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STUDENTS NEARLY DOUBLE NUMBER OF CANS RECYCLED IN NATION-WIDE COMPETITION

More than 4.5 million aluminum cans recycled in five months

WASHINGTON, May 18, 2012 – Schools across America recycled more than 4.5 million aluminum beverage cans in the second year of a national recycling competition sponsored by the U.S. can industry—nearly double last year’s effort.

The Great American Can Roundup raised \$100,591 for school activities and local charities across the country. More than 790 schools from all 50 states participated in the second annual contest, which runs each year from Nov. 15 (America Recycles Day) to April 22 (Earth Day).

“By any measure, this year’s program was a tremendous success,” said Robert Budway, president of the Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI), the trade association representing can makers and their suppliers. “These students recycled more than 65 tons of cans. Their hard work not only helped protect the environment, it raised money for local schools and charities across the country. We couldn’t be more pleased.”

Some 66,000 students ran collection projects that recycled 131,183 pounds of aluminum cans. At current rates, the aluminum collected is worth more than \$65,500, which the students can donate to their schools or local charities. In addition, CMI awarded \$1,000 to the top recycling school in each state that fulfilled all contest requirements. The National Champion receives an additional grand prize of \$5,000.

Schools were judged on a per capita basis, comparing the number of cans recycled to the number of students participating. With a recycling rate of 70.49 pounds, Expedition Academy in Green River, Wyo., was the national champion for the second year running. Two Montana schools rounded up the top three: Fromberg High School, Fromberg, placed second; and Cascade High School, Cascade, third.

“Expedition Academy is once again the national champion and we congratulate them for being number one in the nation for two years in a row. This is really an impressive showing and we challenge them to do it again next year,” Budway said. “I also congratulate every other school and every student who took part in this national challenge and give them a heartfelt thank you. The money they raised will be very welcome for a variety of school activities and local charities.”

American consumers earn more than \$1 billion annually from recycling cans, making aluminum and steel cans the most valuable recycled consumer package. About 67 percent of steel food cans and 58 percent of aluminum beverage cans are recycled each year in the United States. “By far, cans are the most recycled package in the United States,” Budway noted. By comparison, glass is recycled about 31 percent of the time, Polyethylene terephthalate, or PET containers, 29 percent, and aseptic cartons, 6.5 percent.

The can’s significant value stems from its unique characteristic of being 100% recyclable back into the original package. Once placed in a recycling bin, a can could be back on a store shelf in as few as 60 days. This closed-loop recycling process has kept millions of tons of material out of landfills. Indeed, 75% of all aluminum ever produced is still in use.

“Metal, essentially, is a permanent resource,” said Budway. “Chances are, the metal in the soda can you’re holding now was previously used by your grandparent’s generation and will likely be used by your grandchildren’s generation. A permanent material meeting the needs of yesterday, today and tomorrow, while minimizing landfill waste and resource depletion – what can be more sustainable than that?”

About The Can Manufacturers Institute (CMI)

CMI is the national trade association of the metal can manufacturing industry and its suppliers in the United States. CMI members account for the annual domestic production of 130 billion food, beverage and general line metal cans. Together, they employ approximately 35,000 workers and operate nearly 150 plants in 36 states. For more information, visit www.cancentral.com.

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