



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Going Yellow-Green: Trash Cans Re-Purposed as Recycling Bins at New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center**

More than 200 non-biodegradable fiberglass trash cans, once destined for a landfill, have found a new life as bright yellow-green recycling bins at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

In an effort to be more environmentally-friendly, the Convention Center sought to replace their existing trash cans with 210 new recycling bins for paper, plastic, and waste. As the trash cans were about to be put out to pasture, enterprising Convention Center employees stepped in with an innovative idea for re-purposing the 25-year old trash cans.

During a “green” brainstorming session, Operations staff members suggested that the Convention Center’s existing trashcans could be sanded down and repainted; the lids could be cut down and slots or holes could be cut into the top. Lead by Environmental Services Manager Adrian Faciane, Operations staff members Joe DiLosa and Anthony Cadogan went to work sanding and cutting, then painters Elaine Thompson and Reynold Ray spent days spray painting the cans a bright yellow-green hue. The color was selected to complement the building’s fresh new palette of colors reflected in the carpet and other interiors.

Sets of three bins – one for paper, one for plastic and one for waste – were placed throughout the Convention Center lobbies and public spaces in time for the Society of Human Resource Management show which began Sunday, June 28. More bins will be in place for the upcoming Microsoft conference in July. The bins bear the “Forever Green” logo, representing New Orleans’s citywide recycling initiative.

After events, Pelican Commercial Waste Service hauls away the materials to a recycling center for sorting and weighing, then provides the Convention Center with a breakdown of recycled materials by type.

Besides reducing impact on the environment, Convention Center officials are enthusiastic about the cost savings. “New recycling containers are not cheap; if we had to buy them today they would cost nearly \$500 each. By re-purposing the old trash cans as recycling bins, we saved \$103,000. Not to mention the space they would be taking up in a landfill because fiberglass does not decompose,” said Paul O’Connell, assistant director of production and technology services.

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O’Connell’s expertise is in “green” practices. He came to the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center from David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh (known as “the Greenest Building in the Country”). As director of operations, he worked with the Green Building Alliance to ensure compliance to gold standard “green” building requirements.

O’Connell says that the Convention Center is currently working on several other green initiatives: by the end of July, the Center will replace 6,000 casino-style lights with LED lights, which are 88% more energy efficient than the current incandescent lamps. Later this summer, LCD electronic signage will be installed outside of every meeting room, reducing the need for foam-core board signs and easels.

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### **About the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center**

With 1.1 million square feet of contiguous exhibit space, an award winning staff and first class amenities, the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOMCC) is the sixth largest convention center in the nation and a consistent Top 10 host of the largest number of conventions and tradeshow annually. A leading rainmaker of the city’s hospitality industry, NOMCC event activity has produced \$39.12 billion in economic impact since its 1985 opening, including \$2.19 billion in new tax revenue.

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**Original Convention Center trash can; trash can after being sanded;  
newly painted recycling bin**



Convention Center painter Elaine Thompson at work



Trash cans re-painted and re-purposed as recycling bins