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Products that earn the ENERGY STAR prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

ENERGY STAR® Wins the Bid

Gaining the Competitive Edge with Energy-Efficient Bottled Water Coolers

In 2002 Mount Desert Spring Water, a bottled water distributor, beat out four competitors to win a contract to supply bottled water and coolers to the University of Maine campus. What was the key to Mount Desert's win? Was it offering the lowest price per bottle? No, other bidders offered a lower cost. Mount Desert won because it proposed to supply UMaine with energy-efficient ENERGY STAR qualified bottled water coolers, while still being able to offer a competitive price.

"We received five bids and Mount Desert was the only vendor to provide ENERGY STAR qualified bottled water coolers," explains Anne-Marie Nadeau, UMaine's purchasing agent. "It was a determining factor for us in using them."

Ms. Nadeau had calculated that the energy savings the university would gain by using qualified models would far surpass the premium per bottle they would pay by using Mount Desert Spring Water. The university's purchasing policy requires that all bids ask for information on the availability of ENERGY STAR qualified products, and show a preference for them if available.

Purchasing policies are increasingly calling for ENERGY STAR qualified products to be included in purchases and requests for bids. Products that have earned the ENERGY STAR meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

"Whenever I prepare a request for bid for products that use electricity," says Ms. Nadeau, "I go to the ENERGY STAR Web site to see if I can take my bids one step further from merely asking for ENERGY STAR product information, to stating it's a preference for us." It was an exciting process for Ms. Nadeau who, for the first time as purchasing agent had awarded a contract based on the cost savings she would realize by going with ENERGY STAR qualified products.

"I called all my vendors until I found an ENERGY STAR qualified model," explains Gary Scillia, Operational Manager of Mount Desert Spring Water located in Southwest Harbor, Maine. "This was the first time I was dealing with [ENERGY STAR qualified] water coolers, but I figured they were going to be an important part of the bid."

Since the original award, Mount Desert has increased the amount of bottled water coolers it supplies to UMaine to over 100 units both hot and cold, and cold only. Current savings from using ENERGY STAR qualified models for UMaine are estimated to be close to \$3000 per year. With ENERGY STAR qualified hot and cold water coolers, a customer can save as much as \$47 per year per unit on their annual energy bills - enough to power a new, full-sized refrigerator. For "cook and cold" qualified models, savings are up to \$7 per year on each unit.

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