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From A Project To A Recycling Program

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# What is Thumb Industries

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- Thumb Industries, Inc. is a non profit organization and was founded in 1970. We provide job skills training in retail, janitorial, lawn, recycling and manufacturing services to individuals with vocational disabilities. The training provided is to help individuals become more independent. Since 1990, Thumb Industries, Inc. has also provided Employment Placement Services to our clients. Services are provided to individuals living in Huron and Sanilac Counties.
- Our mission: We are dedicated to the development and provision of quality services for persons with vocational disabilities. We believe that personal success and positive employment outcomes can be obtained when persons have informed choices and support in reaching their highest capabilities.

# A Recycling Project

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- Thumb Industries began recycling as a project in spring 2009. The project was based on the interest of our community and a new outlet of job training for the individuals we serve.
- Initially the program only accepted paper and cardboard that Huron County residents personally dropped at our main facility. A 3,000 sq. ft. utility shed behind our main facility served as our “recycling center”.
- In fall of 2010 our project had reached full capacity and outgrew our current building. We presented a plan to Thumb Industries board members, city council and board of commissioners.



# Developing a Recycling Program



- Partnering with the Elkton/Pigeon/Bay Port School District, Thumb Industries secured 2 grants from State Farm totaling \$100,000. This money was used to purchase necessary equipment such as; balers, trailers, shredders, a hi-lo, and a truck to get our recycling program off the ground. Yearly tipping fees received from our local landfill are also used to purchase needed equipment.
- The program served 6 local schools and continued to serve Huron County residents that personally dropped off their recycling. The program was used by local school districts as an educational tool to teach students the value of recycling and to promote recycling in homes.
- As the program continued to grow and evolve, commodities were picked up from local businesses for a modest fee. This not only provided our consumers the opportunity to interact with the public and learn valuable job skills, but also allowed Thumb Industries to increase the commodities collected from our community.
- Thumb Industries contracts with our local Community Mental Health to provide job training/coaching to individuals involved in our recycling program.



# A Community Wide Program

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- Since 2009 our program has grown leaps and bounds. In early 2011 we moved into a 25,0000 sq. ft. warehouse. We began accepting not only paper and cardboard, but also plastics #1 & #2. We offer shredding services. Not only do we accept commodities at our facility, we have trailers stationed at all 6 local schools and provide recycling education to students. Thumb Industries has trailers stationed in 5 communities throughout the county. We pick up recyclables from many local businesses and work with all 6 manufacturing facilities in our community. Since inception, we have kept over 10 million pounds of recyclable material out of our local landfill. Thumb Industries has also been awarded grants through various sources and used revenue to purchase additional equipment to continue to grow. While 10 million pounds may seem small to some, in a county with a population of around 31,000, we see that as a success.



# Continuing to Grow and Thrive

- 2017 marks our biggest year of new initiatives and growth. In October of 2017 we partnered with Emterra to begin processing their recyclables in our county. We also were awarded a grant from the MDEQ to expand our program to 3 additional communities and to purchase additional equipment to process commodities more quickly and efficiently. Through Thumb Industries partnerships and grant funding, we are expecting to increase our commodity intake by 25%, a goal that we look forward to accomplishing.

