



KEESLER NEWS

KEESLER AIR FORCE BASE, BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

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Shane Olsen, recycling center contractor, grabs an arm-full of flattened cardboard boxes to put into the baling machine at the recycling center Monday. Keesler's recycling center recently won the Environmental Hero Award, Recycler of the Year in the state and federal government category from the Mississippi Recycling Coalition. In fiscal year 2012, the center recycled 2,383 tons of materials including 323.45 tons of food waste, a unique effort in south Mississippi. This effort saved \$99,555.44 from going to landfills and resulted in \$180,119 of revenue being returned to the base.

Photos by Kemberly Groue



Duane Olsen, recycling center contractor, separates plastic and aluminum materials into different bins.

Recycling center wins Environmental Hero Award

By Senior Airman Heather Heiney

Keesler News co-editor

Keesler's recycling center won the Environmental Hero Award, Recycler of the Year in the state or federal government category from the Mississippi Recycling Coalition Jan. 3. A formal announcement is scheduled for 10 a.m. today as part of the MRC Recycling Awareness Day at the state capitol in Jackson, Miss. The award will be presented to Keesler at a later date.

According to its website, www.msrecycles.org, each year the Mississippi Recycling Coalition honors outstanding environmental efforts of organizations, businesses, schools and local governments around the State of Mississippi.

The MRC judges the nominees based on the following criteria: promotes recycling as a way to create a better community, conducts continuous recycling or environmental programs rather than a one-time project, practices and improves awareness of environmental stewardship and improves community waste handling and environmental practices.

Mark Williams, solid waste policy, planning and grants branch administrator of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality said, "Keesler has had a strong recycling program for some time, but this year we felt they deserved the award."

Doug Smith, Zero Waste Solutions/Mark Dunning Industries project manager, said

that winning the Environmental Hero Award shows all the progress the recycling center has made over the last two years.

"We've gone from a 20 percent to a 52 percent diversion rate," Smith said. "It takes all the individuals on Keesler to make this happen."

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Smith also said his team looks for new items and ways to recycle every single day. The team's goal is a 75 percent diversion rate by 2015.



Pete Robertson, recycling center contractor, rolls cans of recycled materials from around the base into the recycling center for processing.



Duane Olsen empties a bag of shredded paper into a baling machine.



Aluminum cans collected from around the base are crushed and bailed in preparation for shipment to an off-base processing center.