

BIR World Recycling Convention: Emphasizing education

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BIR President Tom Bird emphasizes the need to point out the economic and environmental benefits of the recycling industry.

Tom Bird, the chief operating officer at Chiho Environmental Group, Hong Kong, set out his key priorities as the president of the Bureau of International Recycling (BIR), Brussels, in his first convention address in this role. He spoke before delegates of the BIR World Recycling Convention Round-Table Sessions, which took place Oct. 13-15 in Budapest, Hungary.

Among Bird's priorities are membership expansion and developing a close working relationship with the media to promote the environmental, economic and social contributions of the recycling industry. He also identified the need to make BIR the "go-to" organization for facts and figures relating to the recycling industry.

The event attracted more than 900 participants, according to a news release issued by the BIR.

"Recycling still has an image that needs improving, and we really need to promote the positive contribution our industry makes," Bird said. "We will be updating all the figures in this area so we have the info to hand that will enable us to better argue our case. Our figures on the ferrous market are excellent, but I believe we should offer more in other areas."

Bird stressed the need for education, adding that that is "one of the reasons why BIR created the Global Recycling Foundation. We will work more closely with the foundation, and BIR will be looking at education programs relating to our sector. We will be working to see what we can do to educate a wider audience of the role of recycling" he said.

His other goals include creating a global database of recyclers and "strong initiatives" to ensure that BIR "expands its presence to new countries and regions of the world."

Describing himself as "passionate" about recycling, Bird stressed his desire to make BIR more visible and to place the organization at the forefront of the environmental debate. "In doing so," he said, "BIR will be in a better position to represent its members and, most importantly, attract new members. Members need to feel that their voices are being heard, that their interests are being represented and that, ultimately, they are receiving value for money."

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