

Renewal projects receive \$50,000 in DOE competition

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Winners of the U.S. Department of Energy's Re-X Before Recycling Prize will get \$50,000. | JHVEPhoto/Shutterstock

Twenty teams have received \$50,000 each from a U.S. Department of Energy competition aimed at extending the life cycle for such materials as electric vehicle batteries, packaging, textiles and construction materials.

The [Re-X Before Recycling Prize](#) recognizes innovative ways to extend product life by reusing, repairing, refurbishing, remanufacturing or repurposing before recycling. The DOE's Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Technologies Office, AMMTO, administers the competition, which takes place in three phases.

In this first phase, participants identified solutions for extending product life. In the second phase, which closes Oct. 22, new and phase-one competitors will further advance their ideas. Up to 10 winners will each receive \$150,000 in cash and \$100,000 in technical assistance.

In the final phase, winners selected from phase two will demonstrate substantial progress toward implementing their idea in a viable Re-X supply chain that will continue beyond the prize period. Up to four teams will receive \$500,000 in cash.

"The winning competitors showed us innovative solutions for extending the life of a diverse range of products, which will go a long way toward both decarbonizing our economy and reducing what goes into our landfills," said Chris Saldaña, AMMTO director.

The winners are:

Bleckmann Circular Solution of Columbus, Ohio

Material: textiles

Project: Holistic closed-loop supply chain resource for apparel and textile companies, offering collection, repair, refurbishment and resale.

California Product Stewardship Council of Sacramento, California

Material: solar panels

Project: Establish a hub in partnership with cities/counties to increase resources for safe solar panel reuse.

Circular Route of Austin, Texas

Material: durable goods

Project: Circular hub system to collect durable goods – including furniture, mattresses and appliances – from such outlets as charities, junk haulers and moving companies, to share with a network of small businesses that can refurbish the items.

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The latest recycling industry news

Amazon cutting out more flexible packaging

Amazon will send 15 billion fewer plastic pillows into the waste stream after replacing 95% of its product protection system with paper in North America, the company recently announced.

BC leaders reflect on three decades of EPR

How did a law intended to stop can-tabs litter in British Columbia lead to today's expansive extended producer responsibility laws? Those involved in its evolution traced the path in a webinar hosted by the Coast Waste Management Association.

Balcones' latest MRF features AI imaging and film vacuum

Balcones Recycling has completed a new sorting facility in San Antonio, the growing company's 17th MRF nationwide and home to AI-equipped optical sorters and an innovative experiment to deal with a common MRF contaminant, company executives said in an interview.

Doors Unhinged of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Material: building materials

Project: Remanufacture doors by leaving core material intact while exterior surface can match new specifications.

Electra of Bellingham, Washington

Material: solar panels

Project: Product registry to trace life cycle management, collection and logistics for solar panels, via customer registration upon installation.

Jack Paulin Lamuraglia of Binghamton, New York

Material: electronics

Project: Technology to disassemble electronics and refurbish the integrated circuits, for sale to manufacturers to use in new electronics.

Lifecycle Building Center of Atlanta, Georgia

Material: lumber

Project: Produce nail-laminated timber for use in affordable housing projects from salvaged lumber used in the state's motion picture industry.

Llink Technologies of Brown City, Michigan

Material: automotive headlights

Project: Manufacture new, warrantied headlights using components from lights damaged in auto collisions.

Posh Electric of Hayward, California

Material: EV batteries

Project: Repurposing lithium iron phosphate batteries from electric vehicles for long-term energy storage.

RecycleBalls of South Burlington, Vermont

Material: tennis balls

Project: Create a national recovery community and ecosystem for used tennis balls. The balls would be sorted based on condition, then routed for direct reuse on courts or in classrooms, or remanufacturing via repressurizing.

Rejoule Incorporated of Signal Hill, California

Material: EV batteries

Project: Assess EV battery health directly via charging port, without removing it from the vehicle.

Renewable Parts of Humble, Texas

Material: wind turbine parts

Project: Refurbish and resell wind turbine parts, to help reduce lead times, lower carbon footprints and lower costs for wind energy developers.

RePurpose Energy of Fairfield, California

Material: EV batteries

Project: Use machine learning to test battery health, sort and repurpose EV batteries to commercial and utility energy storage systems.

RESOLVE of Washington, D.C.

Material: reusable packaging

Project: Pilot testing of the PR3 Reusable Packaging Standards, to help ensure that reusable cups can be collected, washed, redistributed and reused. The standards also will help ensure that these systems are accessible to low-income and underserved communities.

Rochester Institute of Technology of Rochester, New York

Material: office furniture

Project: Remanufacture office furniture to help reduce the flow of furniture into municipal waste streams. RIT is working on a hub-and-spoke network starting with Seneca Holdings and scaling that network to Tribal nations across the U.S.

Rockwind Venture Partners of Rockford, Illinois

Material: wind turbine parts

Project: Refurbish decommissioned wind turbines and reuse them in distributed energy applications.

Sankofa Lumber of Portland, Oregon

Material: lumber

White House releases national food waste plan

Federal agencies this month unveiled a national organics recovery strategy with specific actions – and designated grant funding – that will move the country toward an existing goal of reducing food loss and waste by 50% by 2030.

Brand owners set new five-year plastics targets

The U.S. Plastics Pact this week unveiled the goals its signatories will strive for during the next five years. Most of the goals build on the efforts over the past five years, and the group's target date to hit 30% average recycled content has been extended from 2025 to 2030.

Iowa notched a 49% container recovery rate in 2022

Iowa had the third-lowest container recovery rate among the ten states with deposit return systems, the 2022 Recovery Rate report found, although part of that figure is based on estimation.

As OCC continues to rise, end users up product prices

Multiple paper packaging giants have announced price increases for their uncoated recycled paperboard in recent weeks due to rising recycled fiber prices and demand.

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Project: Establish a hub to enable direct reuse of construction wood, bringing together small businesses to share resources, create business opportunities and foster workforce development.

Shorepower Technologies of Hillsboro, Oregon

Material: EV batteries

Project: Develop a transportable fast-charging system for EVs using repurposed batteries, requiring less grid power than traditional fast charging and avoiding the need for utility upgrades. The team focuses on making EV charging more affordable in disadvantaged communities.

The Welman Project of Fort Worth, Texas

Material: business supplies

Project: Reroute surplus business materials to classrooms in Fort Worth, to provide teachers free, curriculum-enhancing materials. A creative reuse craft store serves to sell the materials classrooms do not need, helping to ensure economic viability of this supply chain.

Upstream Policy Institute of Damariscotta, Maine

Material: food and beverage packaging

Project: Work to catalyze adoption of reusable food and beverage containers by developing forward-facing, high-volume contracts to promote build-out of public infrastructure needed to scale reuse systems.

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