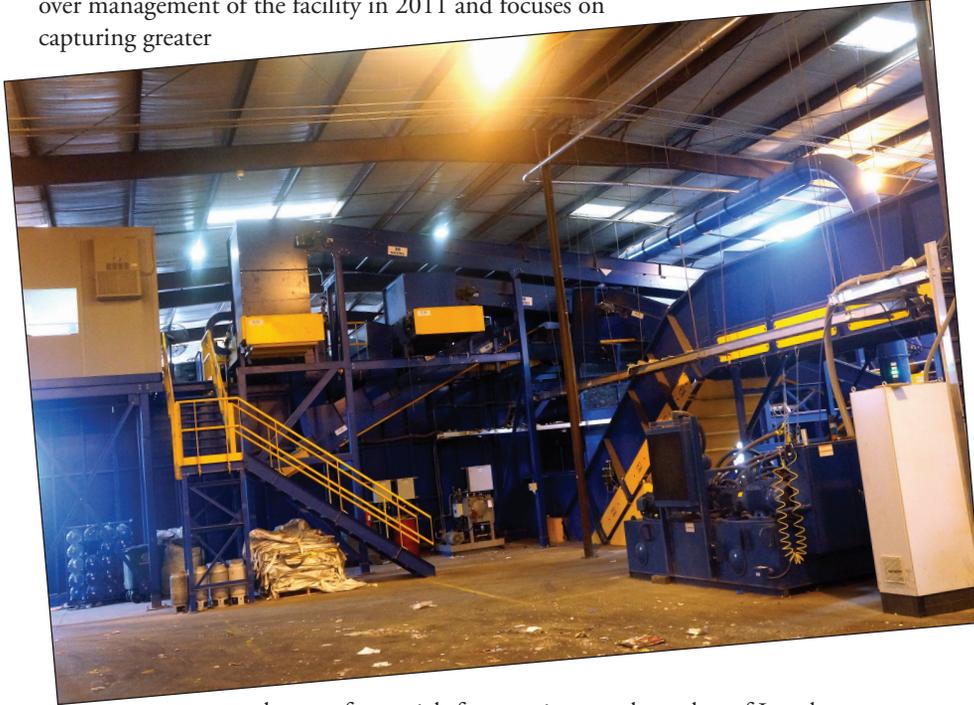


# MRF of the Month

## City of Laredo Material Recovery Facility

The famed Western ballad “Streets of Laredo” tells the story of a young cowboy who was shot and killed after a game of cards. Modern day Laredo retains little of its border town roots and is now, for instance, the number one inland port along the U.S.-Mexico border. And thanks to the City of Laredo MRF, recyclables processing is no gamble.

Built in 1995, the MRF first handled a blue bag system for recyclables collected in the city of 245,000 residents, and the commodities were manually sorted. First Recycling took over management of the facility in 2011 and focuses on capturing greater



volumes of materials from an increased number of Laredans.

“After two years of benchmark studies,” according to Luis Jaimes of First Recycling, “the City of Laredo was firmly convinced to invest in an automated single-stream system.”

The processing setup was designed and installed by Machinex Industries, and the 30,000-square-foot facility, which started operation in October 2013, can handle 15 tons per hour and manages a material stream that is approximately 80 percent fiber and 20 percent containers.



## Technical Specifications

### City of Laredo Material Recovery Facility

**Location:**

Laredo, Texas

**Start-up date:**

1995, grand re-opening in October 2013

**Number of processing lines:**

One

**Throughput:**

15 tons per hour

**Tons of material expected to be processed in 2014:**

11,000

**Contamination rate:**

24 percent



Another portion of the recycling investment by the City of Laredo brought on new 96-gallon rollcarts, which allowed for automated curbside collection of recyclables from the city's 55,000 households.

The bulk of recyclables are from the residential single-stream collection program in Laredo, and the City is also working to expand commercial collection of recyclables in the coming years. Administrators will be looking into the possibility of including other materials as well.

In the years before being revamped, the City of Laredo MRF collected an average of 3,200 tons of material annually, but that total is expected to grow to 11,000 tons in the first calendar year of the reconfigured operation. The local recycling program has seen participation go up, and the installation of the new MRF equipment has led to a drop in the facility's contamination rate, from 32 percent to 24 percent.

First Recycling representatives say reducing the contamination ratio continues to be a priority, and alongside the Laredo Solid Waste Services department, the company is performing systematic outreach and education. Sylvia Garza, recycling coordinator for the City of Laredo, spearheads programs that include MRF tours, schools outreach, a Recycling Day fair and other initiatives to encourage public participation in recycling.

The City of Laredo Material Recovery Facility has 25 employees running one shift, five days a week.

