

Powered by Rural in Winthrop, WA

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[The Powered by Rural campaign](#) is designed to increase awareness of rural issues and opportunities. Our challenge to you is to do one thing, big or small, to help improve your community and then challenge two others to do the same. Joseph Weaver and Casey Bouchard of [Methow Recycling Roundup](#) in [Winthrop, WA](#) took the Powered by Rural challenge with a goal of helping the economic vitality of their small town.



“Go forward, do something useful, be passionate.” That is the powerful motto of two rural Washington residents from Seattle who decided to dedicate themselves to recycling in the country.

“We love recycling. We love the Methow Valley. We love our community.” Joseph Weaver and Casey Bouchard live in Winthrop, WA, a rural community nestled in the Methow Valley in the heart of the North Cascades. A couple of years ago, when they were part time residents from Seattle, they saw a need and dedicated themselves and their livelihoods to help fill it.

The Methow Valley, with a population of approximately 5,000, is a popular vacation destination for cross-country skiers, rock climbers, hikers, mountain bikers, and others. Although the population of the valley is small, there are a lot of people passing through, and Joseph and Casey started noticing that recyclable materials were either going back home with visitors or into the landfill. They wanted to offer a recycling service to the Methow Valley and realized that the key to this idea was in a nearby town called Twisp.

[Twisp, WA](#) is the home of a recycling processing center and Joseph and Casey realized that they could offer local collection of recyclable materials to valley residents, businesses, and visitors, if they were able to get the collected materials to Twisp. They left the big city and started Methow Recycling Roundup in November of 2009.

In light of the two-year anniversary, Joseph and Casey attribute Methow Recycling Roundup's success to community support. When they first launched the business, they solicited local businesses to sponsor public recycling bins, and ten businesses in the tiny town of Winthrop gave their support. There are challenges to making a rural lifestyle viable, but Joseph and Casey have found that engaging the community and leveraging existing resources are the keys to their progress.

The core of their mission is to decrease waste in the landfill but it's also making an economic impact. By helping to make recycling convenient and affordable for people, Methow Recycling Roundup is not only eliminating the obstacles to recycling, but they are also helping to create an economic opportunity for the local recycling center in Twisp, called [Methow Recycles](#). Methow Recycles sorts and bundles cardboard and paper which they sell to nearby companies, like one who turns it into products such as apple trays and wine packaging.

Joseph and Casey have been looking for more opportunities to grow the services offered to the Methow Valley and continue to create economic vitality. They are now partnering with [TwispWorks](#), a center for arts and culture, local agriculture, innovation, education, and economic vitality in the Methow Valley, and the [Seattle University Albers School of Business](#) to develop an organic waste recycling program. Their plan is to turn yard waste, food scraps, and agricultural by-products into compost, mulch, and top soil to sell in the valley and beyond. The goal of this new project is to create local jobs and increase the valley's economic diversity by introducing a new sustainable industry.

For these two, Recycling Roundup is a business venture as well as the adventure of a lifetime. And they feel lucky every day to wake up in the Methow Valley with the opportunity to combine a passion for recycling with their desire to provide the community with a useful service. To read more about Methow Recycling Roundup's public recycling efforts and the Winthrop barrel project, visit the [RIPPLE blog](#).

Joseph and Casey were introduced to us through the [Powered by Rural Facebook application](#). For information about how you can join the Powered by Rural movement and be a part of raising awareness, highlighting rural issues, identifying rural solutions, and providing and sharing resources to help communities thrive, contact Kari Rosenfeld, email: krosenfeld@rdiinc.org or call 541-684-9077.