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Arizona State University

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Even private universities with large endowments struggle to fund environmental initiatives. This struggle can keep an institution from seeking out new solutions, assuming that cost will be an impediment. For Arizona State University officials, who had trouble keeping their campus litter-free, both the solution and the funding were discovered in an unusual place – a soda can.

### Willing Sponsor

Hoping to encourage the recycling of its products, Pepsi Co. approached ASU with a novel idea: solar-powered compaction. In the fall of 2006, Pepsi donated six *BigBelly*<sup>®</sup> solar compactors to the university, sporting

ASU’s red and orange colors and large recycling logos on their sides. Not only do the compactors encourage recycling, with their enclosed tops and innovative design, they also reduce the university’s carbon footprint by decreasing the number of times the university needs to drive around, emptying trash containers.



### Great Solution

“The machines are working great for the university,” said Ted Woods, ASU’s refuse coordinator. “They’re very attractive and people really use them. We only have to empty them intermittently, and there’s no maintenance – we don’t have to worry about them at all. I’m a believer now.”

Prior to switching to the *BigBelly* compactors, ASU crews were emptying the trash every day. Today, the compactors are emptied only every three or four days. That’s great news for institutions hoping to purchase *BigBelly* compactors without outside funding, as the machines pay for themselves over time in reduced labor and fuel costs. Woods also reports that odor problems have been dramatically reduced and the enclosed design has eliminated the bee problem they had with the old trash cans.

Following this initial success, ASU purchased an additional 10 *BigBelly* units in June 2008. The university has a "Go Green" initiative that requires all new buildings to be LEED Certified, and includes efforts to install solar panels on rooftops, expand the recycling program, and add a new composting program. The *BigBelly* is a natural fit for their campus, and Woods plans to acquire more solar compactors for trash and recycling.

### Doing More with Less

As is true with many facilities and maintenance departments, Woods finds himself being asked to do more with less. “I’m short 18 people, and we are now responsible for our recycling program – which is good, but it requires more time.” By saving time and reducing demand for trash collection, the *BigBelly* system allows Woods and his team to be more efficient and allocate valuable time to tasks like recycling rather than trash collection.