

New Web Site Kicks Off eCycling Campaign

By Jason Peterson

The U.S. EPA and IISG are hoping that what happens in Vegas does not really stay in Vegas.

They officially kicked off a campaign for environmentally-sound computer electronics management, which includes reuse, recycling and sensible disposal—called “ecycling”—at this year’s Consumer Electronics show in Las Vegas, Nevada. While major companies debuted their top-of-the-line electronics, EPA and IISG launched their green computer web site—www.ecyclingtools.com.

“The web site is a one-stop shop,” says Susan Boehme, IISG coastal sediment specialist and co-developer of the site. “When people buy computers, printers and other peripherals, especially in larger numbers for businesses, they can now make choices based on contaminants and energy efficiency.”

IISG created the web site, which features ecycling tools developed by EPA and others, as a part of a grant from EPA to market their green electronics campaign. “Sea Grant is able to provide the outreach necessary to inform the public,” said Boehme. “Taking the information out to the community is what Sea Grant is all about.”

The idea for the campaign came out of the Great Lakes

Regional Collaboration (GLRC), a multi-state cooperative effort to establish one large-scale blueprint for improving the health of the Great Lakes region. “This year, the GLRC called for the establishment of more collection programs to prevent pollution,” said Boehme.



The EPA responded by creating ecycling tools, which serve as an informational resource for individuals and businesses buying and disposing of electronics. “We provide tools, resources and information for people looking to donate, recycle or reuse computers,” says EPA environmental scientist Chris Newman, who played a key role in the development of these services.

The web site offers a handful of purchasing tools, including the Electronics Purchasing Environmental Assessment Tool

(EPEAT), which was developed through stakeholder input. “EPEAT is a registration system, mutually agreed upon by purchasers and the electronics industry, that allows someone buying a computer to have access to a set of qualifications for green computers,” said Newman.

“This is something a purchaser can drop into a contract the same way they would specify things like memory, processor speed and hard drive size,” added Newman.

The web site also provides a slew of resources for donating computers, including a link to the web site Earth 911 (www.earth911.org/electronics). On this site, people can find nearby locations to donate computers. The only downside is that it’s only for individuals, not businesses.

Despite the campaign’s infancy, interest in ecycling is steadily increasing. “I think we’re going to see more emphasis on ecycling as a part of the mainstream solid waste management program across the country,” said Newman. “There are a lot of state and local programs heading that way.”