

# Opportunity Development Centers, Inc.

The Wisconsin Environmental  
Working Group® and WMC have recognized  
Opportunity Development Centers, Inc.  
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of the Environment Award Winner.  
The award recognizes companies  
that have demonstrated leadership  
in environmental protection.



Environmental Protection ...  
Wisconsin Industry  
Demonstrating Leadership.

## Opportunity Development Centers, Inc.

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Headquartered in Wisconsin Rapids, Opportunity Development Centers, Inc. (ODC) has worked for more than 40 years to enrich the lives of people with disabilities or other barriers to employment by developing meaningful work opportunities. ODC has accomplished this important mission by providing employment for hundreds of persons with disabilities each year. ODC employees produce a wide array of goods and services to local, regional and national customers, and benefit from additional opportunities through partnerships with businesses in local communities who hire qualified employees through ODC.

ODC, in cooperation with several Wisconsin healthcare laundries, have teamed together to save landfills from medical textile and linen waste by developing a "second life" market for these products. Incontinent pads, blankets, towels and hospital gowns are all being re-cycled and re-used by a "secondary" market of dog show enthusiasts, breeders, exhibitors, rescue groups and humane societies.

ODC undertook the project because significant quantities of solid textile and linen waste from healthcare laundries, hospitals, and hotels were being deposited in landfills. Once they determined that there were multiple sources for these types of textiles and linens, it was ODC's challenge to come up with a new secondary consumer market and alternate use for these items. The ODC marketing and sales team concluded that the products did have a "second life" in alternative markets that primarily included pet owners, dog show exhibitors, breeders, rescue groups and humane societies.

A unique business partnership joined the need to find an alternative use for discarded textiles and linens with a need to find employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The initiative is unique because it involves developing

a secondary market for the used textiles that is capable of sustaining jobs and employment for people with disabilities. The start up for this initiative was supported with a Waste Reduction and Recycling Demonstration Grant through the State DNR.

ODC set a goal in 2007 of diverting 20 tons of solid textile and linen waste from landfills throughout the year. They shattered their goal. The dedicated efforts of ODC employees resulted in the diversion of 36.6 tons of textile and linen waste, and saved over 73,197 of pounds of medical textiles and linens from burdening the landfills by creating an innovative secondary market for these products. ODC converted literally tons of used blankets, towels, incontinent pads and other textiles into useful products for pet enthusiasts, while providing meaningful and rewarding job opportunities for persons with disabilities.

### **For more information on environmental innovation efforts at Opportunity Development Centers, Inc., please contact:**

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### **For more information on how your company can benefit from environmental protection programs, please contact:**

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