

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPPUpdate

Issue 11 | August 2002

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING

The Greening of Our National Parks

The National Park Service (NPS), the National Recreation and Park Association, and EPA's EPP program have joined together to move our national parks toward sustainability by focusing on greening a number of park functions, including purchasing, maintenance, planning, interpretation, and concessions. A key element of the partnership is demonstrating to park staff, managers, and visitors that environmentally preferable purchasing is a tool to achieve their sustainability goals.

To kick off this endeavor, NPS held its first charrette at Big Cypress National Preserve in south Florida. The park's Superintendent, John Donohue, made opening remarks and emphasized that part of NPS' mission is to be "demonstrators, not regulators." Furthermore, he discussed the opportunity to educate more than 280 million park visitors each year about sustainability approaches, including greener products and services. During the first day of the charrette, NPS experts presented brief overviews of key issues and approaches in areas such as transportation, facilities, operations, and procurement.

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Highlights

- Greening Our National Parks
- Sustainable Public Housing
- Federal Network for Sustainability
- Shopping Online for Green Office Supplies
- New CPG Database
- And More!

EPP PIONEERS:

Planning for a Green Future

Kathy Seikel knows a bit about "green" purchasing. After working for 8 years in EPA's Office of Acquisition Management (OAM)—where she headed up the staff responsible for ensuring the integrity of EPA's \$4 billion-a-year contracted programs—she made a transition to EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS) where she served as the senior policy advisor for grants and contracts. When an opportunity arose for Kathy to take a temporary position on OPPTS' EPP team, she leapt at the chance to combine her extensive technical skills in federal procurement with her commitment to the

environment. Kathy recognized EPA's unique position as a promoter of governmentwide green purchasing and a major procurer of services and supplies. Working with OAM management, she cleared the way for EPA to "walk the talk" in green contracting by pursuing opportunities for converting conventional contracts into EPP contracts.

Kathy began this process by integrating pollution prevention principles into the purchase of products, but soon expanded her scope to include services, which



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Conference Helps

EPP in Practice

The *EPP Update* is highlighting a variety of paper types that EPA has determined to have certain positive environmental attributes. The paper choice for this issue is *Vanguard Eco Blend*. Look to future issues of the *EPP Update* to highlight additional paper types.

Well, It Happened Again....

As some of our readers might have realized, the paper actually used to print *EPP Update* #10 was not the paper EPA had specified. The newsletter was supposed to be printed on Living Tree Paper Company's Vanguard Eco Blend—a processed chlorine-free (PCF) paper that includes 25 percent virgin hemp and 75 percent postconsumer fiber. The paper used for *Update* #10 was actually the standard paper used by EPA for all of its quick-turnaround contract jobs. The specification for that paper is the same except that the 25 percent virgin hemp fiber was actually 25 percent postconsumer fiber, making it a 100 percent postconsumer fiber, PCF paper (which has a fine environmental profile in its own right). We also incorrectly referred to the paper in the article as “100 percent recycled content” when it should have read “totally free of virgin tree pulp.”

How Could This Happen?

The first step of the EPP process involves “defining EPP,” while the second step deals with “fitting EPP into the procurement process.” Despite establishing procedures with EPA's print shop after *Update* #4 was printed on the standard contract paper (30 percent postconsumer paper at the time) instead of the kenaf/postconsumer blend EPA had specified, mistakes can still be made. Mistakes happen most often when a special procedure is requested that deviates from standard practice. Until environmentally preferable products or services are offered as the standard practice, there may be a bump in the road here and there, but EPP pioneers keep going!

Let's Try It Again...

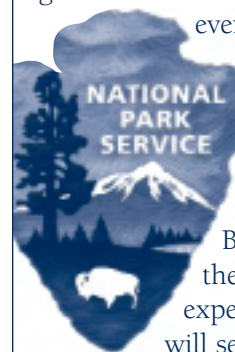
This issue of the *EPP Update* is printed on Vanguard Eco Blend processed chlorine-free (PCF) paper, including 25 percent virgin hemp and 75 percent postconsumer fiber. For further information on Vanguard Eco Blend or other Living Tree papers, contact the Living Tree Paper Company at 800 309-2974, or visit the company's Web site at <www.livingtreepaper.com>.

More than 130 government and private sector purchasing officials and other interested parties from around the world gathered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from April 22 to 25 to learn more about environmentally preferable purchasing. The first-ever North American Conference on Green Purchasing, organized and co-hosted by the Center for a New American Dream (the Center) and TerraChoice Environmental Services, Inc., attracted people from 7 countries and 25 U.S. states.

Conference attendees heard from several notable speakers, including the Honourable Gilbert Parent, Canadian Ambassador for the Environment, and Ray Anderson, Chairman of Interface, Inc., a Fortune 500 company that strives for sustainability in all aspects of its floor covering production process. They also participated in a wide variety of sessions devoted to specific environmental pur-

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On the second day, participants worked in small groups on these issues, developing short-term, interim, and long-term goals and actions for Big Cypress. This



event was very well-received by the Big Cypress managers and staff, as well as participants from other parks.

Based on lessons from the two-day event, NPS expects that the charrette will serve as a model for sustainability planning at other national parks designated as Centers for

Further Green Purchasing

chasing topics, such as how to design an environmentally preferable purchasing program, how to “sell” the environmental purchasing concept to political leaders and other key audiences, and how to leverage the power of institutional purchasing to increase product availability. Participants debated the future of lifecycle assessments and eco-labels in sessions on these topics. They also attended sessions devoted to specific commodity areas to learn about the availability of more environmentally preferable office products, paper, cleaning products, and electricity options.

“One of the most exciting aspects of the conference,” according to Betsy Taylor, executive director for the Center, “was bringing together so many experts from across the country and around the world to share their knowledge with the state and local government purchasers we are trying to help.”



The conference was held at the Sheraton Rittenhouse, which conference organizers consider one of the most environmentally preferable hotels in the United States. Conference proceedings will be available soon on the Center's Procurement Strategies Web site. For additional information about the conference or the Center's purchasing program, visit <www.newdream.org/procure> or e-mail Scot Case at <scot@newdream.org>.

Environmental Innovation (CEI). Several more charrettes will take place in the next year. Big Cypress National Preserve is one of 20 CEIs in the nation. CEIs are park areas where research, development, and appreciation of sustainable practices occur. The intent is for these areas to serve as catalysts to teach and inspire people with

concepts and values of sustainability. One of the key expectations is that these CEI parks will be showcases for environmentally preferable products and services.

For more information on the Big Cypress charrette or CEIs, contact Julie Shannon of EPA at 202 564-8834 or Shawn Norton of NPS at 202 565-1260.

Charrette: *n.* An intensive planning workshop that allows for multidisciplinary participation from a variety of stakeholders to create an integrated design of a building, landscape, or community.

Several key action items emerged from the charrette, which will guide Big Cypress' greening activities:

- Form green teams, which will help keep momentum going.
- Communicate the results of the charrette to other park staff.
- Educate park visitors about the new green initiatives.
- Become a leader and model for other national parks, as well as state and local parks.

Bringing HOPE

The cramped, no-frills, barracks-style buildings along Northwest 22nd Avenue in Miami, Florida, symbolize the stigma of public housing. Established in 1954, the Scott Homes development consists of 754 dwelling units. More than a decade later, Carver Homes built 96 units right next door. Although both of these public housing projects were constructed to meet the rising demand for affordable housing at the time, today these developments—the largest public housing complex in Florida—appear outdated and raise serious structural and health concerns, making Scott/Carver Homes overdue for redevelopment.

Unique partnerships and fortunate circumstances have given Scott/Carver Homes and its residents a second chance. Community representatives, local law enforcement, environmental groups, federal agencies, private corporations, and numerous other stakeholders came together over two intense days in December 2001 to assist the Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA) in planning a sustainable vision for Scott/Carver Homes. The design charrette provided a unique forum for developing environmentally sustainable solutions for the community—from deconstruction to demolition to redevelopment.

EPA's EPP program supported the Southface Energy Institute in convening the design charrette. In addition, the EPP program provided technical assistance to a working group charged with recommending "green" building materials to MDHA and the design team. The following is a summary of the recommendations from the various stakeholders comprising the working group. For a more detailed list of these recommendations or to review each of the working group's recommendations on a variety of sustainable design concepts, read the Final Report at: <http://cool.southface.org/home/courses/HOPE-VI-Report.pdf>.

HOPE's Goals

The transformation of Scott/Carver Homes through HUD's HOPE VI revitalization grant program is designed "to end physical, social, and economic isolation of obsolete and distressed public housing by recreating and supporting sustainable communities and lifting residents from dependence and persistent poverty."

to a Community in Despair

Design Charrette Recommendations*

Specify Environmentally Preferable and Locally Produced Materials in Contract Language

The following resources can help when choosing environmentally preferable products:

- EPA's EPP Database contains green building contract language, voluntary standards, and case studies: www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/database.htm.
- Building for Environmental and Economic Sustainability is a software program that supports lifecycle costing and environmental impact decision making: www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/bees.htm.

Provide Good Indoor Environmental Quality for Residents

- Select and specify no or low-volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in paints and finishes.
- Select hard flooring surfaces in non-bedroom areas.
- If using particle board or medium-density fiberboard, coat with low- or no-VOC paint.
- Install and upgrade air filters.
- Design a separate usable entry with seating area to allow removal of outerwear prior to entering home.

Choose Materials That Are Appropriately Durable

Providing residents with durable structures and materials keeps operation and maintenance requirements to a minimum. Using lifecycle costing, products and materials can be appropriately compared to determine cost and maintenance over time. For example, outdoor deck and railing material made from recycled plastic lumber is long-lasting, does not use toxic preservatives, and requires no sealants or coatings, as wood does.

Provide Education to the Community Before and After Redevelopment

Project success often hinges on community commitment. Addressing perceptions of “poor quality” that might mistakenly be associated with salvaged materials, stained concrete floors, or recycled products is critical. Try the following techniques to help residents feel comfortable with the materials used in the development of their homes:

- Display material options and provide “touch and feel” opportunities.
- Create a model home furnished and replete with labeled “green” products.
- Provide a photo album of other homes employing similar products and technologies.
- Show video footage of community charrettes to showcase transparency of decision-making.

Conduct Operation and Maintenance Education

To maintain a healthy environment for residents, focus continuing education efforts on:

- Healthy cleaning products.
- Operation and maintenance of air-conditioning and heating systems.
- Appropriate and natural methods of pest management (indoor and outdoor pests).
- Furniture and finishing choices as they relate to indoor environmental quality.
- Energy- and water-saving practices.



For more information, contact Alison Kinn of EPA at 202 564-8859 or by e-mail at kinn.alison@epa.gov.

* These recommendations are not necessarily the views of EPA. They were developed by multiple stakeholders participating in the design charrette.

EPP Investigative Reporting:

How Easy is it to Shop Online for

The IRS anticipates spending up to \$15 million a year on office supplies, while DOE's Pacific Northwest Laboratory spends approximately \$34 million.



These days, when government workers need to purchase copy paper or file folders, they will likely pull out a government-issued credit card. These cards can be used on “micropurchases,” which for most government purchase card holders is \$2,500 or less, a limit that covers most office supplies. But how easy is it for the typical customer to buy a “green” office product from the top office product suppliers? The majority of office supplies sold to the federal government are purchased through GSA Advantage! or other major office product companies such as Staples, Office Depot, Boise Cascade Office Products, and Corporate Express. In addition, some office supply companies, such as Recycled Office Products, focus on providing only green products to their customers. The EPP program tried its hand at buying green products from these suppliers’ Web sites and compiled some interesting findings.

Does the Company Sell Green Products?

GSA carries several “green” items and, as the government supplier of office products, establishes some basic environmental criteria for vendors. For example, all GSA copy paper contains at least 30 percent postconsumer content, meeting the requirements set in Executive Order 13101. All five private companies we visited also sell products that they identify as “green.” Most are items with recycled-content, including paper, plastic products, and remanufactured toner cartridges. We found chlorine-free paper products at Staples and Recycled Office Products, and

nontoxic and/or biodegradable items on four of the companies’ Web sites. Boise Cascade and Corporate Express carry both 30 percent and 100 percent recycled-content paper.

How are Green Products Identified?

GSA has special icons that denote green attributes, including “environmental items,” “CPG compliant,” and “recycled content.” From the Web site, however, it is difficult to determine which products are considered “environmental items.” Certain office products have a tree icon representing their qualification as an “environmental item,” but the basis of this distinction is unclear. Three of the private companies also have a way of distinguishing environmental products from other items. Staples has a “Recycled Products” link, which shows up on top of the page when you shop for paper. Clicking on the icon gives you a list of recycled paper products and links to more information about recycling. Recycled-content items on Corporate Express’ Web site have a small icon next to them, as do the items on the Recycled Office Products Web site, even though most of them are recycled to begin with.

Is Environmental Attribute Information Available?

Identifying a product as “recycled” or “environmentally friendly” is one thing, but determining exactly what attributes a product has can be difficult. Fortunately, GSA and all five companies provide relatively detailed attribute information. GSA relies on the vendor to provide environmental attribute information,

Green Office Supplies?



meaning the level of detail is dependent on what the vendor submits. In preliminary searches, most GSA office products had environmental attribute information available. All five private companies list the recycled and/or postconsumer content percentages of recycled products. In some cases, they include more specific information, such as chlorine-free or acid-free. Office Depot and Recycled Office Products even include information about the environmental attributes of product packaging (e.g., recycled-content, soy-based inks), while Corporate Express explains that its “environmentally friendly” cleaners are non-toxic and biodegradable. Unfortunately, none of the nongovernment companies’

Web sites mentioned third-party certification (e.g., Green Seal) or CPG compliance of products, although Staples sells a few items bearing the Energy Star® label.

Are Government Green Purchasing Requirements Indicated?

Most of the companies do not describe the federal government’s green purchasing requirements outlined in Executive Order 13101. Boise Cascade Office Products states that its 30 percent postconsumer-content paper meets “federal and state guidelines for recycled content,” but this claim is not applied to its 100 percent postconsumer-content paper, which obviously exceeds the

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For more information on GSA Advantage! and the companies discussed in this article, visit their Web sites:

- **Boise Cascade Office Products**
<www.boiseoffice.com>;
Boise Cascade Company
<www.boisecascade.com>
- **Corporate Express**
<www.corporateexpress.com>
- **GSA Advantage**
<www.gsaadvantage.gov>
- **Office Depot**
<www.officedepot.com>
- **Recycled Office Products**
<www.recycledofficeproducts.com>
- **Staples**
<www.staples.com>

Some Food for Thought...

Online ordering systems are increasingly becoming valuable tools for federal purchasers in identifying and purchasing greener products and services. Here are some ideas for these companies as they continue to improve the green features of their systems:

- GSA-specific recommendations: standardize environmental product descriptions; link to the EPP Database <www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/tools/database.htm> and other EPP resources; enable the sorting of search results by percent recycled content; clarify the definition of “environmental items”; feature only CPG-compliant items.
 - Link to Executive Order 13101 in key places.
 - Specify which products are CPG compliant (visit <www.epa.gov/cpg> for more information).
 - Specify which products meet Green Seal’s new guidelines in its office products *Choose Green Report* (visit <www.greenseal.org> for more information).
 - Spearhead product “take-back” programs (for batteries, remanufactured toner cartridges, and other products) in participation with manufacturers.
 - Prepare to respond quickly to upcoming demand for biobased products—the 2002 Farm Bill includes new provisions for federal procurement of these items.
 - Continue aggressively pursuing and increasing the availability of green products on the Web sites.
 - Develop ways to help the government track purchases of greener products more efficiently.
- If any of our readers have comments or additional suggestions, please contact the EPP program at <epp.pilot@epa.gov>.

What Happened to the EPP Guides?

Last December, the EPP program published six purchasing guides on the following product and service categories: Cleaning Products, Meetings and Conferences, Carpet, Electronics, Copiers, and Food Serviceware. Following the release of the guides, EPA heard both positive and negative feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. Generally, some of our stakeholders' greatest concerns

focused on EPA's process for developing the guides. While we had consulted with many of our colleagues in and outside the Agency, many interested stakeholders did not have the opportunity to review and comment on the guides prior to publication. **Due to these concerns, we suspended distribution and are now treating the guides as drafts for public comment.** A formal review process will be initiated in the near future (see text box).

EPA conceived the guides as a way to communicate the challenges, successes, and resources associated with various products and services, focusing on how to incorporate environmental considerations into purchasing decisions. In addition, each guide sets out to present to purchasers the potential environmental impacts of their decisions.

Some stakeholders expressed the concern that the guides were endorsing certain products. EPA's EPP program does not endorse products nor does it recommend or discourage the purchase of specific products. However, the program does provide guidance and information on relevant environmental attributes for a number of product and service categories. Environmentally preferable purchasing seeks the overall best value, taking into account considerations of price, performance, and environmental impact. Because purchasers typically have well-established sources of information and methods for evaluating price and performance, the EPP program's information products (like the guides) focus primarily on the environmental factors in the EPP equation.

Please "stay tuned" to our Web site for the latest developments. We look forward to working with all of our stakeholders on creating valuable EPP resources.

The EPP program strives to operate in a transparent manner, with open participation and counsel from our stakeholders. However, because of the concerns raised, we have developed a new process for the EPP purchasing guides to allow for broader review and comment from all stakeholders. A brief description of the new process is shown below:

Process for development and review of EPP product guides:

1. Make changes based upon comments and information received to date.
2. Publish notice in the Federal Register announcing that the draft guides are available for review and soliciting input on existing standards, lifecycle impacts, and other relevant information.
3. Send revised draft to key stakeholders and simultaneously post on the EPP Web site as draft, with request for comments within 30 days.
4. Consider the appropriateness of a stakeholder meeting for guides.
5. Establish record for comments and publicize (via Web site and other means) procedures for submitting/reviewing comments.
6. Make further revisions as necessary based on additional comments and post revised document along with comments on the Web site.
7. Allow for stakeholders with major concerns to request a meeting before we publish the document as final.

At this time, we are not contemplating any new purchasing guides. Should we determine that additional guides are appropriate, we will follow a similar process for their development and review.



EPA Makes Buying Recycled A Snap

This summer, EPA will unveil a new database to make complying with its Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG) easier. CPG forms the foundation of the federal government's buy-recycled program, which requires agencies to purchase certain designated items containing the highest percentage of recycled content possible. The searchable database of vendors who sell or distribute CPG-designated products with recycled content will be a powerful tool that allows users to search for vendors of a specific CPG product (e.g., Floor Tiles), product category (e.g., Construction Products), or type of material (e.g., Plastic). In addition, users will be able to search directly for a specific vendor by typing all or part of the vendor's name in a search field.

According to Terry Grist, EPA program manager for CPG, "The purpose of moving to a database system is to provide procurement officials with a more accessible and reliable reference source they can use to identify vendors of CPG-designated items." Mr. Grist explains, "In the past, our lists of manufacturers and suppliers on the CPG Web site were static and required extensive research to maintain, which greatly reduced the utility of the information." The new automated system will allow EPA to more readily update and maintain the vendor information.

The database is expected to be fully operational on the CPG Web site <www.epa.gov/cpg> by the end of the summer, with continued efforts being made to update and expand the information.



www.epa.gov/cpg





Sharing the Knowledge:

More and More Agencies Seek Information about Sustainability

“Of special note is one of the guiding principles contained in the Statement of Unity – ‘to act as a catalyst for change.’ I believe FNS represents that catalyst. As a group, we can exert a more positive force for change than we can now do individually. We will also gain momentum for change in capitalizing on one another’s ideas.”

—James T. Hill, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army, Fort Lewis, Washington

Imagine a place where federal employees can go to voluntarily learn about and share sustainability practices. Since its inception on Earth Day 2000, the Federal Network for Sustainability (FNS) has provided a virtual home for just that. A voluntary, non-regulatory network of federal government agencies in the western United States, FNS promotes interagency collaboration in the areas of planning, purchasing, and managing valuable resources. FNS is focusing on the following four initiatives this year:

- Electronic Products Stewardship
- Environmental Management Systems
- Green Power Procurement
- Greening Federal Copier Paper

Since our last article on this issue in EPP Update #9 (EPA747-N-01-002), FNS has expanded the scope of its program by leaps and bounds. While most of its members are still federal agencies from the West, FNS is also working with various city and state governments and interest groups across the country as they begin thinking about sustainable practices. Perhaps one of the biggest changes the FNS steering committee has seen over the past year is that other groups are seeking them out.

“FNS is at a point now where people are coming to us for information. Many of the agencies don’t know very much about sustainability, and often those that do are not sure how to go about implementing it,” said Alan Hurt, FNS Chair. Hoping to become a central clearinghouse for communicating the successes and challenges of implementing several environmental Executive Orders (13148, 13149, 13150, 13101, and 13123), as well as long-term sus-

tainable practices, FNS is conducting surveys and collecting information from agencies that exemplify best business practices. “These case studies,” Hurt says, “will help provide answers to those who need help implementing sustainability activities.”

As FNS continues to add federal agencies and others to its membership, current members have taken a lead on many of the initiatives. The Department of Defense, for example, is currently promoting the principles of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) through its senior management and within other agencies. “In addition,” Hurt adds, “the Navy is actively incorporating EMS principles as a standardized process in all of its business lines of operation. The key point here is that EMS is inherent to business operations, as well as being important from an environmental standpoint.”

With a busy year ahead, FNS will continue to build and collect case studies for each initiative, increase collaboration among federal agencies, continue its outreach and education efforts, and keep the lines of communication open among the network. It is this communication that has propelled FNS forward over the past 2 years, allowing member agencies to use one another’s expertise for future initiatives.

For more information about FNS or to become a member, please visit www.federalsustainability.org or contact FNS Chair Alan Hurt at 619 524-6253. For information on how you can participate in the FNS Paper Initiative contact Barbara Lither at 206 553-1191.

Pioneers < Continued from Page 1 >

constitute the bulk of EPA's acquisition budget. When EPA was about to issue an RFP for meeting management support, Kathy seized the occasion and worked with contract officials to incorporate environmental criteria into the RFP. "I felt that green conferencing would serve as a living advertisement for what EPA stands for," says Kathy. In the RFP, companies had the opportunity to demonstrate their ingenuity and creativity for planning green conferences.

Enter MEGA-TECH, Inc. (MTI) under the leadership of Harlan Lee, a former conference planner for the State Department. EPA ultimately awarded MTI the meetings management support contract. MTI, an award-winning, woman-owned small business based in Falls Church, Virginia, provides environmental and information technology support for a variety of federal agencies.

Harlan viewed the EPA contract as an opportunity for MTI to develop expertise in green conference support and introduce the concept to others. Lacking green conference models to follow, Harlan and his staff embarked on a mission to develop guidelines and specifications for hosting environmentally conscious meetings. Building from suggestions for green conference activities found on EPA's Web site, the MTI team developed an extensive list of environmental initiatives to undertake when planning a green event.

Harlan's team now considers an assortment of environmental criteria when selecting a conference venue, including proximity to mass transit;

lodging facility certification by Green Seal based on its environmental standard for lodging properties; facility membership in either Green Globe or the Green Hotel and Motel Association, which are organizations that encourage the travel and tourism industries to

engage in environmentally sound initiatives; electronic registration and/or checkout systems that save paper; well-developed recycling programs; and employee education on green policies.

Harlan and his staff also take actions to provide environmentally responsible

amenities and services throughout the conference, such as establishing Web sites to post conference information; offering online services; distributing conference materials on diskette or CD-ROM; printing hard copy materials on recycled paper; and using reusable cups, dishes, napkins, and serving containers.

Under this EPA contract, MTI has been supporting green conferences and meetings around the country. In March 2002, MTI organized the annual EPA OPPTS National and Division Directors meeting in Seattle, Washington. Harlan and his staff continually investigate options for enhancing green events and state that they "are happy to be in a position to lead the way in green conferencing."

If you would like to see the "green" contract language from EPA's OPPTS meeting planning support contract or are interested in current initiatives and tools that are making planning and supplying green meetings easier, please visit <www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings> or contact Russell Clark at EPA at 202 564-8856.



Office Supplies < Continued from Page 7>

standards. Similarly, in Office Depot's description of its brand of 35 percent postconsumer-content paper, there is an indication that it exceeds "federal guidelines for recycled paper," but the site does not provide any other specifics. Staples' Web site includes a couple of articles about recycling and buying recycled office products, and one footnote references Executive Order 13101.

What Does a Search Turn Up?

Let's face it—purchasers don't always have time to leisurely browse through Web sites or catalogs for green products, but good search engines can help. We tested the search engines of these companies by searching on two types of keywords: specific products (e.g., remanufactured toner cartridges) and environmental attributes (e.g., nontoxic, recycled). GSA Advantage! allows customers to specify

"environmental items" when searching or to perform a more general keyword search. However, GSA's large number of vendors and its reliance on manufacturer-supplied attribute information sometimes produces confusing search results (e.g., "pcf" and "processed chlorine free" yield different results). Corporate Express and Office Depot allow customers to specify certain attributes when searching, including "recycled" and "remanufactured." The other companies had more general, keyword search engines, yet they still returned lists of items when we searched on environmental attributes, such as "recycled" or "nontoxic."



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