

## **Ireland Recycles More Than Twice the Weight of its Population**

- **Enough glass recycled to create a giant glass marble almost the height of the Dublin spire**
- **603,000 tonnes of packaging recycled resulting in the equivalent of 463,000 tonnes of Carbon Savings.**
- **220 million glass bottles, 3.7 billion cereal boxes, 214 million cans and one billion plastic drinks bottles equivalent recycled**
- **Nearly 3 million tonnes of used packaging recycled in last 10 years the equivalent of 600,000 elephants**
- **€23 million invested in supporting packaging recycling by Repak in 2006**
- **Household package recycling climbs by 24%**
- **€45 million needed by 2011 to fund packaging recycling**
- **Household Packaging recycling rates at c41%, overall packaging recycling at 64%**
- **Repak funding recycling collections through supporting 935,000 households kerbsides, 2,200 bring banks and nearly 90 recycling centres.**

**Dublin; Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2007:** Repak's 2006 results which were announced today show a significant increase in packaging recycling from 565,000 tonnes in 2005 to 603,000 tonnes recycled in 2006. This equates to the average weight of 8.8 million people which is more than double the population of Ireland and has resulted in equivalent of 463,000 tonnes of carbon savings.

During the year household packaging recycling tonnages rose by 24% from 2005. While this is a significant increase it only represents just 29% of all recovered

packaging but in fact accounts for 70% of the total Repak support funding. The results this year also show a 12% increase in glass recycling which reflects the increase in the use of Bring Banks.

In total for 2006:

- 111,283 tonnes of glass was recycled which equates to approximately 214 million wine bottles or one giant glass marble 100 metres in diameter
- 276,507 tonnes of paper and cardboard was recycled which equates to 3.7 billion cereal boxes or the same as one giant box 37km high and 37 km wide able to hold 51million giant glass marbles inside.
- 52,841 tonnes of plastic equivalent to 1.5 billion plastic drinks bottles, enough to create a line of bottles almost 45 times the diameter of the earth ??
- 111,047 tonnes of wood was recycled enough wood to make 163 million hurling sticks
- 47,980 tonnes of steel, equivalent to the 1.25 billion food cans
- 3,567 tonnes of aluminium was recycled the equivalent of 214 million beverage cans
- In 2006, 83% of the waste packaging materials recovered and recycled were from glass, cardboard/paper and wood. 17% of material was from plastic and metals.

“Once again this year recycling rates have continued to grow and both businesses and householders deserve to be congratulated, In order to meet future targets more will need to be recycled from the domestic household bin which will see costs rise significantly,” commented Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak.

He also added “The significant increase in household recycling of last year of 23.5% confirms that ordinary people and their communities are committed to recycling provided they are supported with effective recycling infrastructure. Repak is pleased

to have played its part in supporting this increase through the funding of our members.

“We have increased our membership, with an additional 268 companies bringing Repak’s total membership to 2,165 companies. However these companies only account for 61% of the packaging placed on the market which shows that there are a still a lot more companies who are not paying for the recovery/recycling of their packaging. This is putting a strain on the system and as costs increase with higher recycling targets we need to have more companies in and paying towards the recovery and recycling of their packaging.

Repak, now in its in tenth year of recycling in Ireland, is looking towards the many recycling challenges faced by all in the future. If Ireland is to meet its recycling target of 65% by 2011 Repak will need to recycle or recover more materials from domestic or household bins which is significantly more expensive than the recovery of commercial packaging tonnes. Repak estimate that €180 million needs to be invested by Irish industry in packaging recycling over the next 5 years in order for Ireland to meet its next EU packaging recovery targets. By 2011 the annual funding of packaging recycling by Repak is forecast to rise to €45 million.

Repak members paid €23.7 million in packaging levies to supporting packaging recycling in 2006, an increase of €1.9 million on 2005. Since 1997 Repak has invested in excess of €118 million in supporting the recovery and recycling of nearly 3 million tonnes of used packaging. In its tenth year, membership and investment in package recycling has grown from under 15% in 1998 to over 60% in 2006.

**Ends**

**Press queries to:**

Eoin Kennedy

Slattery Communications

Tel: 086 833 9540 or 01 634 2510

## **Notes to Editor:**

- 603,000 tonnes of waste packaging recovered and recycled in 2006
- 3 million tonnes of used packing collected since 1997
- Membership income exceeded €23.7m in 2006
- 268 new members generate additional €1.9m in fee income
- €22.6m invested in recycling activity bringing total since 1998 to €118 million
  
- Repak now support packaging collections from over 937,000 household kerbside bins (i.e. green bins), 2,200 bring banks and nearly 90 recycling centers nationwide.

## **About Repak**

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved packaging compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National Packaging Recovery and Recycling Targets of 25% of packaging waste in 2001 and 50% in 2005 and is well on their way to achieving their 2011 target of 60%.