

## A NEW BALER BRINGS EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY TO GREEN LIFE WASTE & RECYCLING, BURLINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA.

BY MARK MCDONALD



# Embracing efficiency

**G**reen Life Waste & Recycling, Burlington, North Carolina, is a commercial and industrial waste hauling and recycling operation that was founded by brothers Justin and Wayne Moody in 2009. In addition to accepting material trucked to its recycling

facility by customers, Green Life offers roll-off and tractor-trailer collection services and hauls recyclables to its 25,000-square-foot plant, which is housed in a converted textile mill from the early 20th century.

Green Life provides its services in the Triad and Triangle areas of North Carolina,

which include Winston-Salem, Greensboro, Burlington, Raleigh and Durham.

Green Life has quickly grown from a “two brother” operation to a workforce that includes four drivers, three recycling floor staff, an office manager and a new outside sales representative.



### THE BARE MINIMUM

Like many upstarts in the waste and recycling industry, Green Life started with minimal equipment.

“When we opened our doors, we had one downstroke baler, a forklift and a dream,” says Wayne Moody, now a six-year veteran of the recycling business.

However, Green Life’s volume grew by more than 600 percent between 2014 and 2015, and the difficulty of operating without the proper equipment quickly proved to be time consuming, inefficient, dangerous and, according to Justin Moody, “downright painful.”

Justin continues, “We went from having one downstroke baler to two; but, then volume grew so quickly, we had to add a small horizontal auto tie.”

However, even the addition of a third baler didn’t eliminate the growing pains the Moody brothers encountered.

“In addition to our balers being unable to keep up with the volume of material we were receiving, much of the material coming in was too large for our balers to bale, we couldn’t easily change material grades, our labor costs were going through the roof due to being so inefficient and, last but not least, we had huge safety issues with our horizontal baler,” Justin adds.

“We had grown so quickly in the past few years that I had to figure out how to work smarter rather than harder,” he says.

### ADDRESSING INEFFICIENCIES

In late 2014, Justin contacted Catawba Baler & Equipment LLC (CB&E) for advice.

CB&E is a custom recycling equipment manufacturer headquartered in Greensboro, North Carolina, with its primary manufacturing facility and service center in Statesville, North Carolina.

Put simply, Green Life had too many small balers, a conveyor that was too small and too many employees stepping over one another to manually feed the machines.

With the three smaller balers, Green Life baled approximately 400 tons of material in roughly 180 hours per month and normally had more than 200 tons of material left unbaled on trailers and stacked outside in its yard.



Pictured, from left: Justin Moody of Green Life Waste & Recycling of North Carolina, Mark McDonald of Catawba Baler & Equipment and Wayne Moody of Green Life

In addition to not being able to keep up with the incoming volume of recyclables, Green Life employed six people to offload, bale, clear jams and move material. Each day, and often multiple times per day, Green Life employees had to use a metal pole to push recyclables into the horizontal baler to unjam the machine and get it running again.

What Green Life was in desperate need of was a single baling system that could easily change material grades, one that had the feed opening and horsepower to handle the company’s volume and, most importantly, a safe machine.

After several weeks of repeated trips to Green Life, along with analyzing its varied incoming paper, plastic and nonferrous metals, I recommended a machine from CB&E’s Gold Rush Series two-ram baler line, with its patent pending automatic jam-clearing technology.

“There were many days, and multiple times per day, that we had to lock and tag out our horizontal baler so that either a floor worker, Justin or I would have to climb on the machine and down into the charge chamber to pull out material and unjam the baler,” Wayne says.

### PUTTING IT TOGETHER

In June 2015, Green Life installed a twin 75-horsepower two-ram baler with a 60-inch-by-120-foot rubber belt infeed conveyor. The installation was led by

**Today, Green Life is baling more than 1,000 tons of paper, plastic and soft metals per month with one machine and three fewer employees on the floor.**

CB&E co-owner and Gold Rush baler inventor Kevin Burt.

Burt, with more than 30 years’ experience manufacturing and repairing balers, was happy to see a 5-ton baler and conveyor fit into a building that initially was designed to accommodate multiple small knitting machines.

“We got really lucky on this install because old textile buildings just weren’t designed for this type of system,” Burt says. “But, with great collaboration between the landlord, Green Life and CBE engineers, we were able to make it fit and function well,” he continues.

The installation took three days to complete, and CB&E and Green Life’s employees worked long days to ensure the recycling plant was out of commission for as little time as possible.

With the install and startup completed, Green Life began baling the 400-plus tons of material that had accumulated over the preceding three months. After only three days of continuous feeding and baling with its new two ram, Green Life was caught up.

“We estimated Green Life baled 18 tons per hour, eight hours per day, for three days to catch up,” Burt says.

Today, Green Life is baling more than 1,000 tons of paper, plastic and soft metals per month with one machine and three fewer employees on the floor.

According to Justin, Green Life now bales more material in far less time, with

fewer people and in a much safer manner. "If the machine jams, we just push a button, and the jammed material is cleared out of the machine quickly. We have reduced our need to lock out and tag out due to jams by 9 percent since the new baler was installed, which reduces our safety paper work requirements," he adds.

In addition, Justin says he estimates that his company has saved more than \$30,000 in the past few months because Green Life has not had to spend time unjamming its baler, nor has the company had to handle

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material multiple times to make room for incoming material.

"It's hard to convince yourself to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a new system and new technology," Justin says. "I'll admit, my brother and I both had sleepless nights and lunches together where not much was said after we pulled the trigger on buying our new system. But at the end of the day, it was the best investment this company has ever made, and we still have over 2,000 tons per month of available capacity."

He adds, "I'm not sure I would stay in this business if I had to go back to our old manual balers—it was just too hard of a way to make a living, and now I can focus on bringing in more tons instead of fighting with equipment." **rt**

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\* Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) reports over 40 recycling baler fatalities and 70 serious injuries since 1990.

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