

The Ripple Effect

Two local businesses are helping residents take a fresh look at common household garbage.

words KELLI WHITE | photos ABBE FINDLEY

RIPPLE GLASS

Something colorful is popping up around Johnson County and the metro area—something so simple yet part of a worldwide cause to help the quality of life for future generations. It's the purple bins that serve as temporary housing for a product so frequently wasted—glass. The brainchild of local glass recycling company, Ripple Glass, these vibrant purple bins collect a portion of the 150 million pounds of glass thrown away by Kansas Citians each year. Going green is all the rage right now, but Ripple Glass has proven there is room to improve where environmental efforts are concerned. In the meantime, the company has shown Kansas City residents just how easy it is to be green. A spinoff from Boulevard Brewing Company, word on the street about Ripple Glass has spread in a very short time. Formally launched in November 2009, this company is proof that when people are passionate about a cause, the excitement is contagious.

“We are thrilled by the public embrace,” says Ripple Glass Executive Director Stacia Stelk. “People are excited to learn about how to recycle glass.”

The effect Ripple Glass has had on local recycling efforts and on the global concern of energy efficiency is inspiring. It breaks down like this:

The Problem: A lack of recycling efforts in Kansas City. Only 5 percent of glass used in the Kansas City area ends up being recycled. Compared with the national average of nearly 30 percent, this statistic was cause enough for Ripple Glass’ founders to see a citywide problem and to discover an easy solution with multiple benefits. Not only were Kansas Citians not recycling their glass, there was also a lack of local processors or collectors. Because glass is heavy and expensive to ship to out-of-town processors, the need to narrow a widening gap was even more apparent.

The Solution: Make it simple for patrons to recycle their glass all the while keeping costs low and energy efficiency high. Ripple Glass has placed dedicated glass recycling containers throughout

the metro area. Sorting by color is not necessary, and drop-off locations are convenient. Plus, the company has partnered with area Price Chopper stores that offer residential bins for a one-time low price, which saves even more time and energy. A local trash removal service has also signed on to empty the bins when they are full, so there is no burden on residents.

The Benefits: After the glass is cleaned and crushed at the Kansas City processing plant, local manufacturer Owens Corning picks up the glass “cullet” and converts it into fiberglass insulation. This simple partnership saves energy by dramatically lowering emissions while producing a product that saves even more energy. According to Ripple Glass’ Web site, “It’s a great way to close the loop, protect the environment, support local businesses and even make homes more energy-efficient.” With more than 60 drop-off locations city-wide, the demand for glass recycling opportunities has not weakened since the company’s



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inception. Stelk works to build partnerships with area drop-off centers and has recruited hosts all over the metro area.

“We’ve had more companies inquire about recycling bins than we have available,” Stelk says.

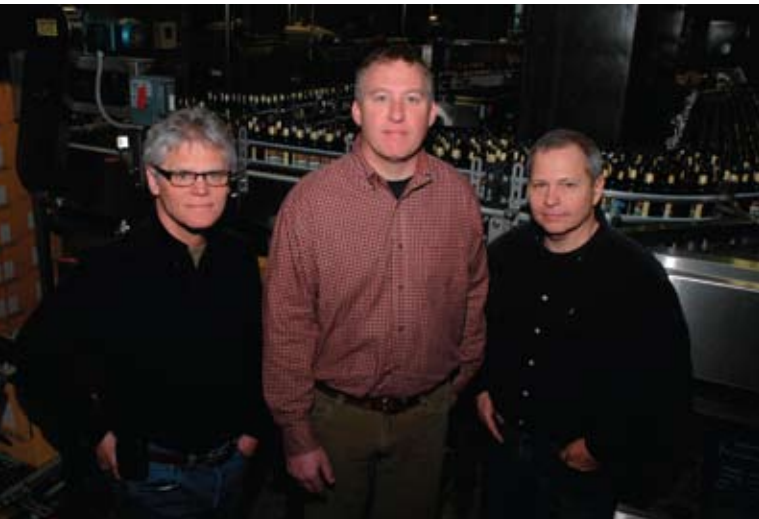
And according to Stelk, many local entities are interested in helping the cause even without hosting a bin.

“For example, the City of Overland Park does not have a purple Ripple Glass bin, but they use their existing containers to collect glass and then send it to Ripple Glass,” Stelk says. Despite its launch in the cold weather and before the holidays, the company is recycling a tremendous amount of glass.

“The amount of recycling we’re doing is a phenomenal statement of what area residents think about this project,” Stelk says. As with any good idea, this ripple effect is leading to more great plans. Future plans include a partnership with area restaurants to salvage wasted glass and transport it to Ripple Glass recycling bins instead of landfills. Another idea in the works is to bring the Boulevard bottles full-circle by eventually making new bottles from the old, recycled ones.

“It’s our hope for the future, but for now, we’re happy with aiding in energy efficient homes,” Stelk says. ❖

For more information or to find a recycling location near you, visit www.rippleglasskc.com.



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It's a not-so-typical Tuesday morning. You have coffee while sitting at your kitchen table in the same kitchen you've spent thousands of mornings. You look at the walls that have held up the house you've called home, the place where you have laughed, cried and shared memories. You realize that soon you will never look at these walls again. You think about the next step and feel overwhelmed. How do you pack up everything you own and relocate to a place full of strangers? Will the walls of your new house provide the same comfort? Will it be hard to leave the life you have now? Will you like your new job? The people? But before all of these questions, you ask yourself, where do you start?

The answer? Best Price Boxes.

Many psychologists say that after death and divorce, moving is the third most traumatic experience people may endure, so for Best Price Boxes owners John and Meegan Campbell, the opportunity to help people through a potentially overwhelming time is something they love most about their job.

"One of the most rewarding things about this business is the way customers

are reacting to us," Meegan says. "It is rare that a week goes by where we don't get at least two hugs from customers. For some, it's because they've saved so much money, for some it's another way they can act locally for the environment and for others, it's because we offered a resource that made a difficult move a little easier."


The Campbell's story began in the warehouse of their moving company, Studdard Moving and Storage. As they were literally watching a machine crush used moving box-

In less than a year in business, Best Price Boxes has kept nearly 90 tons of cardboard (about 45,000 boxes) in re-use and out of the landfills or recycling plants. To put that in perspective, recycling one ton of cardboard:


- Saves 17 trees from being cut down
- Saves 7000 gallons of water
- Saves 11 barrels of oil
- Saves more than 3 cubic yards of landfill space




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es and bundle them for recycling, they were disappointed in how much waste went right before their eyes, so they made a decision.

“We knew there had to be a way to re-use the perfectly good boxes versus recycle them right away,” Meegan says. “Most boxes are good for four or five uses, so we started searching for someone who was already doing that and found the Best Price Box franchise.”

At Best Price Boxes, you can:

- Buy new and used moving boxes
- Purchase other moving and packing supplies
- Order conveniently online
- Get moving advice
- Sell your used boxes
- Help the environment

Best Price Boxes sells moving boxes at deeply discounted prices — prices made possible by constantly reusing the materials. The store sells new and “gently” used boxes,

often at half the price of competitors and will then buy the same boxes back from customers. The company will buy and sell any type of moving/shipping boxes — even those not originally purchased there — as long as they meet the “gently used” criteria. For example, tape and writing on the box are acceptable, but holes and stains are not.

The Campbells are passionate about leading Best Price Boxes to an “environment wins-customer wins” success story.

“When it comes to helping the environment, it’s about finding small changes that lead to big results over time,” says Meegan. “People really don’t mind moving boxes that have been used before, particularly when you look at the cost of new moving boxes and the impact to the environment if everyone makes better use of the resource. We’re focused on offering our customers simple ways to help the environment while also saving money. Our motto is, ‘no more one and done.’”

The Overland Park store opened in April 2009 and was one of the first six Best Price Boxes stores in the U.S. Now there are three

stores in the Kansas City area. Along with the Overland Park location, Best Price Boxes also serves customers at the offices of Studdard Relocation Services in Lee’s Summit and Studdard Moving and Storage in Leavenworth. The franchise started in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and has since spread to San Antonio and Denver. The Campbells plan to work with their Best Price Boxes partners in Dallas with the goal of launching locations nationwide.

Best Price Boxes is also aligned with the Arbor Day Foundation as a way to extend its environmental reach and donates a percentage of its proceeds to this cause every month.

“The foundation has provided us with more than 150 seedling trees that we have given to customers as a ‘thank you’ for thinking green,” Meegan says.

Located at 12090 W.135th St. in Overland Park, Best Price Boxes is helping to save the environment, one box at a time. ❖

For more information, call (913) 549-4823 or visit www.bestpriceboxes.com.

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