

# Member Spotlight

Technology provides manufacturers with incredible potential for growth, but it also leaves an unprepared manufacturer vulnerable to data breaches and theft. As manufacturers store their client and employee information and the company's own intellectual property on computers, they must be assured that the information is safe, secure and can be destroyed in a responsible manner when the technology is replaced.

"When you deal with sensitive information, it's not enough to lock away your old computers in a basement and hope they stay safe — there are environmentally friendly ways to give your old technology a second life without risking your confidential data," said Jason Kehr, president of the Kentwood-based Valley City Electronic Recycling. "Our mission is to provide manufacturers with responsible recycling options for electronic waste."

Electronics contain toxic heavy metals, such as lead found in the solder

“Our mission is to provide manufacturers with responsible recycling options for electronic waste.”

used on circuit boards, as well as mercury, cadmium and chromium, and flame retardant chemicals present in plastic housings. Simply disposing of these can have devastating impact on the environment. Manufacturers that improperly dispose of these items risk high regulatory fines as well as the potential for criminals to get their hands on data that was not removed.

Manufacturers are especially susceptible due to the wide range of industries they support and, as a result, the information they have access to. All manufacturers, large and small, are at risk of security breaches which can result in hundreds of millions in added costs and long-term damage to its reputation.


"Large companies are absolutely at a greater risk for exposure due to the larger amount of data available to steal but at the same time they've got greater access

to the resources necessary to thwart such attempts," said Kehr. "Small manufacturers may not cross the radar of a criminal as quickly, but when they are a victim of a data breach, the results can cripple the business."

The electronic recycling industry remains relatively new and many businesses are not well-informed of the importance of proper recycling practices.

"It still amazes me how many businesses don't have a plan in place or even don't know that companies like ours exist," said Kehr. "Like any other crime, you don't always think it could happen to your business but, if you're prepared and a breach does happen, electronic recycling could absolutely save your company's future."

Regardless of size or scope, Valley City offers manufacturers access to their logistics and transportation services, its broad asset management capabilities and the most secure data elimination — specifications trusted by the U.S. Department of Defense.

"It has become irresponsible for businesses to not develop a strategy for secure data elimination — there are simply too many threats out there to risk your company and your customers' information," said Kehr. "I encourage every manufacturer to do their due diligence, seek out a Responsible Recycling (R2) certified recycler, tour their facility and ask the right questions." 



Electronic waste moves down the conveyor during Valley City's dismantling process in Kentwood.

## Jason Kehr

President

Valley City Electronic Recycling

✦ Joined MMA: July 2012

✦ Employs: 25 Michigan workers

✦ Website: [www.valleycityer.com](http://www.valleycityer.com)



**The Best Advice I Ever Got**

He who hesitates is lost.



**How I Motivate My Team**

By practicing what I preach.



**If I Weren't Doing This**

I'd be a writer.



**Three Items I Can't Live Without**

Family, Spotify and MSU athletics



**If I Could Have a Superpower**

To make time stand still.



**My Next Goal**

I want to continue to grow Valley City's reach by developing new services that go beyond data security to include innovations that haven't even been considered in the electronics recycling industry.