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Conigliaro Industries Opens Mattress Recycling Plant

Conigliaro Industries, headquartered in Framingham, Mass., has opened the first commercial plant for shredding and recycling mattresses. The plant is located at Conigliaro's 90,000 square foot facility in Framingham. Mattresses are shredded at the site and the contents (wood, polyurethane foam, cotton, steel) are collected and sold into their respective re-sale markets.

The Conigliaro recycling plant opens at a time when landfill space in Massachusetts is at a premium. In 1990, the state had 225 operating landfills. Today, only 22 remain. The state has put in place several waste initiatives to address the landfill crisis.

"Massachusetts has some very aggressive recycling goals," says Greg Conigliaro, president of Conigliaro Industries. "Right now the state has a 36-38 percent recycling rate; by 2010, they want to have a 70 percent recycling rate. The possibility of banning items such as mattresses and boxsprings from landfills is very real. Fortunately, state regulators recognize the need for facilities that address this waste stream. In that spirit, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection provided us with a \$50,000 grant toward the construction of our plant."

Don Schomer, chairman of the Alliance for the Polyurethanes Industry Polyurethane Recycle and Recovery Council (PURRC), supports Conigliaro Industry's efforts. "We are excited about this opportunity to demonstrate another way of recycling mattresses in a responsible manner," says Schomer. "The recycling plant will support the long-term sustainability of the polyurethanes industry and, most importantly, support recycling initiatives in Massachusetts."

According to Conigliaro, approximately 150,000 mattresses are thrown away each year in Massachusetts. "We referenced that figure in designing our equipment. Right now we can recycle mattresses at the rate of one each minute, or 140,000 in a year. We're confident that this plant will play a key role in helping the state meet its recycling goals."

The mattress recycling plant utilizes two different processes for recycling mattresses. For low-quality units from hospitals and schools, the entire mattress is put through a shredder. The shredder separates the polyurethane foam from the springs and wood frame, and bales the foam for sale into a re-sale market. Using this technique, the plant can recycle approximately 60 percent of the mattress components. For brand-name manufacturer mattresses, plant workers first filet both sides of the mattress on a large iron plate and then run it through the shredder. With this technique, the plant can recycle 90 percent of the components.

Conigliaro Industries receives mattresses from several sources. Some of the largest sources include universities, colleges, and hospitals. Conigliaro also works with mattress manufacturers. Many of these companies have programs to take back old customer mattresses when delivering new ones. These mattresses are traditionally passed on to mattress rebuilders, who attempt to restore the used mattress and recirculate it into the market. The recycling plant offers manufacturers a second option for their old mattresses.

"We are able to remain profitable partly through our relationships with these various groups," says Conigliaro. "They pay a small fee for us to recycle the mattresses they deliver. Selling the recycled materials into re-sale markets generates the remainder of our income."

Conigliaro Industries, Inc., based in Framingham, Mass., currently serves 550 industrial, institutional and municipal customers including 42 school systems, 22 colleges and universities, 40 hospitals, 20 cities and towns, and 150 industrial plants. Now in its eleventh year of operation, the firm's acceptable recyclables include 150 different materials. For more information about Conigliaro Industries, call (508) 872-9668 or visit www.conigliaro.com.

API is a business unit of APC. Its members are U.S. producers or distributors of chemicals and equipment used to make polyurethanes, or are manufacturers of polyurethane products. The mission of API is to promote the health and vigor of the polyurethanes industry by identifying and managing issues that could adversely affect the industry.

APC is a national trade association representing 24 of the nation's largest resin producers, including monomer and polymer production and distribution. Founded in 1988, APC demonstrates that plastics are a responsible choice and promotes the countless ways they make people's lives better, healthier and safer. Plastics Make It Possible.®

For more information about our Mattress and Furniture Recycling Programs, please contact us at:



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