

Recycling bins with a message land in Baltimore

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In cities filled with billboards, blaring radios, newsstands and all kinds of grassroots marketing, OutdoorPartner Media Inc. hopes to find its advertising niche in the recycling bin.

In its first foray into a major city, the Toronto-based company has installed 26 recycling PartnerBins across Baltimore during the last month. The bins — with separate sections for recycling and garbage — have been placed at locations with heavy foot traffic throughout the city in an attempt to bring recycling to the pedestrian.

"The program is going great in Baltimore so far," said Ari Huber, president of OutdoorPartner Media. "People are really responding to it. I expect that Baltimore will be a springboard for other metropolitan areas."

Baltimore officials said they are pleased with the public's initial response to the program.

"It appears to be working very well," said Kurt L. Kocher, a spokesman for the city Department of Public Works.

"We don't weigh the trash and recyclable items but we do empty the bins ... and they have been pretty full," Kocher said. "And we have found that people are putting the right things in the right containers, which was our main concern."

OutdoorMedia, founded in 2002, installed its first recycling units at the University of Memphis in Tennessee in 2003. The bins are now found at three college campuses and in four cities: Key West, Knoxville, Tenn., and Baltimore and Ocean City.

The bins, which weigh 350 pounds and hold 90 gallons, were installed at no charge to the city. Instead, Baltimore will make a profit.

OutdoorPartner sells advertising on all four sides of the bin. Revenue generated from the ad sales pays for the bins; the city receives a small portion of the funds.

Depending on the bin's location, ad space on all four sides of the unit costs between \$650 and \$1,000 per month, Huber said. OutdoorPartner screens the advertisements for appropriateness, he said.

"We don't allow any alcohol or tobacco companies to advertise on the bins. It has to be something that you would be able to communicate to a 4-year old," Huber said.

So far, Huber has received a strong response from potential advertisers — mostly hotels, restaurants and small companies in Baltimore.

While Baltimore is the first major city, the bins have been in place in Ocean City for the past 18 months. The beach town has 100 bins in place and plans to install 25 more by next month.

"They are doing great and have been very well received by our tourists," said Bruce Gibbs, a spokesman for the city.

"We have one at every bus stop along Coastal Highway and some in our downtown area," Gibbs said. "I think it is a win-win situation for us. We don't have to handle them, paint them or clean them. All we have to do is dump them out."

OutdoorPartner is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the bins and the municipal government is in charge of disposing of the trash and recyclables.

"They work out well because the bins are no cost to the city and we're taking positive, environmentally conscience steps," Kocher, of Baltimore, said.

"Being the pioneering city that Baltimore is, we are pleased to be one of the first major cities to bring a recycling solution directly to Baltimore," said Mayor Martin O'Malley in a statement.



Fred Marino, an architect with Design Collective Inc., pitches part of a newspaper into a recycling bin in downtown Baltimore. Twenty-six of the bins have been installed in Baltimore by OutdoorPartner Media Inc., which charges as much as \$1,000 for advertising on the bins.