



## AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Facilities Management | Building Services | Waste Reduction & Recycling

### Auburn University Provides Sustainable Public Space Recycling Opportunities

By Joan Hicken



One of Auburn University's nine solar trash compactors and recycling bins

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Department (WRRD) is working to increase the university's efforts to be more sustainable. One way is to provide public space trash and recycling stations.

The BigBelly units use solar power and advanced communications technologies to maximize operational efficiencies. These stations provide more capacity for material due to on-site compaction. Each compactor replaces four existing trash containers.

"This is a great example of how innovative technology combined with thoughtful behaviors can make a big difference," said Mike Kensler, director of the Office of Sustainability. "This very cool technology, supported by behaviors that put trash in the BigBelly and recyclables in the recycling bin, will reduce things we want less of, like trash, pollution and litter, and increase things we want more of, like saving money and resources, making campus cleaner, and through recycling, turning stuff we no longer need into new stuff we can use."

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The trash compactor is paired with a recycling bin for plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and steel cans to support the university's commitment to increase recycling tonnage. Since the trash is compacted, the containers don't need to be emptied as often. Fewer trips lead to reduced fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Servicing public space trash and recycling locations is a resource intensive operation. The BigBelly System takes the guesswork out of collection using real-time data. Information is sent from each unit, via a wireless monitoring system, to an online server. This enables staff to be deployed more effectively.

Auburn University's strategic plan calls for continued development and implementation of economic and environmentally sustainable strategies to reduce institutional energy use. The units are completely self-powered, with 100% of their energy needs coming from solar power, using less than five watt hours per day, about the amount of energy it takes to toast a piece of bread.

WRRD manages all waste contracts on campus and provides recycling services to the university community. The recycling program was established in 2005.

More information about Auburn University's recycling program is available online at [auburn.edu/recycle](http://auburn.edu/recycle).

More information about BigBelly Solar is available online at [bigbelly.com](http://bigbelly.com).

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