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EPA and GSA Administrators Toured Blue Star Recyclers On America Recycles Day

November 16, 2011. Colorado Springs, CO – Blue Star Recyclers welcomed Sue Damour, Regional Administrator for the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), Mike Shanahan, Chief of Staff for Region 8 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Annie Oatman-Gardner, Regional Director for U.S. Senator Michael Bennet to their facility on America Recycles Day. The GSA and EPA are part of the Interagency Task Force on Electronics Stewardship that developed the National Strategy for Electronics Stewardship (www.epa.gov/wastes/consERVE/materials/eycling/taskforce/). The Strategy promotes improved sustainability and optimizing Federal Government management of electronics lifecycle resources.

Blue Star Recyclers was chosen for the visit because the company creates local jobs for people with disabilities by recycling electronics. In just two years, Blue Star grew from 1 to 15 employees and 11 have some developmental disability. The tour coincided with the team reaching a landmark goal of recycling one million pounds of electronics this year. Nationally, electronics recycling is down 20% but Blue Star almost doubled its volume over the prior year. “We credit our growth to the positive response from the Colorado Springs community. When people learn they can help create local jobs for people with disabilities, they expand their electronics recycling efforts,” said Bill Morris, President of Blue Star Recyclers. Every additional 20,000 pounds per month of electronics the company recycles allows them to create a new job for a disabled adult.

Ms. Damour told the group the GSA is responsible for purchasing \$14 billion of products and services a year, including electronics. “We strive for elimination of waste and increasing sustainability. I’m really impressed with the way Blue Star recaptures valuable resources by recycling electronics and creates new jobs at the same time,” she said. Chief of Staff Shanahan told Blue Star employees, “Thank you for going to work each day to keep our environment clean. EPA is on your side in becoming better stewards of the environment and recycling electronics locally.”

Blue Star Recyclers is a 501(c)(3) social enterprise with a mission to ethically recycle electronics as a way to create jobs for adults with developmental disabilities. Employees de-manufacture and separate computer components for further processing by Certified electronics recycling organizations. Since its launch in November of 2009, Blue Star has ethically recycled over 1.5 million pounds of potentially hazardous electronic waste. More information at www.bluestarrecyclers.com, or call Laura Chickering at 719.464.4285.

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