



For Immediate Release

ATHENS SERVICES & DIRECT PACK, INC. PARTNERSHIP IS KEEPING PLASTIC PACKAGING OUT OF LANDFILLS THROUGH COORDINATED RECYCLING EFFORTS



An Athens Services employee shows off bales of post-consumer PET plastic food packaging containers collected and sorted at the company's Sun Valley, CA, materials recycling facility.

Under a cooperative agreement with Athens, Direct Pack, Inc., buys, reclaims, brings the material back to food grade status, and then turns it into new food packaging at its Sun Valley thermoforming facility.

- *Athens Services and Direct Pack, Inc. (DPI), both with locations in Sun Valley, CA, are working together to increase the amount of PET plastic containers being reclaimed and recycled in the greater Los Angeles Area*
- *Athens Services collects approximately 235,000 tons of recyclables annually from more than 40 communities that it serves*
- *Direct Pack Inc. is a leading producer of custom food packaging and owns Direct Pack Recycling (DPR), capable of reclaiming 20,000 tons of PET plastic annually and turning it into new food packaging products.*

SUN VALLEY, Calif. – A year ago, Athens Services (Athens) and Direct Pack, Inc. (DPI) entered into an expanded cooperative arrangement to recycle and reclaim PET plastic food containers. By working together, the two companies have created a “Full Circular” business model. Athens collects, sorts, and bales post-consumer PET food packaging at their Sun Valley Materials Recovery Facility (MRF). DPI buys, reclaims, brings the material back to food grade status, and then turns it into new food packaging at its Sun Valley thermoforming facility.

This full circle reduces the amount of food packaging going into landfills, and the need for new raw materials. It reduces the carbon emissions and ultimately the impact of plastic on the environment. Recycling is even more important today as the demand for take-out containers and food packaging has grown exponentially during COVID in California and the rest of the country.

Athens, DPI, and the agriculture and food service packaging community have been increasing their focus on educating consumers on the sustainability of PET packaging. Food packaging made from PET with the #1 symbol on the bottom is made from the same DNA as PET bottles.

“It is more important than ever for DPI and everyone in the food packaging industry to work toward making PET plastic a valuable infinite resource that we can use over and over again - reducing the impact of plastic on the planet and being part of the solution for future generations,” said Craig Snedden, President of Direct Pack, Inc. “This is only possible with continued commitment from individuals and families to recycle their packaging, and the support from our waste diversion partners, like Athens Services, to help us reclaim this material for renewing and reuse.”

Athens Services is investing heavily in technology such as optical sorters and artificial intelligence to make the work environment safer and more efficient, as well as to improve the quality of recycled material.

When the collaboration with Direct Pack started, Athens was processing at its Sun Valley MRF one to two tons of clamshells per month. Today, the volume is up to more than 21 tons per month. About 9 percent of all the plastic that is collected and baled at the Sun Valley MRF is clamshells.

“Our goal is to find a home for everything. Working with Direct Pack we have found a domestic – even a local - home for containers that otherwise would have ended up in a landfill,” said Riel Johnson, Director of Resource Recovery for Athens.

By working efficiently with the different cities it serves to communicate to consumers that PET packaging is recyclable, Athens has contributed to more consumers putting the used containers in the recycling bin. Educating consumers on the direct impact they are having by participating in the full circular process, by selecting sustainable materials and recycling them, has locally led to a significant increase in materials being recovered.

Last year, DPI acquired Direct Pack Recycling (DPR), where the company now has the annual capacity to reprocess 20,000 tons of PET and rPET plastic, bringing bottles and food packaging back to food grade status, providing the material to manufacture new agriculture and foodservice containers.

“You might not recognize it but the packaging we recycle and reprocess today could become the packaging that holds your salad, berries or sandwich a month from now. Together we can keep that full circular process going,” said Snedden.

Like Athens, DPI is actively supporting partners in educating consumers about recycling. A recently created animation explains how PET food packaging and PET bottles share the same DNA and can be recycled together: [view here](#).

About Athens Services

Athens Services is a recycling and waste diversion leader in Southern California. Family-owned and operated since 1957, Athens was founded on the simple principle of providing exceptional service, by hiring and developing great people, while fostering a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment - that's The Athens Way. Today, Athens Services teams up with local communities, as well as private institutions and government agencies as their zero waste partner. For more information, please visit: www.athensservices.com.

About Direct Pack, Inc.

Direct Pack, Inc. is a leader in sustainable, customized and innovative thermoformed food packaging, with a passion to truly understand customer needs and translate them into sustainable and outstanding design solutions. Since the company's 2006 founding in Sun Valley, CA, our team of experts has designed some of the most innovative packaging in the market today; ensuring that there is always a strong focus on visual aesthetic, functionality and environmental sustainability. Direct Pack, Inc. is a subsidiary of PMC Global, Inc. For more information, please visit: <https://www.directpackinc.com>

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