

Friday June 25, 2010

SITE SEARCH

Search input field with a 'GO' button

News Archive Search

# WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

www.wasterecyclingnews.com

SIGN UP FOR WRN E-MAILS

facebook Become our fan



Open for Business! Waste & Recycling News' Brand New Online Buyers Guide

## WRN@15



### EDITORIAL

Home/News

Data & Research Center **NEW**

Landfill Report

Residential Recycling Report

Scrap Report

Photo Gallery

Special Reports

Departments

Opinion

Archives

### RESOURCES

Buyers Guide

Environmental Library

Commodity Pricing

Classifieds **NEW**

WRN CONFERENCES **NEW**

WRN WEBINARS **NEW**

### ABOUT US

Advertising/ Services

Subscribe

Contact Us



## Texas recycler strong up the middle

By Allan Gerlat

Joel and Craig Litman are a good double-play combination.

The brothers and co-owners of Texas Recycling/Surplus Inc. explain a lot of their business philosophy with sports metaphors. "The shortstop doesn't always look to see if the second baseman's there, he knows he'll be there," said President Joel.

"It's a team game," adds Vice President Craig. "We win or lose as a team."

The Dallas-based company, though, has always been powered by Team Litman. Father Stanley was an industrial chemicals salesman before buying a paper and rag recycling business, Daltex Waste Material Co., in the early 1980s. Joel was working in public relations and advertising when he joined his dad in 1984. Craig, a certified public accountant, came on board five years later. "I saw it as an opportunity to be in the family business, and eventually hoped we'd own it one day," Joel said.

Stanley sold the business to a private investor in 1992. "The three of us wanted to stay together," Joel said. The Litmans saw the recycling business as having "a lot of opportunity, not a coat-and-tie job." They started Texas Recycling four months later.

"There was the three of us, a card table, cell phone, four folding chairs and 30,000 foot warehouse with not one scrap of paper," Craig said. "But a lot of people remembered us, how we did business," Joel said. "We had slow growth, but steady."

The company, which primarily recycles paper, grew to 75 employees with

TAKE THE WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS POLL  
Poll results | Submit comment  
Past polls





**SUGGEST SITE IMPROVEMENT**

Do you have an idea for a way we can make wasterecyclingnews.com better? Please submit it [here](#).

**OPINION**

- Smart move
- Stabilizing the system
- Winning combination
- This week's cartoon



**2010 HAULING AND DISPOSAL SURVEY**

Waste & Recycling News is accepting the 2010 Hauler and Disposal Survey. The deadline is June 18, 2010. To fill out the survey online, click [here](#).

**SUBMIT STORY IDEAS**

Have an idea for a story that you think Waste & Recycling News should cover? Submit story ideas [here](#).

**RSS FEED**

For up-to-the-minute news delivered automatically to your desktop [click here](#).

annual sales of \$12 million to \$15 million. But the values have remained the same, the brothers say.

Their prior professions helped forge those values. "We brought these skills over to the recycling business," Joel said. "I think that's what has helped make us successful over the years." Those values the brothers talk about over and over again -- communication, integrity, trust, relationships.

Stanley passed away in 2004, but many of his values remain with the sons. "He always had a very positive attitude toward everybody," Joel said. Craig added, "He pounded into Joel and I, 'be aware of your surroundings.'"

An example of their emphasis on relationships is how they answer the phones. "You can't call here and get voice mail," Craig said. "You never will. We believe in talking to a person."

Texas Recycling also established a public buyback program, which involves the company paying individuals who bring recyclable materials to the firm. "We look at it as a retail operation, and it's an opportunity to get face time with the customer," Joel said.

Running the family business generates perhaps extra pride but also extra trust between the brothers. "We cover each other's back," Joel said. "We're not only brothers, we're best friends. That helps a lot.

"We don't keep score. When we were growing up we shared a room, so we learned how to work it out."

The challenges continue. "Business has changed in the last couple years," Joel said. "It's gotten more aggressive." Waste generation and margins are down. Getting more efficient and staying focused are big challenges.

While Joel says, "there's always going to be paper," he acknowledges that market is mature, so they look for new opportunities. The company recycles plastic, sees a big future in electronic waste, and growth as well in shredding. Texas Recycling's Action Shred is a document destruction operation that involves much more than paper -- from hard drives, credit cards and T-shirts, to name-brand purses and dog betting supplies. "There are some odd things that come up, and we say, why not," Craig said.

The pride the brothers feel for their business is intertwined with how they view recycling. "We're very passionate about it," Joel said. "You're doing good for the environment, the community."

Adds Craig: "It makes you feel good when you tell people what you're doing, and they get excited about it." *fn*

Contact Waste & Recycling News editor Allan Gerlat at 330-865-6167 or [agerlat@crain.com](mailto:agerlat@crain.com)

EMAIL THIS STORY | PRINTER FRIENDLY | ORDER REPRINTS

**MOST POPULAR STORIES**

**This Week's Top Stories**

- Waste Pro USA makes two acquisitions in Miss., N.C.
- Calif.'s recycling program gets low marks from auditor
- Public comment sought on EPA's strategic 5-year plan
- Scrap LCD films can treat, prevent infections in hospitals
- Ariz. city looks for ways to convert waste into energy

**This Year's Most Popular Stories**

- Billionaire increases investment in Republic Services
- WM's chief operating officer resigns to pursue next goal
- Hooters Girls donate pantyhose to clean up Gulf spill
- Waste Pro makes largest acquisition in company history
- WM invest in organics recycling facilities in U.S., Canada

# WASTE & RECYCLING NEWS

**CLASSIFIEDS  
ON-LINE**

Entire contents copyright 2010 by Crain Communications Inc. All rights reserved. | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)