

MULTIPLE BENEFITS FROM SORTING CANS

The collection and redemption of cans and bottles provides benefits to several parties along the process. First the youth groups sack cans and bottles separately. Then the cans and bottles from the Optimist Can Kennel are collected by Five Star Productions, a division of Five Star Quality Care, Inc., located in Glenwood, Iowa. The manager of Five Star Productions, Jim Westfall, explained that the Redemption Center they run in Glenwood is one of several business arrangements for employing individuals with impaired physical or mental disabilities. The in addition to can and bottle redemptions from local residents, Redemption Center route drivers collect cans and bottles throughout Mills County and at few places beyond such as the Treynor Can Kennel. Jim stated our Optimist Can Kennel operation is an important contribution to his Redemption Center operation, because he has the responsibility to keep can and bottle sorting work in front of from twelve to twenty workers five days a week. This work Jim explained involves segregating all cans and bottles by the bottling company which produced it. The work is complicated because multiple brand labels are used by each bottling company. For example the workers have to identify nine different Pepsi products, fourteen Coke products, and twenty-two different 7-UP products found in cans. Jim noted if a can does not match one of the bottling company labels then it is rejected for scrap aluminum and cannot be redeemed for the deposit. This includes independent and store labels, and labels produced after the 1978 state anti-litter law. While store labels are redeemable, they have to be taken back to the store where originally purchased. This is generally impractical for the Redemption Center for containers purchased away from Glenwood. Also, Jim noted that many plastic bottles are rejected for redemption because they do not contain carbonated beverages or are new brands not covered by the law.

Jim stated that his employees work by the piece at the sorting and bagging process. Counting and tallying is an important part of the job. There are Five Star staff employees who oversee the work which is audited periodically by the bottling companies who pay Five Star six cents for each can and bottle redeemed. Jim indicated he is always looking for additional 'customers' who have cans and bottles to be redeemed to keep his Redemption Center crew busy. He can be reached at 712-527-9705