

metals recycling



challenge: Metals Recycling crushes and recycles assorted metal products, including automobiles, washers, dryers and other appliances. In July 2002, a three-alarm fire broke out on the Metals Recycling property. The fire was caused by spontaneous combustion in one of the auto fluff piles (residue from non-metallic car parts such as seats). Heavy black smoke could be seen from Providence and neighboring communities.

Spurred on by the smoky three-alarm fire, a town councilman and a group of angry neighbors introduced an ordinance, aimed squarely at Metals Recycling, which would limit businesses operating heavy equipment in residential neighborhoods. At a city council hearing on the ordinance, more than a dozen neighbors spent an hour airing their complaints about the facility. Although neighbors had complained for years, the fire and the subsequently proposed ordinance jeopardized the future of Metals' business.

solution: Advocacy Solutions immediately engaged the Johnston Town Council to discuss the proposed ordinance and deal with the neighbors' complaints. Advocacy Solutions also met with the Johnston Fire Chief to coordinate his input into improvements at Metals. These improvement efforts culminated at an unprecedented open house event at the beginning of November 2002, where for the first time in its history, Metals opened its doors to its neighbors. Roughly 80 neighbors and other invited guest including the city's mayor, and several city councilmen, toured the facility, and then attended an information session highlighting safety improvements.

result: The open house was a tremendous success and helped lay the foundation for improved community/ neighborhood relations. Nearly all Metals Recycling neighbors who attended the open house came away with the impression that the facility was needed and that Metals Recycling was open to listening to neighborhood concerns about odors, noise, and safety. The open house also demonstrated to Johnston elected officials that Metals Recycling was committed to opening a dialog with its neighbors.

For our work on behalf of Metals Recycling, Advocacy Solutions won a prestigious Bell Ringer award from the Publicity Club of New England.