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News Brief: First Contracts Issued for Environmentally Responsible Computer Disposal Throughout Federal Government

Following are some Agency developments which may interest you. If you need more information on this subject, call the contact person listed.

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EPA has awarded its first contracts to help all federal agencies in the environmentally responsible disposal of computers and other used electronic equipment. Called Government Wide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs) for Recycling Electronics and Asset Disposition (READ) services, they provide federal agencies with a dependable method of properly recycling and disposing of excess or obsolete electronic equipment.

The U.S. Government buys seven percent of the world's computers. In fiscal year 2005 alone, EPA expects federal agencies to spend almost \$60 billion on Information Technology equipment, software, infrastructure and services. The Government disposes of approximately 10,000 computers every week, a significant number of which are ending up in storage closets, warehouses and landfills, or overseas where generally the environmental standards are lower. Electronic equipment contains toxic materials such as lead, mercury, chromium, cadmium, and beryllium, which, if mishandled, could be released into the environment. This complex waste stream poses challenging management issues and potential liability concerns for federal facilities.

The GWAC is composed of eight contracts (three nationwide, three in the eastern U.S. and two in western U.S.) awarded to small businesses. The contractors are Molam International, Marietta, Ga.; Supply Chain Services, Lombard, Ill.; UNICOR (Federal Prison Industries), Washington, D.C.; Asset Recovery Corp., St. Paul, Minn.; Hesstech LLC, Edison, N.J.; Liquidity Services Inc., Washington, D.C.; Global Investment Recovery, Tampa, Fla.; and Hobi International, Batavia, Ill. The basic contracts approved Dec. 16 run for one year with up to four possible one-year extensions, with a combined potential value of up to \$9 million. Contractors must maintain an audit trail to the equipment's final destination to ensure that reclamation and recycling efforts are documented. The contracts will also maximize revenues from usable electronic equipment currently in storage through a share-in-savings (SiS) program. Under SiS, the contractor will attempt to identify opportunities to save costs associated with recycling efforts and share those savings with federal agencies to offset the latter's recycling costs.

For more information on the READ program, go to:

http://www.epa.gov/oamhpod1/admin_placement/0300115/fact.htm .

In a related issue encompassing all parts of American society, not just the federal government, EPA is also working to increase the number of consumer electronic devices collected and safely recycled in the United States under a program called "Plug-In To eCycling." Plug-In is one component of EPA's Resource Conservation Challenge, a national effort to find flexible, yet more protective ways to conserve our valuable resources. More information on "Plug-In To eCycling" is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/conserve/plugin/index.htm> .

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