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November 15, 2012

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2011 Overall Steel Recycling Rate Hits All-Time High

Record levels of steel scrap consumption announced on America Recycles Day

November 15, 2012, Pittsburgh, PA -- In celebration of America Recycles Day, the Steel Recycling Institute (SRI) announced today that the recycling rate for the world's most recycled material – steel – is at an all-time high of 92 percent. More than 85 million tons of steel scrap was consumed by steelmaking furnaces in 2011 – an increase of nearly 10 million net tons versus 2010.

“This high level of scrap consumption is a reflection of the North American steel industry’s commitment to conserving energy and natural resources,” Gregory L. Crawford, executive director of SRI, said. “The use of steel in everyday products, including packaging, appliances, automotive and construction ensures quality while also supporting product stewardship, knowing that these products are routinely recycled at the end of their use, thanks to steel.”

Each year, more steel is recycled than paper, aluminum, plastic and glass combined, maintaining steel’s identity as North America’s most recycled material. This is reflected through the recycling rates of the quality products commonly made with steel.

The recycling rate for steel packaging has also reached an all-time high of 70.8 percent – with more than 1.5 million net tons of steel recycled. Automobile recycling rates have regained balance at 94.5 percent. This figure came after several years in excess of 100 percent – meaning more old cars had been coming off the road than new ones going back onto it.

Appliance recycling remained stable at 90 percent with more than 2.9 million net tons of steel recycled. Construction rates also remained stable with a recycling rate of 98 percent for construction plates and beams along with a rate of 70 percent for construction rebar.

Recycling rates for steel are generally released up to 18 months following the end of the calendar year as they are based on data released from: American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI) Annual Statistical Reports, US Geological Survey, EPA Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste, National Automobile Dealers Association, Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers and the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries.

“While steel continues to be North America’s most recycled material, there is still progress that can be made,” continues Crawford. “Educating recycling coordinators and consumers on the inclusion of materials, especially empty steel aerosol cans, will increase the overall tonnage for the industry. America Recycles Day is a great reminder to all of us that there is more that we can be doing to divert valuable resources from our nation’s landfills.”

America Recycles Day is November 15. The Steel Recycling Institute was a founding member and SRI would like to encourage all consumers to take the pledge to recycle at <http://americarecyclesday.org/pledge/>.

SRI also provides resources to help consumers learn about how and where to recycle their steel products locally. Visit the Steel Recycling Locator at recycle-steel.org for additional information.

“The Steel Recycling Locator is one of the most comprehensive resources for steel recycling available to the public,” says Crawford. “It contains more than 35,000 records that benchmark the recycling infrastructure for all steel products.”

About the Steel Recycling Institute

The Steel Recycling Institute (SRI), a unit of the American Iron and Steel Institute, is an industry association dedicated to communicating the sustainable efforts of the North American steel industry. The SRI educates the solid waste industry, government, business and ultimately the consumer about the benefits of steel’s recycling accomplishments and advancements in sustainability. For more information on the steel industry’s sustainable efforts visit www.recycle-steel.org or www.sustainable-steel.org. Or follow the SRI on Twitter [@EnviroMetal](https://twitter.com/EnviroMetal).