

# Light Corporation Participates in Green Suppliers Network Assessment Visit

Light Corporation of Grand Haven, Michigan became one of the first companies in the office furniture industry to undergo an assessment by efficiency and environmental experts working with the Green Suppliers Network program. The visits identify cost and energy savings that might be made to make companies "leaner and greener".

Jointly managed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the office furniture participation in the Network is expanding every day. Kimball International has informed BIFMA of its intention to participate, joining Allsteel, Haworth, Herman Miller, and Steelcase. Kimball will be nominating their suppliers to join the 74 invited to participate so far.

Due to the high level of interest in the program within this industry, EPA will conduct a one-day training on integrated environmental management systems (IEMS) in Grand Rapids, MI on June 23, 2004. The IEMS training was developed through the EPA's Design for the Environment (DfE) Program and is available to any interested company. It will incorporate issues specific to the office furniture industry into the presentation.

The course emphasizes reducing risk to workers, the public, and the environment, as well as pollution prevention and wise resource management. DfE's IEMS course walks businesses through the standard steps in developing an EMS and shows how businesses can integrate risk reduction and pollution prevention approaches into their EMS development process. Pilot training projects with screen printing companies demonstrated that even a small company can develop a sophisticated, action-oriented EMS that effectively addresses chemical risk concerns. For example, where most companies developing an EMS would look to reduce chemical exposures through use of personal protective equipment, the IEMS approach shows companies how to find an alternative process, identify substitutes, or reformulate the chemical. This approach ensures that the chemicals selected are safer for the worker and the public, as well as less hazardous to the environment.

The IEMS approach helps companies deliver on their commitments to pollution prevention and continuous environmental improvement. Most companies using the approach will come away with an enhanced understanding of what they need to do to comply, and the steps they can take to move beyond compliance and into the realm of environmental stewardship.



*Rick Fleming, Bill Stough, and Jim Gillespie tour Light Corporation to review work practices as part of the Green Suppliers Network assessment team. Company employees including Marc Langeland, Tom Michele, Jim Kramer, and Michelle Robinson rolled out the red carpet to kick off the project.*

The IEMS training course is delivered in a one-day, intensive format and does not require a registration fee. The training is broken up into nine modules with several modules including case study examples.