

Engage employees to  
prevent food waste

November 8, 2018



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*[Wendy] Hello my name is Wendy Popkin, I am [introduction].*

*I am here today with Holly Stirnkorb with Metro to bring you this exciting webinar to provide you with information about how you can reduce food waste at your business.*

*[Holly] Hello, this is Holly. Metro, local government and Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA) are partnering to deliver practical, how-to information to the restaurant and lodging industry to reduce food waste. Our goal is to provide the restaurant and lodging industry with information about best practices for preventing food waste, donating edible food, and separating food scraps for local government composting programs. . "Food Waste Stops With Me" connects food service business professionals to resources and technical assistance and help them prevent the wasting of food, donate edible unsold food, and set up successful food scraps composting programs.*



**Scott Youngblood – General Manager**  
**Scott Hensley – Executive Chef**

**Wendy [Description of the webinar and introduction of speakers]**

*Scott Youngblood, General Manager & Playground Director*

*Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Washington Square*

Scott Youngblood grew up near Willamette Falls in Oregon City and began his hospitality career bussing tables in the restaurant at Multnomah Falls Lodge at age fifteen. Working his way up in the hospitality industry, Scott has performed almost every responsibility from cleaning and cooking through sales management and operation of large hotels with conference centers.

His career has been split between the Hilton and Marriott brand families, requiring occasional relocation. In 2014, Scott and his family moved home to Clackamas County from Minnesota and he manages the Embassy Suites hotel at Washington Square.

Scott has served on the Board of Directors for the Tri-County Lodging Association, Snohomish County Lodging Association, Minneapolis Hotel Association, and Minnesota Lodging Association. He has also served Mayo Clinic's Destination Medical Center, the Miracles of Mitch Pediatric Cancer Foundation, and the University of Wisconsin Stout's Sales Business Development program. He currently serves as vice-chair for the Oregon Tourism Commission.

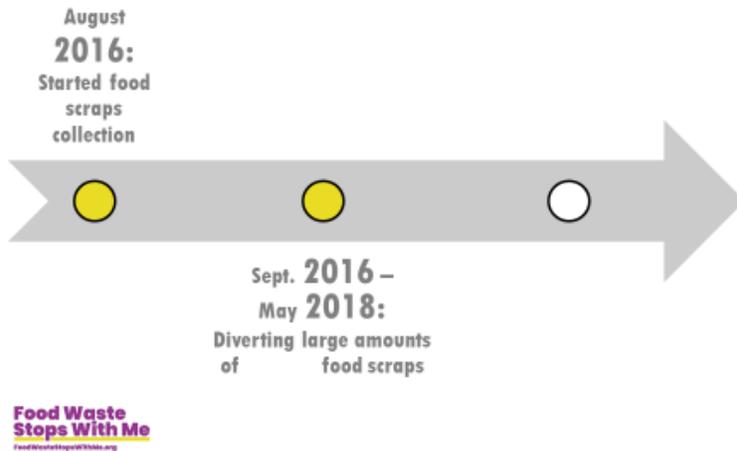
*Scott Hensley, Executive Chef*

*Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Washington Square*

*An Oregon native, Executive Chef Scott Hensley grew up on cattle ranch in southern Oregon, attended culinary school and honed his craft working in hotels and resorts on the Pacific coast, in the French Quarter of New Orleans and the Broadmoor Resort in Colorado Springs, Colo. In 2015, Scott relocated from the Omni Austin Hotel Downtown in Austin, TX, where he served as the Executive Chef to Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Washington Square to take the mantle of Executive Chef.*

**<<PLAY 3 MINUTE VIDEO>>**

## Where we started



### Scott Y.

- Good morning everyone, this is Scott Youngblood. In August 2016 we started food waste composting after speaking with our Washington County Green Business Advisor, Alex Bertolucci. You'll hear us refer to Alex quite a bit during this presentation, as his partnership has been instrumental in everything that we've accomplished in our relatively short journey into this field.
  - In a 356-suite hotel, we produce a lot of garbage, as you might imagine. Waste removal is a significant expense. We use a trash compactor at our loading dock. Our hauler bills us monthly, based on the number of times our compactor is emptied each month and, of course, the weight of our compactor each time its emptied.
  - Alex really helped us understand that wet, heavy food waste contributes more to the weight of our compactor than anything else we throw away.
  - As we switched from putting food waste into the compactor to putting it into a compost collection bin furnished by our waste hauler, our average monthly Waste Management invoice went down almost \$1,000.

### Scott H.

- Hi. This is Chef Scott Hensley. The food composting program was easy to set up, as Alex, our Washington County Green Business Advisor, helped us acquire a set of garbage cans for our kitchens, strong biodegradable can liners, and labels to easily segregate food waste from traditional garbage.
  - Training our team to put all food waste into separate bags and deliver those to the new compost collection bin was remarkably easy.
  - We held small staff meetings in the kitchen to introduce the process to our team and remind them of the steps fairly often.
  - We had to identify a location for the compost collection bin and where to place our food scrap collection cans. And that was really all it took to get started.

## Why we started

TRAVEL   
WITH PURPOSE

Hilton goal: Cut food waste by  
**50%** over **2017** number

### Scott Y.

- We should take a moment to discuss our goals as a member of the Hilton family of hotels.
- Travel with Purpose is Hilton's Corporate Responsibility strategy to redefine and advance sustainable travel and tourism. Every day, we work to make the world a better place, driving positive social and environmental change across our operations, our supply chain and our communities. Being responsible social and environmental stewards is engrained in our culture; it's who we are and who we always want to be.
- Using 2017 as a baseline, we've been challenged to reduce food waste sent to landfills by 50%. This goal became tougher for us to achieve, as we had already begun composting food waste in 2016. We knew that, in order to reduce our food waste an additional 50%, we were going to need more resources and more education.
- Next, let's look at the impact composting food waste has made on our operation over the past few years.

## Where composting took us



Year	Average monthly tons	Average lbs. of trash per occupied suite
2015	15.56	149
2016	15.39	122
2017	11.21	86
2018	13.14	105

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Scott Y.

- As we've discussed, composting food waste has been a terrific success for us! We have been able to cut the amount of waste we sent to the landfill substantially. This reduction of landfill bound waste has resulted in an average cost savings of \$1,000 per month. And in some months, even more.
- In August of 2016, we began composting food waste, and you can see the immediate impact it had through 2017. This year, additional projects around the hotel have increased the volume of non-food waste into our compactor. And so we're now in the process of starting a new campaign to reduce non-food waste. But that's a topic for another webinar.

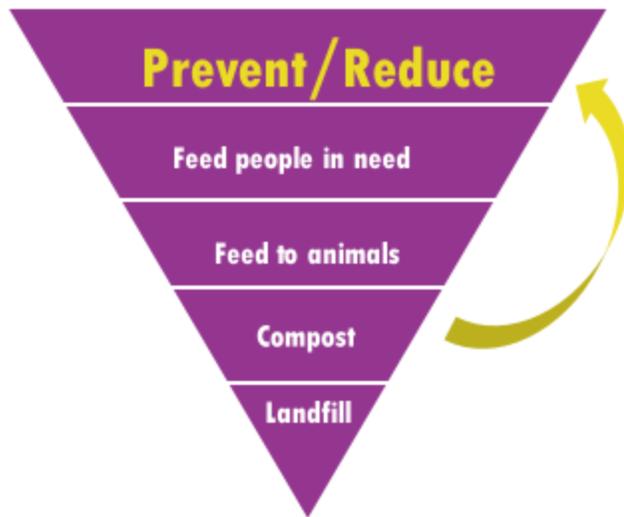
Scott H.

- The financial benefits of composting are true and important. But reducing food waste has more than just financial advantages. We also need to consider our customers, our employees and our environment.
- Statistically, we know that approximately 40% of all food in the US is thrown away. In the Portland Metro region, food is the single largest component of garbage - nearly 20%. And of that 20%, over half is generated by businesses like yours and ours.

Scott Y.

- Chef Scott is right. As we began this journey, we learned very quickly how our efforts were impacting our employee's perception of our business and our shared values, and our customers' perception of Hilton and our hotel. And we began to realize that our individual hotel's efforts were actually making a meaningful environmental impact. It became more than statistics and spreadsheets and entries on the balance sheet. Our employees and guests have really embraced this effort and are proud to be part of something important.

## Food waste hierarchy



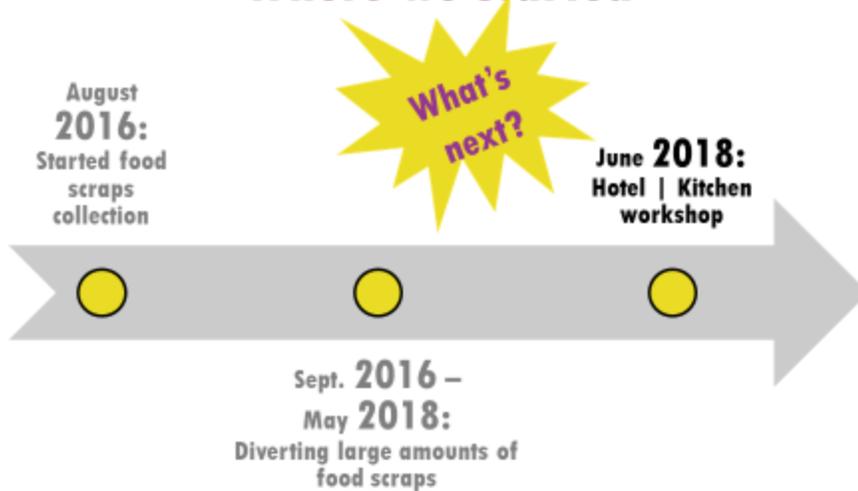
### Scott H.

As we discussed a couple of slides ago, our Travel with Purpose 50% reduction goal was established in 2017, after we had already implemented composting. And since 2017 was our baseline for measurement, we were going to need more tools and education in order to further reduce food waste.

We knew that preventing food waste in the first place is the most important thing, so we wanted to move up the food waste hierarchy with our efforts, from just composting to food waste prevention and reduction.

As you can see in this slide, composting food waste is very near the bottom of the food waste hierarchy. We needed a plan to figure out “What’s Next” in our efforts to further reduce food waste.

## Where we started



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### Scott Y.

- So, this year, in June of 2018, we attended a workshop at Metro with content sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund and presented using HotelKitchen.org. Metro's local sponsorship of this workshop came at a perfect time to help us light a path for our next steps.
- Chef Scott and I attended the workshop and were excited to leave with new ideas, a much clearer understanding, and a plan for how to start moving up the food waste hierarchy from composting to prevention.

### Scott H.

- We knew that we were already doing a good job with the composting. But we wanted to learn what else we could do to improve the food waste program, specifically at our hotel.
- Every food service operation is unique. We feed a thousand people breakfast most weekend mornings. Another restaurant might have a lunchtime seafood buffet or be known for their prime rib dinner. You already know what makes your business unique. Your challenge will be to incorporate food waste reduction as part of your unique journey.

## We created a plan

		HotelKitchen Strategic Roadmap		
<b>HOTEL NAME</b> Embassy Suites Washington Square		<b>GOAL:</b> Reduce breakfast food waste by 20% Create a low waste event menu		
MEASUREMENT	PREVENTION	ENGAGEMENT	DONATION	
1. establish pre-service and post-service waste levels	1. Utilize usable trim products	1. share videos from Hotel Kitchen with staff	1. Contact Urban Cleaners	
2. conduct a making exercise	2. Change buffet sizes	2. train breakfast staff on reduction goal	2. Find another donation partner	
3. test smaller buffet plates	3. video training with culinary staff	3.	3.	
4. observe commodity pricing year round for menu selections	4. market the new low waste menu to meeting clients	4.	4.	

**Scott Y.**

- The HotelKitchen.org workshop and roadmap helped us to identify the areas that we wanted to measure, to understand what our goals should be, and to build a plan for how to get there.
- We were fortunate to attend the workshop with Alex, our Washington County Green Business Advisor.
- Partnering with Alex during and following the workshop, we were able to complete this Roadmap, using the resources provided at HotelKitchen.org to build a plan.
- Of course, if it were up to Chef Scott and I alone to execute that plan, its success would be completely uncertain. That’s where our employees come in.

# It all comes down to employees



## Scott H.

- The real heroes of this story are the men and women who work at Embassy Suites. Our culinary team, our restaurant servers in Cascadia, our banquet staff, our dishwashers and the men and women who serve our daily full breakfast and evening reception were all critical to the success of this operation.
- The eagerness of our staff to make sure they were contributing to the food waste program was super important. Our job was to provide clear and compelling vision and support in their daily routines.
- Over the next few minutes, we'll discuss the practical steps we took to ensure that this program could be meaningful, successful and sustainable over time, especially when we get extra busy and our operations become stressed.

## We created a collective vision

- **Build the team**
- **Engage the team**
- **Listen and act on feedback**
- **Set S.M.A.R.T. goals**



### Scott H.

- Following our attendance of the Metro workshop and creation of our strategic roadmap, we followed Alex's advice to invite our staff to join us for a food waste audit. This was intended to give everyone a taste of the inspiration we got from the workshop and begin an interactive dialogue regarding how we were going to get from A to B.
- When we began with composting practices in 2016, everyone got it. Here's the bins. Here's the bags. Make sure you separate the food waste, etc., etc...
- But our people became truly excited this year, when we involved the entire hotel team to conduct a food waste audit which involved spreading hundreds of pounds of food waste out on a tarp and raking through the discarded food to truly understand what was leaving our back door.

### Scott Y.

- With our team's partnership and enthusiasm, we worked on creating SMART goals to guide our progress = specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound goals to begin reducing food waste by another 50%.



**Scott Y.**

- These are photos of the food waste audit conducted with our partners at Washington County. They got everyone involved in a hands-on way. They helped create an immediate sense of accomplishment while inspiring us that there was even more potential to reduce the amount of waste that was arriving in our compost collection bin every day.
- From that point on, the ideas we came up with seemed endless...

**Scott H.**

- The food waste audit gave us a real world view of food scraps by weight.
- For me, the biggest part was engaging our employees as a top priority. They're the ones who make the program successful.
- This audit helped us begin asking questions like,
  - Should we be cutting fruit for a thousand people every day or should we purchase it pre-cut?
  - How accurate is our portioning for lunch entrees versus dinner entrees?
  - Should we be marketing and producing bite-sized desserts on our catering menus, especially at lunch?
  - Should we have a team member serving proteins at breakfast instead of a self-service model?

## We started putting ideas into action...

- Reduce plate sizes
- Bacon Ambassador
- Low waste catering menu
- Donate extra food



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### Scott H

- Brainstorming with our team, we tested a reduction in the size of buffet plates used during our breakfast buffet. We weighed our post-service food for two weeks and found a 50% reduction in food waste being scrapped off the smaller buffet plates.
- Concerned with the amount of protein that was finding its way into the compost bins at our scrapping station, someone suggested the use of a “Bacon Ambassador” to interact with guests and serve some of the most expensive products that were being wasted by hundreds of guests every day.

### Scott Y

- Chef Scott assembled a team to work on a low waste catering menu, designed to inspire environmentally conscious clients while contributing to our 50% reduction goal.
- Our Green Business Advisor, Alex, introduced us to Urban Gleaners, an organization whose mission is to collect delicious, fresh food before it can go to waste and get it to people who need it. We realized that donating food can be as easy as making one phone call.
- None of these ideas were immediately perfect and there were certainly bumps along the way. But pursuing our curiosity and relying on communication, we began to see success.

## ...and they worked!



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- **New plate sizes**
  - **50%** reduction in post-service waste
- **Bacon Ambassador**
  - Reduction in bacon and sausage waste
- **Low-waste catering menu**
  - More options for the client
- **Donated food**
  - Working with Urban Gleaners was simple and easy

### Scott H.

- The results were clear. Smaller buffet plates reduced post-service waste by 50% and our guests didn't notice the smaller plates. We were really surprised that the change went completely unnoticed by guests.
- Our Bacon Ambassador helped reduce protein waste. The position paid for itself and the customer experience improved as this position added a friendly face and greeting to the buffet experience on busy mornings.

### Scott Y.

- Our Low-waste catering menus have been exciting for our clients to understand and the culinary team has enjoyed the creativity of sourcing and fully utilizing products. The program is in its beginning stages and we will continue to roll this into our hotel culture.
- Donating food to Urban Gleaners or other community partners is easy to set up, convenient to execute and 100% safe in terms of liability. Good Samaritan laws fully protect us from any claims which might result from donated food.

## You can't manage what you don't measure



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- **Measure pre and post-service waste**
- **Track measurements**
- **Ongoing challenge: Making it routine**

### Scott H.

- Knowledge is power and being able to share the impacts of your team's efforts will inspire them to keep going. An establishment like ours creates 180 to 200 pounds of food waste per day.
- Through the Metro workshop, we learned the importance of separating and measuring pre-service and post-service waste. The waste sliding off your cutting board needs to be managed differently from the stuff sliding off of half-eaten plates.
- Alex provided us with yellow bins for pre-service waste, green bins for post-service waste, and a resource for purchasing biodegradable can liners especially designed for food waste.
- Using a simple bathroom scale and log to document each bag of pre-service and post-service food waste before sending them to the compost bin helps us to understand the impact of our efforts.

### Scott Y.

- A challenging element of this is consistency. Each of you will have to decide whether you'll track every bag every day or establish a schedule of incremental measurement cycles to spot-check your progress. We migrated from every bag / every day to a less frequent model once we had a good sense of the amount of waste we're creating.
- There is no single solution for everyone. You have to be comfortable with experimentation, allowing yourself make mistakes, and learning as you go. The best part of this is that there is no risk... only reward.

## What keeps us going

- **Doing our part for the community and environment**
- **Customers want it**
- **Employees are proud to be involved**
- **Sustainability and profitability are connected**

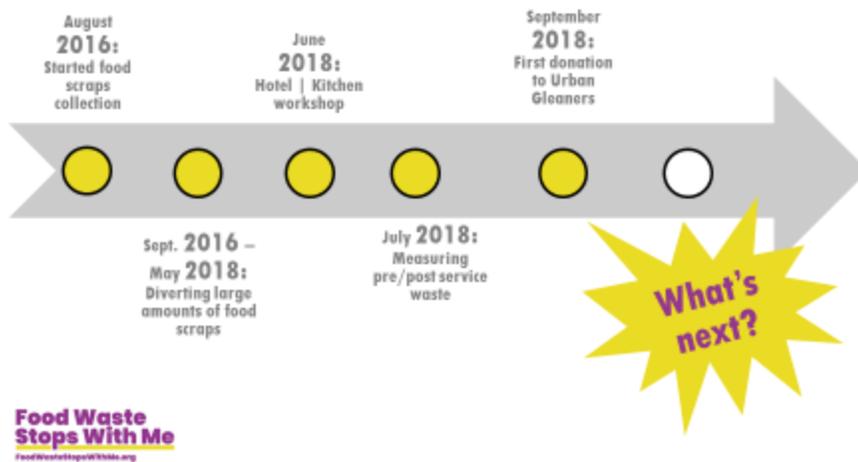


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### Scott Y

- Our customers want to do business with organizations committed to social and environmental stewardship. It's our responsibility to share our efforts so that our customers know what steps we are taking.
- Your employees love to know when they're contributing to something greater than the sum of their individual job descriptions. Helping them to make a difference in the lives of others in ways big and small will pay dividends to you as employers. These efforts breed fierce loyalty, commitment and a willingness to make personal sacrifices for an organization who cares.
- We started today by talking about the financial benefit we realized with composting. It's important to also note that our efforts toward reducing food waste during our breakfast buffet resulted in a 90-day savings of \$32,000 in groceries vs. the same summer period in 2017.

## Where we go from here



### Scott H.

- So, what's coming next?
- With our busy holiday season upon us, this is a critical time for our business.
- We need to continue measuring and tracking pre and post-service waste.

### Scott Y.

- Stay connected to our friends at Urban Gleaners when large holiday parties create opportunities to serve people in our community.

### Scott H.

- Continue spreading the message of food waste reduction to our employees beyond the food & beverage department. This is a matter of pride for our hotel and everyone deserves to share in that feeling.

### Scott Y.

- And we need to continue looking for new ideas. It's really the inspiration that comes from our talented and committed employees that will sustain the success of this program and help us exceed our goal of 50% waste reduction throughout the hotel.

## How to get started

- **Set a plan**
  - Roadmap from Hotel | Kitchen
  - Assistance from City or County partners
- **Measure and track**
  - You can't manage what you don't measure
- **Don't be afraid to fail**
  - Give things a try
  - See how it goes
- **Continuous improvement**
  - Make adjustments
  - Keep getting better

Engage your team!



### Scott H.

- So set a plan. Download the roadmap from [hotelkitchen.org](http://hotelkitchen.org). Contact your city or county partners for assistance in getting started.

### Scott Y.

- Remember, you can't manage what you don't measure. Set up a tracking system and involve your team in daily measurement of progress and success.

### Scott H.

- Don't be afraid to fail. Give things a try. See how it goes. You really have nothing to lose and everything to gain. For me, it was really the participation in Metro's workshop and sharing that inspiration with our employees that lit a fire. When we conducted the food waste audit, spreading those huge tarps in our lot and raking through hundreds of pounds of food... That's when our team really became excited. It's kind of silly that spreading garbage all over the ground was the event that brought everyone together, but it really did. From that moment, everyone who participated felt a personal connection to what we were doing and, more importantly, why we were doing it. It was really changing our practice from a compliance activity like just composting, to a meaningful concept like contributing to the health of our planet and the future of our families that made all the difference in our experience.

### Scott Y.

- Once you get started, feel free to make adjustments. There's no single waste reduction plan, and that's the beauty of this exercise. It's only going to keep getting better.

### Scott H.

- Employees love to know when they are part of a winning team, making a difference. Remember to engage your team all along the way.

**Scott Y.**

- And remember the proverb, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” Your team will love this journey and so will you.



*Scott and Scott, thank you so much for providing us with such a great explanation of how to engage employees to make waste prevention efforts successful. I'd also like to thank everyone that has submitted questions. Let's start with our first question:*

[Be sure to ask these questions]

Q. What do you see as the top motivators for your employees to get involved with these food waste reduction efforts?

**Scott Y.** - Your employees want to be part of something great. They want to have stories to tell their family and friends about how cool their job is. If you share a vision and invite them to participate in helping our environment and community, you might be amazed by their enthusiasm.

Q. What was the initial investment to change the plate size?

**Scott H.** - \$3.50 per plate. We spent \$2,500 and, as we just mentioned, saved \$32,000 in breakfast groceries in our first 3 months.

Q. Do the food cost savings from the Bacon Ambassador supplement the cost of his position?

**Scott H.** - Yes. With this position in place during busy weekends, we realized a 40% savings in the amount of bacon & sausage being cooked for breakfast. At \$28 per case, the savings add up pretty fast.

Q. Was it difficult to start and maintain your composting program?

**Scott Y.** - Not at all. Setting up the labeled cans and liners was made easy through our friends at Washington County. The biggest part of sustaining the program is Management by Walking Around. When Chef Scott finds the wrong can or liner in the wrong location, he helps the team fix the issue. They want to do the right thing and composting doesn't require any additional effort, just new habits.

[Second priority questions]

Q. How can I find local help like Embassy Suites did, what services are available?

**Scott H.** - Visit Food Waste Stops With Me.org and click "Speak with an expert."

Q. Is a food waste audit really important?

**Scott Y.** - It's essential. You may or may not be surprised by the quantity and types of food finding their way into your waste stream. However, your team will be fascinated to participate and it really helps build a sense of ownership on the part of your team.

Q. Is measuring and tracking food waste important?

**Scott H.** - You have to know where you are in order to understand and appreciate your destination.



That is all the time we have for today. Thank you so much for joining us. Please take a minute to visit [Food Waste Stops With Me.org](http://FoodWasteStopsWithMe.org) and watch a short video that highlights the food waste prevention program at Embassy Suites. You will also find all the resources and access to technical assistance you need to improve or start a food waste reduction at your business today.

And please join us this winter for another webinar about how your business can reduce food waste.