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## MDI HIRED HANDS TRANSITIONS AWAY FROM RECYCLING SERVICES

Jan 26, 2020

### *Waste Management to directly provide services to Itasca County*

MDI Hired Hands has announced that it is discontinuing its recycling business with the last day of collection being March 31. MDI is a non-profit organization with a mission to ‘serve people with disabilities by offering inclusive employment opportunities and services’. The organization has been in the recycling business since 1989, and the recycling work has provided many job opportunities for people with disabilities. All employees with disabilities currently working in recycling will be transferred to other work in MDI’s Cohasset facility. The primary reason for exiting recycling is due to prolonged and record low commodity prices for the recyclables, making the recycling process unsustainable using manual sorting processes.

“Due to record low commodity prices, discontinuing recycling services is the best option for our employees at MDI Hired Hands,” says Peter McDermott, MDI’s president and CEO. “We are incredibly grateful for the community’s support over the years, and we will continue to offer people with and without disabilities opportunities in Northern Minnesota.”

With similar missions and values, Deer River Hired Hands affiliated with MDI in 2013 to become MDI Hired Hands. The organization has been a sub-contractor to Waste Management in collecting recyclables from the county canister sites for many years. Effective March 2, MDI Hired Hands will no longer service the Itasca County canister sites and has reached an agreement to discontinue the sub-contract with Waste Management. The canister sites will remain open with the current hours of operation and will be serviced directly by Waste Management.

MDI Hired Hands employees will continue to provide recycling drop-off services at SuperOne Foods South in Grand Rapids, in partnership with Waste Management. This is a free service to all Itasca County residents and is available every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Collected recyclable materials will go to the transfer station and be processed by Waste Management at their Twin Cities recycling facility.

“We appreciate the opportunity to continue to work with MDI and support their mission of providing jobs for people with disabilities,” said Randy Ott, District Operations Manager at Waste Management. MDI also noted that Waste Management has been a good partner to both Hired Hands and MDI over the years.

On March 31st, MDI Hired Hands will make their last commercial pick-ups. Once all material is processed, the recycling line will shut down in MDI’s Cohasset facility. Commercial customers are being notified and will need to seek alternative services for recycling collection.

