News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jennifer Killinger (202) 249-6619
Email: jennifer_killinger@americanchemistry.com

Contact: Steve Alexander (202) 316-3046
E-mail: salexander@cmrgroup4.com

PLASTICS INDUSTRY AND RECYCLERS MARK TWO DECADES OF YEAR-OVER-YEAR INCREASES IN PLASTIC BOTTLE RECYCLING

Recycling Rate for Plastic Bottles Reaches High of Nearly 2.5 Billion Pounds

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 1, 2010) – Plastic bottle recycling by consumers increased 46 million pounds in 2009 (up 2%), to reach a record high of nearly 2.5 billion pounds for the year, according to figures released jointly today by the American Chemistry Council (ACC) and the Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR).

The 20th annual National Post-Consumer Plastics Bottle Recycling Report also marks the twentieth consecutive year that Americans have increased the pounds of plastic bottles that have been returned for recycling. The pounds of bottles collected for recycling has grown each year since the industry survey began in 1990. The recycling rate for plastic bottles rose nearly one percent to reach 28 percent in 2009.

“Two decades of increased collection year-over-year shows that Americans are committed to recycling,” said Scott Saunders, vice president and general manager of KW Plastics in Troy Alabama, and chairman of APR. “Valuable recycled plastic materials go on to become useful products, such as automotive parts, carpeting, fleece jackets, durable outdoor lumber, new bottles and containers. By recycling our used plastics, all of us can help support green jobs and green businesses,” Saunders said.

America’s plastics and recycling industries continue to invest in developing technologies and innovative programs to increase awareness of recycling opportunities among consumers and expand access to away-from-home recycling bins.

A recent step forward in the recycling of plastic bottles involves replacing the caps. “Recyclers now want consumers to place caps back on bottles prior to recycling, said Steve Alexander, executive director of APR.

- more -
“By twisting caps back on our bottles before placing them in the bin, we can help make sure this valuable material says out of the litter stream and gets into the hands of recyclers,” Alexander said.

APR, which represents more than 90 percent of the postconsumer plastics recycling capacity in North America, has initiated a series of recycling workshops and webinars for recycling officials to help increase the volume of plastics available for recycling. In addition, APR works closely with packaging and consumer product companies on design for recycling of new containers and works with industry to minimize contamination of the recycling stream.

ACC, which represents the makers of plastic resins, has partnered with the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the nonprofit Keep California Beautiful to place nearly 700 recycling bins at 19 locations along the California coast. ACC recently expanded its partnership efforts by teaming up with the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) to place recycling bins at rest stops on route to popular tourist destinations. Data show that each year, bins placed through the campaign help to recycle roughly 45 tons of plastics (and more than 100 tons of other materials) in public spaces along California’s coast.

“Continued growth in plastics recycling demonstrates that bringing opportunities and awareness together is the key to success,” said Keith Christman, managing director of plastics markets for ACC. “Recycling more plastics is an important way we all can help the environment and fuel earth-friendly innovation every day.”

Christman pointed to a separate study released earlier this year that was jointly commissioned by ACC, APR and other plastics groups, which confirms that recycling plastics results in significant savings of energy and greenhouse gas emissions.

The full 2009 report (National Post-Consumer Plastics Bottle Recycling Report) is available in the “Publications” section of ACC’s website (http://www.americanchemistry.com/s_plastics/sec_content.asp?CID=1593&DID=11513) and on APR’s (www.plasticsrecycling.org) website.

Data on PET recycling referenced in the report was separately funded and published by APR and the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR). A separate report, entitled 2009 Report on Post-Consumer PET Container Recycling Activity, is available on APR’s website.

More information on recycling plastic bottles, including tips for consumers, is available on www.plasticsmakeitpossible.com.

Resources for municipal recyclers are available at www.allplasticbottles.org.
The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people’s lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care®, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a $674 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation’s economy. It is one of the nation’s largest exporters, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation’s critical infrastructure.

[www.americanchemistry.com/newsroom](http://www.americanchemistry.com/newsroom)

The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR) is the national trade association representing companies who acquire, reprocess and sell the output of more than 90 percent of the post-consumer plastic processing capacity in North America. Founded in 1992, its membership includes independent recycling companies of all sizes, processing numerous resins. APR strongly advocates the recycling of all post consumer plastic packaging.

[http://www.plasticsrecycling.org](http://www.plasticsrecycling.org)