Recycling Today publishes a list of U.S. auto shredder installations every two years, and we’ve seen growth in capacity for the last decade running. The number of auto shredders in the U.S. first surpassed 200 as of our 1998 list. In the 14 years since, that number has topped the 300 mark, though seven of the plants included on our 2012 list are proposed installations for 2013. These shredders range in size from 10,000-horsepower “mega” models to relatively small 1,000-horsepower models.

**POPULATION CENTERS**

Texas again tops the list, with 27 shredder installations and a 28th planned for 2013. At six, Brownsville houses the most auto shredders, followed by Houston with three. Ohio and Pennsylvania both are home to 15 shredder plants. The Ohio cities of Canton, Columbus and Toledo each are home to two shredder plants, including operations by Slesnick Iron and Metal, PSC Metals and Omnimetals. Pittsburgh, with two auto shredders, has operations by Nerdle Metals and Tuba City, while Temple, Pa., is home to two shredders operated by Royal Green LLC/AMG Resources. Pittsburgh, with two auto shredders, has operations by Neville Metals and Tube City, while Temple, Pa., is home to two shredders operated by Royal Green LLC/AMG Resources.

Florida currently houses 14 shredders, though a 15th is planned at Manatee Metals in Tampa. Michigan, also the site of 14 plants, includes operations by Ferrous Processing & Trading, Louis Paladin Iron & Metal and Directsource. Planned installations include Montana’s first auto shredder, to be operated by Pacific Steel & Recycling in Lockwood, as well as in Niagara Falls, N.Y., operated by Falls Metal Recycling, and in Wyoming, N.Y., to be operated by Brookfield Resource Management.

**INTENSE COMPETITION**

In 1998, processors were concerned that the U.S. had an overcapacity of auto shredders. More than 100 shredder installations later, the issue is even more concerning. (See “Too Much of a Good Thing,” p. 76.) Certainly, competition for auto hulks has grown along with the number of auto shredders.

For the ferrous commodity focus article, “Holding Steady,” in the May issue of Recycling Today, a shredder operator based in Illinois told Managing Editor DeAnne Toto: “This is a cycle where you realize that if you are going to compete with your neighbor, you are not going to put in a baler or a shear; you are going to put in a shredder.”

Sources say intense competition for material is eroding margins. “We are probably doing a little better than breaking even,” a Georgia-based processor said of his operation in late April of this year, when No. 2 shredded scrap was selling at $438 per ton as a U.S. average. “If you can take 5 percent to the bottom line, you are doing very well. Right now, that’s not available,” he added.

With No. 2 shredded scrap selling for $398 as of September, auto shredder operators likely are experiencing even more challenging than they were at the start of the spring.

However, shredder capacity continues to grow, as evidenced by the 2012 list of U.S. shoulder plants (some of which may currently be idled) that are installed or planned for 2013.
The Recycling Today Media Group has been trying to locate auto shredder plants operating in Canada. If you are aware of shredding plants operating in Canada, please contact Recycling Today Senior Editor Ben Seibel of bsiegel@recyclingtoday.com or at 330-523-3335.