court; who knows. But there will certainly be legal fees to fight the suits.

"Despite numerous attempts to contact state environmental officials via email or phone calls, there was no comment at press time."

And what were you expecting 'state environmental officials' to do - jump up & down? Harumph!! Harumph!!...??
The stuff is in gaylords in a whse. Sorta like old cars collecting dust in warehouses and barns across the developed world - i.e., they pose no threat, other than sitting there... If it was ground-up glass, that might be a different story, but alas, it isn’t. So, sensationalism aside - and the opportunity for large, market-share dominating companies in this industry to capitalize on stories like these with PR campaigns about how they ‘do the right thing’ - ‘for the children’ of course, and their competitors don’t, this is a Non-Story...

reply

This is a story

I have to disagree with the poster above. This IS a story about how companies charge money to dispose of CRT monitors and then dispose of them illegally, or, as in this case, let them accumulate in the warehouse. There were no laptops or CPUs accumulating, so the owner made money off of those but was unwilling and/or unable to pay a responsible downstream vendor for the CRT recycling.

It is commendable that the owner didn’t just build a CRT mountain in the desert, and it is always unfortunate if a business has to close but the lesson from this story is that some recyclers take in materials that they are unable to handle in order to get to the "good stuff". Downstream due diligence is key in this business and all e-scrap recyclers need to do their homework - either in-house or as an outsourced service.

Tanja Hermann, smartEE consulting

reply

Easy for you to say

People can sit on their old cars nad leave it to their sons, grand children... so on so forth. And if they ever trying to get rid of the old car, there is plenty of dealer/junk car services will jump on it and handle the old car the right way!

But used CRT Glass, who is going to jump on it? And most importantly, when the warehouse owner needs the space for rent or they need to just clean the warehouse, where do they send the CRT glass?

If you don’t know these answers, better keep you big mouth shut!

reply

You’ve got a lot of

You’ve got a lot of organization who put up the site collection of obsolete electronics, if you want some answer go check it!

reply