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CARE Names 2018 Award Winners – Person of the Year and Recycler of the Year

Matthew Realff, Rachel Palopoli and Circular Polymers accept awards at 17th Annual CARE Conference

Houston, TX. – May 1, 2019 – Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE), the non-profit organization charged with advancing market-based solutions for carpet recycling and landfill diversion of post-consumer carpet, has named its Person of the Year and Recycler of the Year for 2018. The honors were awarded during the organization’s 17th Annual Conference, held in Houston, TX, on May 1, 2019.

Person of the Year

Rachel Palopoli, one of CARE’s 2018 Person of the Year recipients, serves as an advisor to the CARE Board, the Chair of the California Carpet Council, and manages the family carpet recycling and retail business that her father, Sal, founded 20 years ago. Rachel has over 25 years of experience in the waste management and recycling business. Planet Recycling operates in the Phoenix and San Diego markets.

Rachel began her career at Morgan Stanley after earning her business degree at Hofstra University. After raising her 3 children, Rachel returned to the family business where she once again proudly learns from her father. With this knowledge and that of her peers, Rachel is committed to seeing the success of carpet recycling industry for years to come.

“Rachel is a smart, driven asset to this industry. Her sharp mind and high energy continually help us tackle the tough challenges of this industry,” said Dr. Robert Peoples, Executive Director of CARE.

Person of the Year

Matthew Realff, Ph.D., the other CARE 2018 Person of the Year recipient, has served as a long-term advisor to the CARE Board. Dr. Realff is the David Wang Senior Faculty Fellow and

Professor in the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr. Realff has produced multiple peer-reviewed academic studies about the carpet recycling industry throughout his career and has worked closely with the Executive Director on special projects.

Dr. Realff's current research is focused on the design and operation of processes that minimize waste production by recovery of useful products from waste streams. Particularly, he is interested in carbon capture processes both from flue gas and dilute capture from air as well as the analysis and design of processes that use biomass. Dr. Realff earned a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering in 1986 from Imperial College, London and a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1992.

"I cannot even begin to imagine doing the work of CARE without the keen mind of Dr. Realff. We have collaborated since the beginning of his tenure at Ga. Tech. Mass balances, process technology, greenhouse gas analysis, reverse supply chain logistics, Matthew helps with it all," said Peoples.

Recycler of the Year

Circular Polymers was founded in 2018 by David Bender, Jeff Kupets, Nick Fiore, and Mark Babich. Operating in Lincoln, CA, Circular Polymers uses a novel process to recycle post-consumer carpet. Their process technology converts the post-consumer carpet into high quality consistent feedstock that meets customer specifications. The propriety technology used by Circular Polymers was developed by Broadview Group International LLC in Ohio. The process produces high yields from processing and produces a clean material, something that's been a challenge with mechanical separation in the past. Circular Polymers used a grant received from the CARE in 2018 to expand its operations and is now one of the fastest growing carpet recyclers in the United States.

"This is an exciting new company that has entered the market and already gone through multiple expansions. They are aggressive in their pursuit of markets and driven to deliver high quality products to succeed. The leadership team is great and a pleasure to work with," said Bob Peoples.

About Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE)

Carpet America Recovery Effort (CARE) is a voluntary, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the landfill diversion, reuse, and recycling of waste carpet, through market-based solutions that benefit the economy as well as the environment.

Since 2002, CARE has diverted more than 5 billion pounds of carpet from landfills in the United States and promoted the use and development of products containing materials derived from carpet. CARE members include independent carpet recyclers, carpet manufacturers, dealers, retailers and suppliers, and non-governmental organizations. For more information about CARE, visit www.carpetrecovery.org.

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