

An Award-Winning Partnership: Toro and Iowa Waste Exchange Create Lasting Community Benefits



Toro's Ankeny distribution facility has an established commitment to waste reduction, recycling, and resource conservation. Its longstanding partnership with Iowa Waste Exchange (IWE) builds on that commitment by turning surplus canvas textiles into resources that support nonprofit services, people facing hardship, and hands-on reuse education.

IWE nominated Toro for Recycling Business of the Year, an honor the company received October 6, 2026, at the Iowa Recycling & Solid Waste Management Conference in Davenport. The award recognizes Toro's sustained environmental efforts and community partnerships developed through years of collaboration with IWE.

Guided by the waste management hierarchy and its sustainability goals, Toro prioritizes waste prevention and source reduction. When surplus textiles remain, Toro actively pursues reuse and recycling opportunities, making every effort to preserve their value and keep them out of landfills. IWE Program Coordinator and Area Resource Specialist Shelly Codner supports these efforts by evaluating materials, developing recovery outlets, and connecting surplus with community needs.

Through the partnership, surplus canvas textiles become canvas zipper bags filled with personal care and hygiene supplies for people experiencing homelessness and hardship, or school supplies for youth in need. IWE also uses the bags in hands-on reuse activities in classrooms, senior centers, and other community organizations. Participants

personalize the bags with colorful designs and fill them with essential supplies to give back to their communities. Toro's contributions make these learning and giving opportunities possible.

For textiles unsuitable for reuse, IWE has been working directly with Iowa State University's textile composting research under the direction of Dr. Rachel Eike, an associate professor in the Department of Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management. The research examines how different fabrics break down during composting, their potential to retain heat in compost piles, and their effects on soil nutrients and quality. This collaboration explores additional recovery options for challenging textiles.

Toro's willingness to consider new uses and make materials available extends its environmental commitment beyond the facility. Supported by IWE's technical assistance and community connections, these efforts conserve resources, strengthen nonprofit services, and demonstrate the lasting benefits of a sustained partnership.



IWE, a program of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources administered by Region XII Council of Governments, provides free, confidential, non-regulatory assistance to help Iowa businesses and organizations reduce waste and find productive uses for surplus materials.

For more information, visit www.iowawasteexchange.org or contact Shelly Codner at scodner@region12cog.org or (319) 404-1942.

Learn more about Toro's commitment to sustainability in its [2025 Global Sustainability Impact Report](#).