



Focus

2002 Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention & Sustainable Practices

Innovators win awards

Gov. Gary Locke honored five Washington businesses and one government agency September 18 with the 2002 Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices. The companies and agency found innovative ways to offer their products and services while minimizing waste and conserving vital resources, such as energy and water. Their efforts succeeded in reducing their material and disposal costs, increasing product quality, and improving worker health and safety.

Why they won

The award-winning facilities demonstrated the benefits of reducing or eliminating the use of toxic materials, preventing solid and hazardous waste, reducing emissions to the air and discharges to water, and conserving natural resources. They demonstrated excellence through their commitment to environmental quality and their willingness to share their knowledge of pollution prevention and sustainable practices. Sustainable practices let a business meet its resource needs successfully, without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The judging process

Entries were judged by past winners, pollution-prevention experts, and representatives from businesses, labor and environmental groups, and academia. The judges looked for facilities that demonstrated the greatest innovation and reached out to others in their industries or communities to teach about preventing pollution and using sustainable practices.

2002 Governor's Award recipients

Batdorf and Bronson Coffee Roasters

Batdorf and Bronson Coffee Roasters, an Olympia-based business, buys and roasts green coffees from around the world. In 2001, it offset all of its emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases (equal to 258 tons), through the Bonneville Environmental Foundation's Green Tags program.

Batdorf and Bronson pays extra for electricity to support energy research and alternative sources of power, such as solar and wind energy. The company is one of the first Washington businesses to make this commitment to the Green Tags program.

The company reduced its overall waste volume by 30 percent; buys approximately 80 percent of its raw bean stock from environmentally superior farming operations; and continuously educates its staff and customers about the environmental issues of coffee production, including sustainable growing practices and social-justice issues.

Columbia River Carbonates

Each year, Columbia River Carbonates processes 180,000 tons of mineral limestone at its Woodland facility into ultra-fine ground calcium carbonate products for the paper, paint and plastic industries. In 1998, the company began developing an innovative wastewater treatment system that recycles treated waste water to use in its production process and for washing down the plant. Before this conversion, the company treated and discharged more than 14 million gallons of process water into the Columbia River each year. It now discharges **no** process waste water, even though their production **increased** by nearly 50 percent during the conversion.

Although it was considered difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate process water, Columbia River Carbonates found a way. The company invested and worked to create an innovative plant-wide system that, among other features, uses centrifugal force to clean process water. The conversion has created a “ripple effect” of improvements throughout the facility. It reduced both the use of city clean water and the generation of solid waste by more than half. Since they no longer need all their settling lagoons, they cleaned and converted the largest one to a natural storm water treatment facility. The new system has drawn the interest of a Swiss firm that operates in 30 countries, which is now interested in wastewater recycling.

Madison Carnolia Cleaners

Madison Carnolia Cleaners provides dry- and wet-cleaning services in the Magnolia area of Seattle. Dry cleaners commonly use perchloroethylene, a potential carcinogen, in their cleaning processes. Improper disposal of this solvent has contaminated groundwater in many areas of Washington. Madison Carnolia Cleaners reduced its use of “perc” from 1,300 gallons to less than 95 gallons a year, saving more than \$12,000. The company did this by adding a wet cleaning process, investing in new closed-loop cleaning equipment, and committing to a maintenance and monitoring regimen to prevent releases. One of the best benefits is that employees are exposed to less chemicals. The company filters its waste water to recover and recycle useable solvent. This ensures the waste water is non-polluting and significantly reduces the cost for disposal.

Madison Carnolia Cleaners also retrofitted its lighting and, as a result, dropped its annual energy use by 56 percent, a savings of more than \$1,200. The company actively promotes environmentally responsible ethics within the dry-cleaning industry and to its customers.

City of Seattle

The City of Seattle provides essential services to more than 560,000 residents. Its Seattle Urban Sustainability Initiative incorporates sustainability and pollution prevention into a wide range of existing business processes. The program encompasses:

- Clean diesel: The city converted all of its diesel equipment and vehicles to ultra-low-sulfur diesel and retrofitted 400 heavy-duty trucks with advanced emission-control devices. This move helped create enough market demand to attract a supplier for the cleaner fuel.
- Sustainable building: Seattle has committed to meeting high energy and environmental standards for all of its new and renovated municipal buildings using the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design rating system. The city also offers financial and technical assistance to businesses and residents in sustainable building.
- Municipal conservation: The city has lowered its use of electric and gas power, water and other materials, saving about \$540,000 a year.
- Sustainable purchasing: The city has established environmental performance as a key criterion in purchasing and contracting decisions, from computers to janitorial products. These and other programs saved Seattle \$2.8 million in 2001.
- Pesticide-use reduction: The city educates employees and relies on their expertise to choose the best pesticide for each maintained site. Pesticide use has declined by 31 percent in general operations and by 5 percent on city golf courses.

Watson Furniture Group

Watson Furniture Group manufactures office and public-safety workstations and storage systems at its facility in rural Kitsap County. The company significantly reduced its use of toxic substances, and the possible release of volatile organic chemicals, by:

- replacing solvent-based adhesives with non-toxic, water-soluble adhesives;
- replacing spray painting with powder coating; and
- cleaning metal parts with a closed-loop pressurized system.

Watson Furniture Group invested in new equipment to increase efficiency while decreasing wood scrap. It buys materials that have recycled content and are recyclable, including fabrics with 100 percent recycled or reclaimed content and particleboard made from reclaimed industrial waste. It ships its products in reusable blanket wraps. The company's new manufacturing facility was designed to coexist with and enhance nearby wetlands and a salmon stream.

The Wenatchee World

The Wenatchee World is a family-owned daily newspaper published in Wenatchee. In 1999, a new production facility was constructed with waste reduction and recycling built in. The company has:

- reduced newsprint consumption by 500,000 pounds per year;
- reduced power use through new equipment and employee-awareness campaigns;
- reduced ink use by 25 percent; and
- eliminated photographic film and chemicals.

The company recycled more than 500,000 pounds of materials last year. It saves more than \$10,000 per year in ink costs by using less ink, buying it in bulk and pumping directly from the large containers to the press. They use soy-based color ink, which does not need solvents and is removed more effectively during recycling than petroleum ink. They use recycled newsprint from Washington mills. They also set up a Web site dedicated to helping other newspapers understand the technological changes. And all of this occurred without sacrificing the quality of the daily newspaper product. As evidence of this quality, in 2002 The Wenatchee World was awarded “Best of Show” for its color reproduction among all newspapers in the United States.

For more information

Contact Mariann Cook Andrews, of the Department of Ecology’s hazardous-waste program, 360-407-6740

Or visit the Governor’s Award Web site at:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/sustainability/GovAward_awards.htm

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