

# A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Annual Report | 2020







## UNFORGETTABLE YEAR UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES UNWAVERING PERSEVERANCE

There's no question that 2020 was a challenging year for households and businesses across the world. In Oregon, we faced a tragic and disruptive global health pandemic, devastating wildfires raging across the state, and deep economic strains and uncertainty. The result was an unintended "stress test" of nearly everything, including Oregon's beverage container redemption system, which proved resilient in the face of extreme pressure.

Embedded in the numbers in this report are the challenges we faced and overcame and the role we played in protecting Oregon's beverage container redemption system while helping vulnerable Oregonians get through this crisis. We are proud of our work and our outcomes, appreciative of our customers and partners for their patience and commitment, and deeply thankful for our employees who demonstrated flexibility and dedication.

Like everybody, we at OBRC hope to start seeing a return to normal life in the year ahead. When we do, we expect the redemption rate to climb again and our programs to keep growing. Through it all, OBRC will be ready to adapt and meet new challenges as they come, and, in the process, we will continue to make Oregon's beverage container redemption system a national model of convenience and success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jules Bailey".

**Jules Bailey**  
Chief Stewardship Officer

## SHOWING STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Just like Oregonians across the state, OBRC adjusted and persevered throughout the challenging year that was 2020 to continue providing valuable services for our retail partners, distributors, and the public.

With restaurants, bars, stadiums, cafeterias, and event venues closed, demand for beverages in redeemable containers rose sharply. That, along with constraints in the redemption system caused by the pandemic, required flexibility, patience, and innovation from OBRC as well as all industry partners, retailers, and customers.

The result: a year that saw record-setting returns, new drop-off locations, and OBRC making a meaningful difference across Oregon.

### OBRC AT A GLANCE FOR 2020

**499** employees

**238** co-op participants

**165.4 million** pounds of materials processed

**228,056** new BottleDrop account sign-ups

**25** full service BottleDrop Redemption Centers across the state

**70** BottleDrop network locations statewide

### SETTING NEW RECORDS

**1.86 billion** containers returned  
up .8% from 2019 despite COVID-19 challenges

**58%**  
ALUMINUM

**31%**  
PLASTIC

**11%**  
GLASS



**122%**

increase in BottleDrop account signups, compared to 2019, averaging about 625 new accounts per day

**978,713**

refillable bottles in circulation

with 2 new partners added



**8.3 million** Green and Blue Bags processed





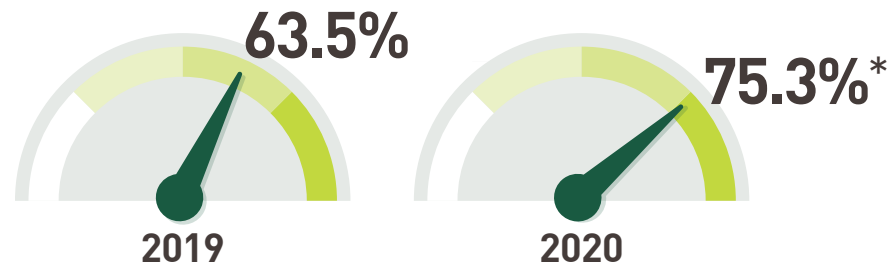
## RISING TO THE MOMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic slammed into Oregon and changed the way we all had to work and live. New sanitation and social distancing measures altered the way OBRC operates. Container returns to retail stores in many areas were suspended off and on throughout the year, often leaving the BottleDrop network as the only redemption option.

Despite these challenges, OBRC carried on, even as other redemption programs across the country suspended operations altogether. The result was an increase in the rate of return in Oregon throughout the year, a dramatic increase in Green Bag sign-ups, and OBRC quickly getting creative to maintain customer access, including opening a large emergency return center in Portland.

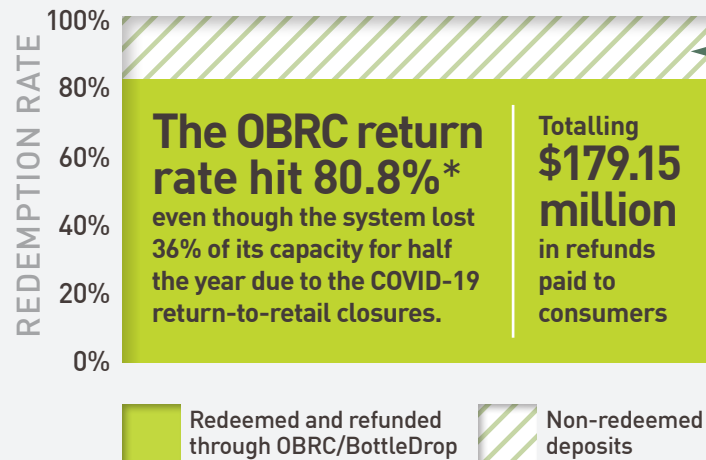
Adjustments in the redemption system caused volumes to shift across the state, requiring OBRC to make investments to increase capacity, add new pickup routes for Green Bags, deploy new technology to speed counting, and make upgrades at Redemption Centers to provide maximum customer access. These efforts helped the OBRC redemption rate reach 80.8% for 2020, which is a remarkably high redemption rate given the circumstances, and likely the highest in the nation.

### CONTAINER VOLUME RETURNED THROUGH BOTTLEDROP VERSUS THROUGH RETAIL STORES



**\*The BottleDrop network handled a higher percentage of statewide container returns due to COVID-19 return-to-retail closures.**

## BIG RETURNS. ZERO TAX DOLLARS.



**\$42.49 million**  
Value of non-refunded deposits

These funds are invested directly into the recycling and redemption system.

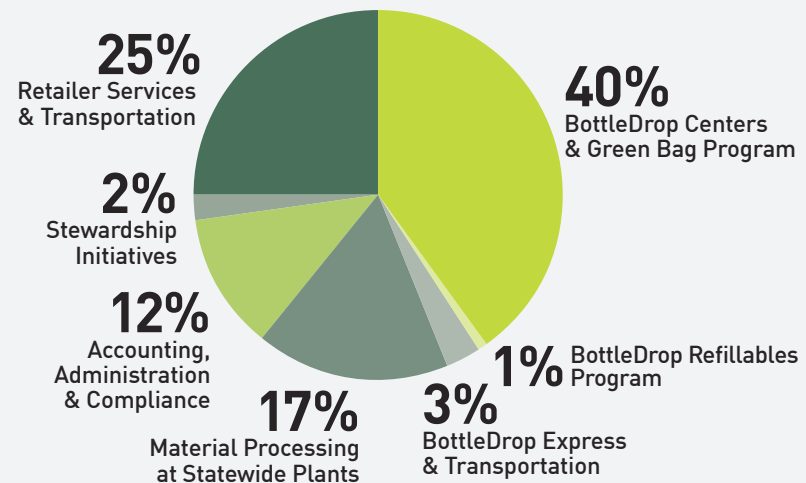


**\$3.96 million**  
Fees charged to OBRC members

Co-op members pay additional fees each year to fund the system's operations.



**2020 Annual Budget:**  
**\$46.45 Million<sup>1,2</sup>**



## EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT

OBRC partners closely with the state of Oregon, legislators, agencies, and other decision makers to achieve the state's recycling and environmental goals. We operate without any public funding, running more efficiently than any other redemption system in North America. But even in an anomalous year like 2020, with a pandemic contributing to a lower-than-normal redemption rate, OBRC's members made significant financial contributions to support the redemption system.

\*The statewide return rate will be lower, due to some distributors who are not co-op participants and on-premise sales.

<sup>1</sup> Pie chart percentages and data reviewed by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC).

<sup>2</sup> Budget and redemption data for 2020 in this report is preliminary. OBRC is committed to accurate and transparent accounting and files an official report to the OLCC as required by Oregon's bottle bill in June of each calendar year. OBRC does not include the value of scrap material sold in its operating budget.





## STEPPING UP FOR OUR COMMUNITY

OBRC has long believed in the power of supporting local communities and nonprofit organizations all over Oregon. Between the years 2009 and 2020, BottleDrop customers donated more than **\$12 million to 4,000 organizations** through the BottleDrop Give program.

More than any other year, 2020 showed how important that support is to our communities and our neighbors. That's why we launched the OBRC Emergency Fund and ramped up efforts to help customers give back to those who needed it most.

And we will continue to look for new ways to support our nonprofit partners and communities while serving our customers and making Oregon a better place, for all of us.

### Oregon Community Foundation BottleDrop Fund 2020 Recipients:

Children's Forest of Central Oregon  
Corvallis Environmental Center  
High Desert Museum  
Institute for Sustainability Education and Ecology  
Lomakatsi Restoration Project  
Multicultural Association of Southern Oregon  
Trash For Peace/The People's Depot

**\$3.4 million**  
raised for nonprofits  
in 2020



**\$200,000**  
raised for the  
Oregon Food Bank  
in just two months

**\$60,000**  
raised for eight rural Oregon  
firefighting organizations  
during devastating wildfires

**\$15,000**  
raised for Oregon Historical  
Society to help repair damage  
from vandalism

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

At OBRC, we are well positioned for Oregon's growth. Our new main processing facility and headquarters in Clackamas has been specifically designed to process more materials than ever before while using the most advanced technology for counting, tracking and moving containers through the system. We are excited for what the coming years will bring. Our work has just begun.

### ON THE HORIZON FOR 2021

**Expand access to the BottleDrop network** through investments in better technology, more drop door locations, and a new Redemption Center in Coos Bay.

**Build a next-generation BottleDrop Redemption Center** with new, efficient counting technology to replace our existing Glisan facility in Portland.

**Make our Green Bags greener** by recycling used Green Bags to create new ones.

**Enhance the BottleDrop customer experience** by rolling out significant improvements to the BottleDrop app, and deploying a new online chat option for customers to gain information and resolve issues.

**Help Oregonians enhance their communities** by supporting nonprofits through the further expansion of BottleDrop Give.

**Launch the Containers for Change program**, making it even easier for BottleDrop Green Bag customers to use the funds from their containers to support nonprofits across Oregon.

**Continue to establish OBRC as an employer of choice** and a great place to work.

**Deploy the OBRC Emergency Fund** to quickly meet pressing needs in communities across the state, as they occur.

**Build upon our strong reputation** as a world leader and innovator in beverage container redemption and recycling, using Oregon's story as a resource to help others.

**Support BottleDrop Refillables** by assisting brands and beverage types wishing to participate in the program.

**Celebrate the Oregon Bottle Bill's 50th Birthday** with Oregonians across the state!



### OUR NEW HOME

17300 S.E. 120th Ave.  
Clackamas, OR 97015

Opened in fall of 2020

\$22,178,097 total investment,  
including new technology for  
increased counting and tracking  
accuracy

142,053 square feet, double the  
processing space and capacity of  
OBRC's previous main processing  
plant and headquarters

## OUR MISSION

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OBRC is the industry steward of Oregon's nationally recognized beverage container deposit program. We help keep Oregon beautiful by providing outstanding services to our partner distributors and retailers, and to the public for the recovery, reuse, and recycling of beverage containers.

## LEARN MORE

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### **Eric Chambers**

Director of External Relations  
echambers@obrc.com

OBRC.com | BottleDropCenters.com



**BottleDrop**<sup>®</sup>  
Oregon Redemption Center

