

**"A**nyone can pick up trash and haul it away," says Ben Harvey. "But that's not good enough today." As executive vice president of Westborough, Mass.-based E. L. Harvey & Sons Inc., Harvey says the key to success for an independent waste services provider is figuring out new services while improving existing ones.

"As an independent company, we compete with goliaths every day," adds Executive Vice President Ellen Harvey. "So we have to find niches."

E. L. Harvey's sprawling facility, encompassing approximately 80 acres, points out the niches the company has found. In addition to the main office, there is a large material recycling facility (MRF); a high-grade paper baling operation; a construction and demolition (C&D) recycling facility; a transfer station; three mobile shredders; and the residential, commercial and industrial trash and recycling collection fleets.

About half of the land is undeveloped, but that will change soon. The company is beginning to plan a new state-of-the-art MRF.

The Harvey family began picking up commercial trash in 1949 to supplement the income of a family farm. Today, this fourth-generation family business serves 3,500 commercial customers, 2,000 industrial customers, and 12,000 residences under municipal contracts and subscription services. The company likely will generate close to \$45 million in revenues this year, up from \$30 million a decade ago.

While trash collection always has been a core business, the company has built a national reputation for other services, particularly its broad recycling capabilities, its comprehensive customer education programs and a safety program that helps to generate new business.

## Recycling Educators

"Our typical customer — companies like General Dynamics and other Fortune 500 firms — doesn't want material sent to a landfill," says Ellen Harvey. "In some cases, if it can't be recycled, they want it sent to a waste-to-energy facility."

Diverting everything — or just about everything — from the landfill is no easy task. It requires detailed planning and an education program capable of changing corporate habits.

E. L. Harvey's recycling services begin with a waste-stream evaluation and the development of a plan that involves as much diversion and as little disposal as possible. Then comes customer education and training in how to divert materials from the waste stream.

If a customer wants to start a mixed-fiber program, E. L. Harvey representatives might set up a booth in the cafeteria, pass out literature and talk to employees about the program or go door to door with literature and speak to employees in their offices. Some programs bring managers to E. L. Harvey's facilities for training.

"We provide total education programs," Ellen Harvey says. "We don't just cover how to facilitate collection. We also talk about how we process the material, where we send it, how it is made into another product and how it is put back into use."

"We spend a lot of time on re-use," she adds. "While people love to collect recycling, they need to buy the products made with recycled materials. That is what creates markets, and that is a recycling area that needs a lot of work."

Training and education programs cover bottles and cans, compost, mixed fiber, plastic, C&D debris and electronics. In November, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection presented E.L. Harvey & Sons with a "WasteWise Endorser of the Year" award for the firm's on-going efforts to promote recycling and waste prevention to businesses in the state.

FEATURE

# Competing With Goliaths

With a philosophy of "resource management," the family-owned and independent E.L. Harvey & Sons keeps pace with the big haulers.

## Resource Management As a Strategy

In the early 1970s, the Harveys began collecting commercial and industrial trash in an Autocar roll-off truck. They sorted what they collected, sold the recyclables, promoted the idea to their customers and found that selling recycling services was a path to growth.

Looking forward, the Harveys plan to continue to grow with recycling as it evolves. "We're excited about the next five years, because customers are asking for more and more services," Ben Harvey says.

In fact, the Harveys have a name for the services they are planning to provide for customers: resource management. Call it recycling writ large. "More and more building contractors are looking at environmentally friendly facilities," Ben Harvey says. "And we have services to help them."

For example, today's commercial property owners regularly ask their architects and contractors for buildings carrying the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifications issued by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). Recycling capabilities designed into buildings as well as C&D construction methods earn points toward LEED certifications, and E. L. Harvey consults with owners and contractors about these features and methods.

When IT services giant EMC of Hopkinton, Mass., set out to renovate its world corporate headquarters building, it decided to seek a Platinum LEED certification. To facilitate that, Ellen

**ALL IN THE FAMILY:** The management team of E.L. Harvey & Sons features several generations of family members. Pictured here are (bottom row, from left to right) CEO and Treasurer James Harvey, and Executive Vice Presidents Lynda Harvey Walcott and Ben Harvey; (middle row, from left to right) Director of Finance & Acquisitions B.J. Harvey and Executive Vice President Steven Harvey; (top row, from left to right) Executive Vice President Douglas Harvey, technician Joshua Harvey and Executive Vice President Ellen Harvey.



## Industry Royalty

Jerry Sjogren, E. L. Harvey's safety director, recently received the 2010 Distinguished Service Award from the Environmental Industry Associations (EIA). "It was for the enormous amount of time Jerry has devoted to the EIA safety committee over many years," says Bruce Parker, president of EIA. "The award is also a testament to the Harvey family. They encourage their employees to give back to the industry by participating actively in the association and allowing them the time to do it. The Harveys are royalty in our industry."

To cite just a few examples of the Harveys' involvement in the waste industry, CEO and Treasurer James Harvey has been a member of the steering committee of EIA's Massachusetts chapter for two decades, served on the National Solid Waste Management Association's Board of Directors and also was president of the Detachable Container Association. Executive Vice President Ben Harvey is president of the Paper Stock Industry, a chapter of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, and is on the EIA board. Executive Vice President Ellen Harvey is a founder and past chairman of the EIA Women's Council.

And young B. J. Harvey, the firm's director of finance and acquisitions, is continuing the family tradition. He co-chairs the EIA's Future Industry Leaders Alliance (FILA), which was established to educate young industry leaders. — MF



**FINDING ITS NICHE:** E.L. Harvey & Sons competes with bigger haulers by offering such services as C&D and e-waste recycling,

Harvey sat on the LEED certification committee and helped ensure that the project acquired all of the LEED points available for sustainable waste and recycling facilities and activities.

The EMC LEED effort required proper C&D recycling as well as reports documenting the recycling. As part of its LEED services, E. L. Harvey tracked the materials sent to its own C&D recycling facility and generated the appropriate reports.

The renovations are finished, and EMC's LEED certification is pending.

Profiled just after it opened four years ago on the Discovery Channel's "Renovation Nation" program, the E. L. Harvey C&D recycling facility features a number of innovations.

As material arrives, excavators pull out large pieces and load the remaining materials onto a conveyor. That material goes into a rotating drum that captures small and medium-sized items. Larger materials continue on the conveyor.

The medium-sized recyclables flow through a vat of water. Heavy items — metals and concrete — sink onto another conveyor below where a magnet separates the metals. Lighter materials such as wood float atop the water and flow into the next

stage. Manual pickers finish the sorting and pack the materials for shipment to processors.

"Our facility can process up to 350 tons of waste per day," says Executive Vice President Steven Harvey. Eighty-five percent of construction waste is recyclable, he notes. Furthermore, Massachusetts regulations ban the disposal of materials like asphalt pavement, brick and concrete in landfills.

Ben Harvey looks at electronics recycling as another growth area. "We're a small electronics collector and processor right now," he says. "We have only just begun breaking down computers and other electronic equipment into component parts. These are developing into good recycling streams, especially the components with precious metals. We want to push to grow our C&D business as well as electronics recycling, which is very profitable."

### The Safety Niche

E. L. Harvey employs about 220 people, many of whom perform jobs that are very dangerous. Jerry Sjogren's job is to make sure that every employee goes home safely every night.

As the company's safety director, Sjogren has driven down the company's experience modification factor, a safety measure used by insurance companies to set premiums, to 0.75. Anything below 1.0 is considered excellent — and competitive when it comes to attracting new customers.

Sjogren looks at safety as a cultural issue. "E. L. Harvey has a strong company culture," he says. "You have to like the way we do things, or you won't be happy here. That kind of company culture helps create a safety culture."

Sjogren's safety culture has begun to help the company's bottom line as large companies today insist that their vendors meet stringent safety standards. Large corporations can't afford to get caught up in liability issues created by the negligence of a vendor.

"More and more national corporations looking for vendors are auditing prospective vendors and evaluating their commitment to safety," Sjogren says. "So safety has become an important part of doing business."

It's one more niche that E. L. Harvey has mastered in carrying on its daily competition with goliaths. ■

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*Celebrating*  
*100 Years*

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