

Many Mattresses!!

7 Rivers Recycling, Inc has built its reputation as being a leader throughout the Midwest in mattress recycling. They have been a long standing and reliable business partner to numerous counties and municipalities in multiple states. With over 60,000 mattresses saved from the landfill over the past 2 years, they have the experience and know-how to handle any size mattress recycling project.

Recently, this experience was tested in the form of the largest single vendor arrangement that 7 Rivers has ever seen. Nearby Fort McCoy was slated to have several of its barracks upgraded in a major construction project. Fort McCoy also was the home for many of the Afghani refugees, who the United States supported after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. That meant that a significant number of mattresses were to be decommissioned as part of the overhaul. The Fort would need to dispose of 10,600 mattresses, and move them in a 6-week time frame



Mattresses used by Afghani refugees while at Fort McCoy await processing at 7 Rivers Recycling, Inc in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Arrangements were made for the hauling and soon 7 Rivers was receiving multiple truck- loads of mattresses per day. Each load had between 200-300 units of retired mattresses. They were off-loaded, counted and placed into inventory. Soon 7 Rivers Technicians were deconstructing mattresses into their most basic parts to be recycled and reused for new products.

The most difficult part of the operation was finding the space for all the mattresses. With roughly 254,000 cubic feet of mattresses, space was filled up fast. 7 Rivers also continued to receive mattresses from its other clients during this period. The processing areas, warehouse and yes, even the parking lot served as a staging area for the deliveries.

Once the mattresses were inside the processing area, technicians removed the outer Nylon shell, separated the foam, felt and polyester to be recycled, and stacked the remaining metal spring to be baled immediately. The work flow was steady and efficient - a crew of 5 were deconstructing over 1,000 mattresses per week – and generating massive amounts of material to be recycled. In October alone, 7 Rivers shipped out 120,000 pounds of steel springs. Similar amounts of Foam and Textiles also were kept out of the landfill and recycled. Any material that did not meet recycling standards was used for Refuse Derived Fuel at the near-by waste-to-energy facility.

The most important aspect of the entire process was the fact that 7 Rivers was able to save over 572,000 pounds of material from being placed in the landfill. Mattress recycling is one of the best ways to maximize space, and to reuse the materials that are contained in the mattresses. Considering the fact that many landfills are closing due to capacity, with no plans to build new ones, the idea of Mattress Recycling makes good sense.

7 Rivers Recycling is proud of the role it played in making the Fort McCoy construction project more environmentally friendly. The space saved and the materials generated showcase the positive impact that mattress recycling can have on creating avenue for sustainable materials management. As landfills across the nation edge towards full capacity, 7 Rivers, the leader in mattress recycling, provides a valuable resource to ensure we are “doing the right thing” for all involved.



The sheer volume of mattresses can be seen in this photo that shows some of the 10,600 mattresses recycled from Fort McCoy. These mattresses provided steel, foam, polyester and other materials that are made into new products.