

# LinkUp NewsLink

Winter 2002

INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES USING RECYCLED MATERIALS IN THEIR PRODUCTS

## IN THE NEWS

**LinkUp** partners garnered coverage recently in several construction and solid-waste recycling trade journals.

**Green construction.** The November issue of *Northwest Construction* magazine highlighted **LinkUp** partners Allied Floors, Tri-Vitro Corporation and Y.K. Products. The three company principals were asked about the challenges they face in creating markets for recycled products and about the technical or marketing services they received under the **LinkUp** program. *Northwest Construction* reaches some 12,000 contractors, architects, engineers and owners of construction companies in Washington, Oregon and Alaska.

**Golden recovery.** *The Daily Journal of Commerce's* October 15 edition featured a front-page story on Tacoma-based partner, Recovery One, Inc., and general manager Terry Gillis. According to the article, in the past four years, Recovery One recycled enough construction and demolition material to create a stack longer than a football field and higher than the Space Needle. Without Gillis' operation, this material would likely have been sent to landfills.

**Tripling sales.** *Solid Waste Report*, a national trade publication geared toward producers and disposers of solid waste, reported on **LinkUp's** first year of operation. The October 19 feature looked at first-year program results — from increased sales to expanded production volume — and cited **LinkUp's** "ability to work directly with manufacturers."

## *Recycled Plastics Marketing: Plastic lumber makes the grade*

The plastic milk jug sitting on your countertop today could become the weather-resistant deck you walk on tomorrow.

That scenario is moving closer to reality, thanks to Recycled Plastics Marketing, Inc. Headquartered in Redmond, Wash., RPM takes plastic items, such as milk jugs and detergent containers destined for the landfill, and creates new products from them.

### *A Northwest original*

At the RPM plant in Tacoma, a 50,000-square-foot facility, tons of assorted plastic items in huge bales fill the loading dock area. The plastics are separated, reprocessed and turned back into pellets that are then made into new products, including plastic lumber, outdoor furniture, gardening products and composting bins.

The plant, the only one of its kind in the Pacific Northwest, also acts as a collection and resale site for scrap plastics that are marketed around the globe.

This past year has seen many enhancements at the RPM facility. The company has added shredding and grinding equipment and expanded the capability of its reprocessing line. "We also have become more aggressive in purchasing scrap and surplus materials, increasing our activity in that area by about 50 percent," says John Cote, president, RPM.

### *Sitting pretty*

Increased interest in the long-lasting and maintenance-free benefits of plastic lumber, along with its environmentally friendly qualities, has also meant more orders. In fact, orders for RPM's plastic lumber, DuraBord, have quadrupled in the past two years.

An expanding market for RPM is municipal transit authorities seeking graffiti-resistant benches for bus stops and terminals. School sales and industrial orders are also on the rise. Currently, the Tacoma facility is operating round-the-clock five days a week.



John Cote (left), RPM, shows off DuraBord to Erv Sandlin, **LinkUp** program manager.

RPM was one of the first businesses to become a **LinkUp** partner. The **LinkUp** team helped identify organizations that might provide financing for expansion and also created a media campaign that netted feature stories in several business publications.

### *Building sales*

Plastic lumber is produced in many conventional sizes and can be sawn and nailed just like wood. But unlike wood, homeowners do not need to treat it with chemical preservatives or paint it, so it is more earth-friendly.

"Plastic lumber is the future," says Marc Lagen, sales manager, RPM. "It doesn't fade or stain; it doesn't harbor moss, mold or mildew; and it has a 50-year guarantee."

As contractors become familiar with the product, it is finding its way into more homes. Contractor Darrell Johnson built a "dream home" at the 2000 Pierce County Street of Dreams that included a deck and porch made from RPM recycled plastic lumber. "Initially, I was skeptical," Johnson said at the time. "But I found out that plastic lumber is durable, easy to care for, good-looking and will outlast any natural product."

**NewsLink** is published quarterly by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Solid Waste Division, as part of the **LinkUp** program. For information about **LinkUp**, contact Erv Sandlin at (206) 296-0233 or [erv.sandlin@metrokc.gov](mailto:erv.sandlin@metrokc.gov), or go to <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/market/linkup>.



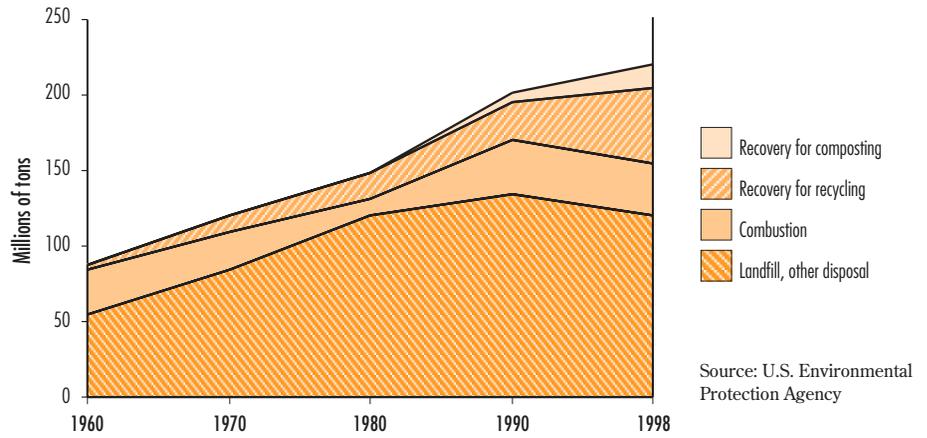
## **LinkUp seeks new partners for 2002**

**LinkUp** provides eligible Puget Sound businesses with free technical assistance and marketing support. To be considered for program participation in 2002, download an application form at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/market/linkup> or call (206) 296-0233.

## FAST FACTS

### *A shifting landscape*

The amount of solid waste generated annually in the U.S. grew from 88 million tons in 1960 to 220 million tons in 1998. But growing participation in recycling programs led to a decline in the quantity of waste discarded. The amount of material recovered for reuse or composting increased from 5.6 million tons in 1960 to 62.2 million tons in 1998, yielding a 28 percent recycling rate in 1998.



## SPOTLIGHT ON KING COUNTY

### *Glorious gardens and recycled products*

What do a rain garden and aphrodite's retreat have in common? They were two of the spectacular gardens featured in last year's Northwest Flower & Garden Show. This year's event, scheduled for Feb. 6–10 at the Washington State Trade and Convention Center, showcases not only glorious gardens but also recycled products for home and garden — from compost and mulch to glass tiles and furniture made from reclaimed bicycle parts. Visit [www.gardenshow.com/nw](http://www.gardenshow.com/nw) for information on hours, seminars and more.

The region's premier environmental consumer event, Northwest EnviroExpo, will be held Feb. 16–24 at the Stadium Exhibition Center as part of the popular Seattle Home Show. Now in its fourth year, EnviroExpo showcases innovative products available locally that use less water or energy, have been made from recycled materials, or incorporate sustainable materials in the manufacturing process. For more information, contact Kris Beatty, King County Solid Waste Division, at (206) 296-3740.

### *County reorganization streamlines services*

As part of a larger countywide reorganization, the King County Commission for Marketing Recyclable Materials was merged this past fall with the Waste Reduction and Recycling section of the county's Solid Waste Division. This realignment consolidates some administrative functions, with attendant cost savings, without diminishing services to businesses participating in the county's recycling programs. Programs created under the former Marketing Commission, such as **LinkUp**, benefit by being integrated with the full range of resources and staff services available through the Solid Waste Division.

The Marketing Commission was created by county ordinance in 1989 to help create markets for the growing supplies of recycled materials. During the past decade, it pioneered several nationally recognized buy-recycled programs, such as Get in the Loop for retail goods and Shift Gears for re-refined oil. **LinkUp** was established in 2000 to work with Puget Sound manufacturers to use more recycled materials in their products.

## CHECK IT OUT!

### ONLINE RECYCLING DATABASE

A new database developed by the Business and Industry Resource Venture provides help for disposing of empty printer cartridges, old computers, scrap steel, and other reusable or recyclable materials. For more details, visit [www.resourceventure.org/database.htm](http://www.resourceventure.org/database.htm).

### HOME BUILDING

The fourth annual National Green Building Conference will be held March 24–26 at the Westin Hotel, Seattle. More than 700 homebuilders, designers, contractors and remodelers are expected to attend. For details, go to [www.nahbrc.org/gbc2002](http://www.nahbrc.org/gbc2002).

### FINANCING HELP

The U.S. Department of Energy has launched a new website that focuses on financial resources available to fund sustainable development efforts. The site outlines grant programs, taxes and fees, voluntary programs, bonds and loans. Find out more at [www.sustainable.doe.gov](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov) and choose "Financing."

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