

# UPDATE

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## UNITED RECYCLING

This Seattle-area recycling firm evolved from a sand and gravel background

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Owner/President Dan McAuliffe and  
Vice President Nickie McAuliffe

**KOMATSU**

# UNITED RECYCLING

## This Seattle-area firm views evolution from sand and gravel to recycling as a natural progression



Dan McAuliffe,  
Owner/President



Nickie McAuliffe,  
Vice President

United Recycling in Snohomish, Wash., takes in almost all types of recyclable materials, from green waste to highway concrete, processed here by a Komatsu WA500-6 wheel loader.

Growing up in the sand and gravel business turned out to be an invaluable experience for Dan McAuliffe, who now owns a major recycling operation. His father, Jim, owned several gravel pits where Dan worked along with his four older brothers.

"I come from a family of six children — five boys — and I was the youngest of the boys," Dan recalled. "By the time I got the toys, they were broken, so if I was going to play, I had to learn how to fix them. Same with the equipment in the gravel pits. I wasn't around many new machines. I'm not complaining. It was great experience. I learned how to tear apart and put back together anything and everything — from equipment to crushers to screens — and that skill set has been invaluable to me through the years."

It's been especially valuable since Dan started his own company, United Recycling, in one of the former gravel pits in 1995.

"I started it with one of my brothers, whom I bought out in 2000," said Dan. "I didn't know a lot about recycling at the time, but it didn't seem

like it would be much different. In sand and gravel we were taking rock out of the ground and crushing it to make a useable product. In recycling, we're taking in concrete or asphalt, crunching it up and turning it into a useable product. In most ways, it's fairly similar."

From learning the business as a start-up operation 14 years ago, Dan has grown United Recycling into a full-service recycling operation employing more than 40 people. Located in Snohomish, north of Seattle, the company serves customers throughout King and Snohomish counties. As you might expect, Dan is a hands-on owner who runs all day-to-day operations at United Recycling. His wife, Nickie, serves as Vice President, and Bruce Clark handles sales.

### Superior service

United Recycling accepts construction and demolition (C & D) debris including steel, scrap wood and brush, yard waste, mixed paper, nonferrous metals, aluminum, glass and more.

"We pride ourselves on always offering a fair price and on providing service that is second-to-none in the industry," said McAuliffe. "An example was a large job on I-90 taking out the median through Mercer Island. We stayed open round-the-clock, 24 hours-per-day, for more than a month, taking in material to process and resell.

"It's the same as any business," he noted. "We try to treat our customers fairly, honestly and courteously — and make it easy for them to do business with us."

United Recycling has customers throughout the greater Seattle area, up to Marysville and Granite City. "There may be recycling locations closer to some of these customers, but our facility



is very easy to get in and out of so they're not wasting time in line — and our price is better."

McAuliffe says most of the product that comes out of United Recycling is used as base material for buildings, highways or logging roads. "Recycled material is great for heavy-duty industrial/commercial use because it tends to have a dusty film that acts as a binding agent, so it gets harder than base that utilizes natural stone."

### Productive equipment and dealer support

For heavy equipment to run the recycling operation, McAuliffe turns to Komatsu machines from Modern Machinery. United Recycling has two Komatsu excavators (PC300LC-7 and PC200LC-7) to feed the crusher and grinder; a Komatsu WA500-6 wheel loader to process soils and green waste; and three Komatsu WA250 wheel loaders to handle the C & D debris.

"I've run all types of equipment," noted McAuliffe. "Komatsu gives us great productivity, a good price and the best maintenance package in the business. I'm very hands-on. I not only spec every machine out, I'll go out and count the pins and bushings before I make a purchase. On one piece I was comparing, the Komatsu machine had nine pins and bushings in the boom compared to 22 in the leading competitor. That's a lot less stuff to break with Komatsu.

"The other great thing about Komatsu is the support we get from Modern Machinery. On that I-90 Mercer Island job, we had a problem with a machine. Modern understood the position we were in and the stress we were under. They brought us out a loaner piece so we didn't miss a beat while they fixed ours. Bottom line, from Territory Manager Marc Bandy to everybody in the parts and service departments in Kent, Modern takes care of us and we appreciate it."

"Dan McAuliffe has built an excellent business and reputation for himself from scratch," said Modern President Brian Sheridan. "We're pleased to count him among our loyal customers."

### Part of the solution

When he started United Recycling, McAuliffe says he didn't have any preconceived idea of



(Above) This United Recycling operator uses a Komatsu PC300LC-7 to feed wood waste into a grinder. (Left) United has three Komatsu WA250 wheel loaders to handle construction and demolition debris.



Dan McAuliffe (left) works with Modern Machinery Territory Manager Marc Bandy on equipment purchases. "Marc and everybody at Modern understand what we need and they take great care of us," said McAuliffe.

how big the business would become. "Initially, it just seemed like a good idea, then it became like a snowball going downhill — it kept getting bigger and picking up speed. Now we're looking to expand our current site and possibly start a new location.

"I think recycling is an idea whose time has come, especially here in the Pacific Northwest where people have long been concerned with the environment and want to help preserve it," he added. "Rather than consuming more raw materials, recycling re-uses what's already been mined. People appreciate that, and it makes us feel good to be part of the solution."

In addition to United Recycling, McAuliffe also owns Clearview Nursery & Stone in Snohomish, a retail landscaping business designed both for the commercial builder and the homeowner. ■



Bruce Clark,  
United Salesman