

## Green Janitorial Services

# The Department of the Interior

By Gisele McAuliffe, contributing feature writer

**C**ustodial work at the Washington, D.C. headquarters complex of the Department of the Interior (DOI) has turned as green as the agency's mission.

The DOI is one of a growing number of federal agencies or private-industry businesses that are convinced environmentally responsible business practices are critical to their success as well as the future health of the planet.

NISH agrees with this strategy and is committed to positioning JWOD-associated CRPs as national leaders in providing green janitorial services. In the December 2002 edition of *Workplace*, NISH reported on the lessons learned by one CRP—**The Chimes, based in Baltimore, Md.**—that transformed all of its custodial work to green cleaning practices and now manages nearly two-dozen green janitorial services contracts with U.S. government agencies.

The Chimes decided to make the switch to green cleaning when it began work on an environmentally preferable janitorial services contract provided, through the JWOD Program, by the DOI national headquarters complex.

The following story outlines the experiences and insights of that federal customer, including why the DOI decided to shift to an environmentally preferable system for cleaning its offices; how it went about developing requirements for a green janitorial services agreement; and its experiences managing a green cleaning contract.

### Deciding to Make the Switch

The DOI Washington, D.C. headquar-

**“The mission of the DOI is environmentally related—the preservation of our wonderful public lands. My team and I felt it was in keeping with that mission to be at the forefront of environmentally sensitive cleaning.”**

**—Gary Peacock, building manager, DOI Headquarters**

ters complex encompasses two buildings with 1.4 million gross square feet that hold some 2,500 government office workers. A visit to the buildings reveals that they function a lot like a small city.

**Gary Peacock** began working as assistant building manager for the headquarters complex in 1988 and took over the position of manager seven years ago. Over the years, Peacock and his staff received numerous and repeated com-



Gloria Swann, The Chimes, uses a Genius Smart Vac equipped with hepa filters.

plaints from individuals who were allergic to or sensitive to some of the cleaning products used by the building's janitorial crews.

“My personal pet peeve was the discharge from old, large vacuum cleaners that blow out small, harmful particles right back into the air,” Peacock said. “So a few years ago, I decided to examine what could be done to improve the quality of living for ten-



Alicia Myrick, The Chimes, cleans a display in the DOI main lobby using a micro fiber rag.

ants. The mission of the DOI is environmentally related – the preservation of our wonderful public lands. My team and I felt it was in keeping with that mission to be at the forefront of environmentally sensitive cleaning.”

### Existing Federal Mandates

At about the same time as Peacock decided he wanted to make the switch to green cleaning, the U.S. government added a requirement to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR Part 23.703). It requires executive agencies to identify and purchase environmentally preferable products and services. The regulation states that agencies must maximize the utilization of environmentally preferable products based on guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and promotes the use of non-hazardous and recovered materials.

Prior to the FAR, Executive Order 13101 on “Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling and Federal Acquisition” required federal procurement officers to consider environmental factors in their purchasing and contracting decisions and directed the EPA to develop guidance to address environmentally preferable purchasing.

EPA established the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Program in response to the Executive Order and developed guiding principles for applying environmentally preferable purchasing in the federal government setting. Today, EPP clauses are included in a growing number of federal contracts.

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## DOI on Green Cleaning

**The products are safer for employees** – Looking at the “Material Safety Data Sheets” of green cleaners versus traditional cleaners, there are real differences; green cleaners are specifically formulated to have no carcinogens; be less caustic and flammable; less irritating to skin and respiratory systems and have less potential to interfere in reproduction.

**Green cleaning is cost neutral or less expensive** – As Gary Peacock, building manager, DOI Headquarters, discovered, green cleaning doesn't cost any more than traditional cleaning methods and, in some instances, green cleaning actually drives down costs.

**Green products work** – The products used at DOI's headquarters complex are environmentally preferable and do an excellent job, according to Peacock.

**All products should be evaluated in the field** – Some products do not perform as advertised by manufacturers and in many instances, Peacock said, “this could only be discovered after seeing the products used on a day-to-day basis.” For example, one window cleaner cleans windows well, but it requires 75 percent more time to do the job. Ultimately, an alternative environmentally sensitive window cleaner had to be found.

**Green cleaning operations require closer monitoring** – Cleaning chemicals purchased in bulk form (to reduce waste) require mixing and some products are used for multiple cleaning purposes. The mixing ratio varies depending on the intended use. Peacock recommends mixing stations be monitored more closely than they are with traditional cleaning chemicals.

**Tenant response is very positive** – Since he switched to green cleaning, Peacock no longer has to handle the 5-15 complaints he used to receive daily from tenants who suffered from allergies and other negative health reactions to the harsh chemicals used in traditional custodial work. “Within three days of The Chimes carrying out green cleaning services at the DOI's headquarters complex, tenants were actually going out of their way to tell me how pleased they were,” Peacock said. “That's truly remarkable when you realize that customer service experts say a dissatisfied customer will complain on average to 35 people, whereas a satisfied customer will tell an average of just five people. The positive feedback is a wonderful thing.

**Build on the green cleaning experiences of others** – Peacock discovered that selected companies have been great to work with, responsive to inquiries and willing to come on site to ensure the correct and best use of their products, while others fall short. They recommend contractors that want to offer green cleaning and federal agencies that want to make the switch to research the experience of other organizations like the DOI, and compile a list of names of recommended suppliers.

**JWOD Program sources supply green cleaners** – St. Louis Lighthouse for the Blind recently teamed up with Rochester-Midland to produce and sell a line of environmentally preferable cleaners, four of which were the first cleaning products certified against the Green Seal standard. This gives NISH CRPs the opportunity to support JWOD Program sources when they buy green products.

**There is no reason for not making the switch** – “Why damage the environment when there is no good reason, no cost savings or sacrifice in quality for doing so?” Peacock asked. “I know that this planet is something that we are holding as stewards for our children and grandchildren, and green cleaning makes a real difference. As a result of my green cleaning experiences, environmentally sensitive considerations are a part of my whole life today.”

## Green Janitorial ...



Agnes Fobay, The Chimes, washes windows at the DOI with environmentally friendly cleaning products.

### Defining Contract Requirements

For help in making the switch at the DOI headquarters complex, Peacock turned to **Environmental Protection Specialist Heather Davies**, a staff member of the **Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEC)** within the Office of the Secretary of DOI. The OEC teamed up with **Blaine Robinson**, senior project manager, NISH to develop green janitorial training for CRPs. OEC's mission is to further policies and practices for pollution prevention and waste management within the DOI's eight bureaus nationwide. It is no small undertaking. The DOI bureaus encompass approximately 33,000 buildings and 2,400 operating locations that support 70,000 employees and a total budget of \$13 billion.

"My objective is to educate DOI personnel to transition their own operations to green cleaning or to specify environmental performance attributes for cleaners when they contract janitorial services," Davies said.

Davies helped Peacock form an expert panel to evaluate the chemicals that would be used by each contractor bidding on the janitorial services contract at the DOI headquarters complex.

The first and foremost requirement was a significant level of efficacy for each cleaning product. The product had to work as well as traditional cleaning products, but also be as environmentally safe as possible. Peacock and the expert panel required contractors to describe why their products were considered to be environmentally preferable and that enabled the panel to review a wide range of products. As part of the source selection plan, 30 percent of the bid evalua-

tion was based on the rating of the cleaners offered against these performance attributes.

### Evaluating "Green" Proposals

"We decided to score each bid giving significant weight to how green they were," Peacock said. "We changed from requesting contract bids comprised of just two parts – a technical proposal and a pricing proposal – by adding a third part outlining the environmental proposal. For example, it had to detail the paper products and cleaning products that would be used. The expert panel researched all the information contained in the environmental proposals to verify the claims they made and went so far as to seek demonstrations and certifications that the products performed as they were described in the bid."

Davis said the biggest challenge was that no standard existed at the time for a green cleaner. That changed since the Green Seal standard was adopted. It reduces the confusion about truly environmentally sensitive product manufacturing.

Evaluating proposals and selecting a contractor was a time consuming process, both for the DOI and the winning contractor—The Chimes. The benefits and lessons learned, however, were invaluable.

Looking to the future, Peacock is confident that, in partnership with The Chimes and the OEC, green cleaning at DOI's headquarters complex will continue to develop new, innovative, environmentally preferable cleaning methods. In turn, Davies and the OEC will press ahead with efforts to implement green cleaning throughout all of the agency's buildings nationwide.

### More Information

For training or consultation about green cleaning, please contact Blaine Robinson, senior project manager, NISH, at 571-226-4646 or brobinson@nish.org.

To learn more about the DOI's experiences with green cleaning, contact Gary Peacock, building manager, headquarters of the Department of the Interior, at 202-208-7560 or gary\_w\_peacock@nbc.gov. To confer with Heather Davies, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance at the Department of the Interior, call 202-208-7884 or e-mail heather\_davies@ios.doi.gov. ♦

## More Information about Green Cleaning and the Environment

- [www.epa.gov/oppt/epp](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp)—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Web site has a vast amount of information about janitorial green products and practices as well as links to many other Web sites related to the subject. Be sure to look through the "documents" section located at [www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/documents/docs.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/documents/docs.htm).

- <http://webteam.nbc.gov/green/sustain/clean.html>—The Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance Web site contains a wealth of information about green cleaning and, most importantly, a guidebook and training materials that were created in partnership with NISH to instruct CRPs on how to make the transition to green cleaning practices and win green cleaning contracts at federal agencies.

- <http://www.lhbindustries.com/enviro.htm>—The Lighthouse for the Blind in St. Louis now co-brands Rochester-Midland Environcare Products with Skilcraft, distributing and providing product support through four authorized dealers across the country. People with disabilities are employed to package and label these products.

- <http://www.greenseal.org/standards/industrialcleaners.htm>—Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization that develops environmental standards and certifies products and services that, over their entire life cycle, cause less toxic pollution and waste, conserve resources and habitats, and minimize global warming and ozone depletion.

# Allied Industries—\$50 Million and Counting

By Laurie Sampson, corporate communications assistant, NISH National

Allied Industries, the manufacturing division of The Resource Center (TRC), Jamestown, N.Y., surpassed \$50 million in government sales on September 4, 2002. A special tribute to Allied Industries took place during the organization's 14th annual Disability Awareness Awards ceremony on October 29, 2002.

Invited guests included representative from the U.S. military and NISH. Bob Chamberlin, NISH president and CEO, and Phil Kosak, chairman, NISH Board of Directors, presented Allied Industries with a NISH President's Award in recognition of the \$50 million milestone and the outstanding accomplishments of the workers with disabilities employed by Allied.

In his remarks, Chamberlin described The Resource Center as "one of the stellar rehabilitation programs in the country," and continued by saying, "Over the years I have worked closely with both the Marine Corps and the Army; and I can tell you from personal experience that those war fighters are appreciative of the quality products that you produce. Our war fighters tell it as it is and can attest to what you do far better than I can from this podium. The products you've produced over the years have been exceptional examples of the quality products associated with the JWOD Program, and the great news is that I'm sure the best is yet to come!"

"You all should be incredibly proud," Kosak told Allied workers. "While a lot of people in your neigh-



NISH President and CEO Bob Chamberlin and Board Chairman Phil Kosak presented a NISH President's Award to The Resource Center in recognition of its manufacturing division, Allied Industries, reaching \$50 million in government sales. From left to right: Paul Cesana, executive director, The Resource Center; Kosak; Gregg Bender, director of business operations, The Resource Center; and Chamberlin.

borhood were telling you that you couldn't work, we knew that you could. We're going to prove it to the rest of the country and the world."

Since receiving its first contract in 1978, Allied Industries has annually provided work for an average of 500 people with disabilities. Over the years, the number of products Allied developed or built to existing product designs has grown significantly. The organization currently has 19 contracts worth \$9.2 million.

Bob Schifano, production administrator for government contracts, said

the ongoing relationship with the U.S. military continues to improve and bring valuable work for the employees. "We now have 55 items on the Procurement List for the government, which means anytime any of those 55 products are ordered, we have the contract for them," Schifano commented. "They keep knocking on our door, and the products are high quality—they have to be. You cannot sell something inferior to the government."

Schifano and Gregg Bender, director of business operations, TRC and a member of the NISH Board of