



Official from As You Sow Tours Electronic Recyclers International

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Fresno-based Electronic Recyclers International, the largest electronic waste recycler in North America, welcomed a special visitor last week when Conrad MacKerron, senior program director of non-profit As You Sow, toured its state-of-the-art facilities to see firsthand ERI's environmentally-safe operations.

Highlights from the tour included an up-close look at the world's largest e-waste crusher, the plant's electric forklifts, energy efficient lighting, recycled office furniture and the sales team's fleet of hybrid cars – all aspects that show ERI is truly a green business.

As You Sow is an organization that promotes environmental and social corporate responsibility, and over the years has impacted major corporations including Apple, Best Buy, Dell, Walt Disney, McDonald's, General Electric, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, Target, Gap Inc., and Home Depot. Chairman and CEO of ERI John Shegerian called MacKerron one of the "visionary pioneers" of the e-waste industry, and that he is responsible for influencing such large companies to strengthen their environmental policies and practices years ago.

"It's due to the work of people like Conrad MacKerron that pressed the electronics industry to take responsibility for end-of-life goods that ERI is even in existence," Shegerian said last week. "So to have him come here today, and to see some of the fruits of his and his great organization As You Sow's labor is a big day for ERI."

MacKerron founded the As You Sow Corporate Social Responsibility Program in 1997. In order to carry out its mission, As You Sow partners with shareholders in publicly traded companies, using shareholder dialogue and advocacy to encourage them to adopt stronger environmental and social policies and practices. As You Sow's work not only helps to preserve the environment, but big electronic brands can also financially benefit from their modified ways of doing business.

"We're very happy that over the years brands like Apple and Dell made commitments to us to recycle certain specific levels of their end-of-life materials, their electronics," MacKerron said. As You Sow was instrumental in pressing Best Buy, the largest U.S. electronics retailer, to offer in-store take back of e-waste nationwide for free.

MacKerron said there are always different reasons for As You Sow to become involved in corporations. They often concentrate on leading brands, ones with household names like HP, Dell,

Apple, McDonald's and Disney, which can result in broader impact. They then take into consideration risk or exposure to liability for an issue they are engaging them on (factors may include child labor or air or water pollution).

"We're shareholders, and we're part owners, so we want to reduce reputational risk and resolving these issues will reduce their reputational risk," MacKerron said.

MacKerron applauded ERI for its strong commitment as a leading practitioner of the e-Stewards Standard for Responsible Recycling and Reuse of Electronic Equipment .

As You Sow is currently engaging Walmart and Target, who sell a large volume of electronics, to take back e-waste, similar to what Best Buy is doing. When these stores develop in-store take back policies, MacKerron hopes they use an e-Stewards recycler to process the old equipment.

"Working with great people and great organizations like Conrad MacKerron and As You Sow is where our great work is going to go and really make greater things happen and change the world more than we ever have before," Shegerian said.

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