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DEP chief celebrates 30 years of recycling in New Jersey

NJDEP Commissioner Bob Martin yesterday celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the enactment of the New Jersey's Recycling Law.

He addressed an overflow crowd at the Spring Meeting of ANJR, the Association of New Jersey Recyclers, held at the Rutgers Eco-Complex in Burlington County.

The commissioner noted that the Recycling Act-- the nation's first-- had set a recycling goal of 50 percent for all municipal solid waste. New Jersey has never been able to surpass 40 percent but Martin said his department is committed to enhancing household recycling and is implementing several initiatives, including a new web app that will make it easier for residents to participate by clarifying what materials can be recycled and what cannot, on county-by-county basis.

The DEP also is moving to increase recycling inspections in conjunction with County Environmental Health Agencies, he said.

Martin also hailed the recent enactment of legislation that updates and extends a state law governing the recycling of such electronic products as used computers and televisions. He said that the amendments are expected to further increase the recycling of so-called 'e-waste' which had already posted a sizable collection increase last year-- from 46 million pounds to 53 million pounds.

Taking a bow for his role in recycling was former legislator Paul Contillo who sponsored the Recycling Act in the state Senate. Arthur Albohn, deceased, was the bill's sponsor in the Assembly.

Contillo's daughter, Angela Andersen, the recycling coordinator in Long Beach Township, also addressed her recycling colleagues, encouraging them to continue to build on the recycling foundation established by many others, including her father.

Sending messages of congratulations were former Gov. Tom Kean, who signed the recycling legislation into law, and Mary Sheil who was a driving force behind recycling in its early years at the NJDEP.

At the business meeting that preceded the commissioner's address, ANJR applauded outgoing president Dominick D'Altilio for years of service and elected former NJDEP Recycling Chief Guy Watson as its new president.