New truck brings reliability, color to UAB’s campus recycling efforts

UAB ramped up its recycling efforts four years ago and began providing recycling containers to campus buildings — along with pick-up service of those containers — shortly thereafter.

Since the service began, one of UAB Recycling’s biggest needs has been dependable transportation for pickup and delivery of these recyclable materials.

Now, faithful transportation has arrived.

UAB recently purchased a 2006 F-650 24-foot-box truck that immediately became the largest and best-decorated truck of UAB Recycling’s three-truck fleet. The funds to purchase the vehicle were made available through a 2010 grant awarded by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM). UAB’s partnership with the Jefferson County Health Action Partnerships, which includes the Alabama Environmental Council (AEC), City of Birmingham and Jefferson County Health Department, was a key factor in making the much-needed funds for the vehicle available, says Jon Paolone, UAB’s recycling coordinator.

“This truck has been our biggest need,” Paolone says. “The two trucks we have were graciously donated, and they’ve been put through the paces; they are 1995 and 1997 models. The new truck is nicer-looking, smoother-riding and more reliable.”

The new truck is equipped with air brakes, and it does not require a
Recycling reduces trash, reuses materials and even saves energy. UAB’s containers — located throughout buildings on campus — make it easy to recycle your aluminum cans, plastic bottles and paper.

**Aluminum cans:** Aluminum bins, which include the split containers or 4-foot-tall white cardboard event boxes, accept all aluminum drink cans — but not soup or other food cans, which are typically steel. Those steel cans may be brought to the Recycling Drop-Off Center Mondays only from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.

**Plastic bottles:** Plastic bins (also the split containers or event boxes) accept all #1 and #2 plastic bottles. Check the bottom or side of the bottle to see if yours qualifies; just remember to have all contents emptied before putting the bottle in the bin.

**Paper:** Paper bins (the 96-gallon totes with wheels) accept all forms of paper except sticky labels and their waxy backings and paper that has touched food or beverages such as milk cartons or greasy pizza boxes.

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Commercial driver’s license to operate. Paolone says the truck handles differently from the other two 20-foot vehicles. “The extra four feet in length makes a big difference,” he says. It also has an upper hand in the looks department.

The old trucks are plain white boxes while the new one is decked in green and gold with UAB’s recycling logo, its [www.uab.edu/recycling](http://www.uab.edu/recycling) website address and its partnerships with Recycle Alabama, the AEC and Jefferson County Health Action on display.

“It’s a great billboard for us,” Paolone says. “Now, people driving through Southside will see it. We can take it to Legion Field for a UAB home football game. It's huge. It gives people an opportunity to see what the program is about.”

The truck will be used to empty the 96-gallon totes placed around campus that collect paper and cardboard. At last count, UAB had collected 889,880 pounds of combined paper for fiscal year 2012, with September’s numbers still to be factored into the equation. UAB also recycled 5,920 pounds of cans and 24,480 pounds of plastic during the same time frame. It is estimated the university has saved at least 7,564 trees, 169,077 gallons of oil, 1,779,760 kilowatts of energy, 3,114,580 gallons of water and 1,468,302 cubic yards of landfill space with its recycling efforts during this time frame.

Paolone hopes the new truck will help add to the numbers, and he hopes to add another new truck to the fleet — with a similar UAB wrap around the box — in the not-too-distant future.

“We do hope to get another one through grant funding or with monies in our budget,” Paolone says. “The other trucks have served us well, but we’d like to have another one that’s comfortable and less prone to possible mechanical breakdowns or issues. We
want something the drivers can feel comfortable in and feel good about driving around campus. It helps them take more pride in their jobs and a little more ownership in what they do.”

**More recycling opportunities**

UAB Recycling recently had its 2012 grant approved by ADEM. The new grant will fund 10 more outside bins to add to the 20 Victor-Stanley containers for plastic bottles & aluminum cans located in various spots on campus, including the Campus Green.

“These are specifically outside containers,” Paolone says. “The new ones will go in various high-traffic spots next to trash cans.”

The 2011 grant from ADEM purchased interior split plastic and aluminum containers that have been put in many buildings on campus. UAB Recycling currently provides all participating UAB buildings with recycling containers and empties the containers at the recycling center. If you would like to add your building to UAB’s recycling efforts, or for more information about recycling at UAB, contact Paolone at 996-9043 or recycle@uab.edu.

UAB’s Recycling Center is located at 620 11th Street South and also offers drive-through drop-off services Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. This free service is available to the entire UAB community to recycle materials from home.