

# What's New with Your Environmental Committee in 2014

by Mark Shriver

The IAPD Environmental Committee was formed in April 2008 to develop an association environmental position statement, provide a proactive industry response to the negative image of plastics as being environmentally unfriendly, institute programming into future conventions and develop training programs, “green” best practices for the association and membership and forge partnerships and alliances with other organizations to further the association’s environmental efforts. In the words of a former president of the United States, “How are we doing?”

As only the third chair of this committee, I wanted to take a moment to look at where we started six years ago and how far we’ve progressed. Perhaps the most dramatic change to date has been the emergence of the Government Relations Committee as its own entity. Prior to the formation of the GR Committee, the Environmental Committee was led by two co-chairs, with Kevin Short leading the “external-focused” part of the committee (what’s now the GR Committee) and Russ Walters leading the “internal-focused” committee initiatives. Now, with the GR Committee fully functioning as a standalone committee, the Environmental Committee found a need to redefine itself. Thus, I am pleased to present the new Environmental Committee purpose statement, which will guide us in this next phase of our service to IAPD members and the plastics industry at large.

## **The IAPD Environmental Committee is dedicated to promoting environmental policies and best practices to the plastics industry.**

That’s easy to say, but what are we doing about it? Well, the committee has conducted two popular recycling webinars, presented an environmental session at each convention in recent years, created a recycling brochure, offered mentoring, sponsored an elite annual award for environmental excellence, conducted bi-annual surveys and developed GreenScene™, a program that allows IAPD member companies to showcase their environmental-friendly practices to their customers and prospects, as well as promoting the “greenness” of the plastics industry to the rest of the world. And we aren’t done yet. As mentioned in this column in the February/March issue, IAPD is now a sponsoring member of Operation Clean Sweep, which provides education and resources designed to help plastics companies prevent marine debris.

In addition, our data-collection efforts via the bi-annual survey are more important than ever. During the 2013 Plastics Industry Fly-In to Washington, D.C., where representatives from IAPD member companies joined the IAPD GR Committee and staff for a day of meetings with lawmakers, plastics recycling was a huge topic, one that made them, according to one attendee, “sit up and take notice.” Because that data is so vital to our GR Committee as they tell all the good, positive stories about plastics, the Environmental Committee is fine-tuning the survey for 2014, to make it more “user-friendly” and we encourage all IAPD member companies to complete it. Look for it in the near future.

## *Energy Saving Tip*

There are a number of opportunities for companies, big and small, to reduce consumption and save on energy. If you have older lighting in any of your facilities, go to [www.designlights.org](http://www.designlights.org) or simply do an online search for “DLC” or “Design Lights Consortium” for incentives in your area.

With new LED and other lighting solution technologies available, power companies across the country are offering huge incentives to “re-light.” In many cases, incentives are as high as 50 percent rebates on material and labor, often bringing your ROI to around three years. After that, the savings is all yours!

Speaking of simplifying things, the committee plans to spend a significant amount of time during its meeting at the Leadership Summit re-evaluating the application for the IAPD Environmental Excellence Awards. We’ve been thrilled with the additional applications we’ve received each year — and tremendously inspired by the improvements IAPD members are making in their environmental and sustainability practices — but we’ve also received some feedback requesting a more straightforward application. So, we will be revising it and we encourage you all to take a look and see how you might qualify for an award this year.

Finally, the committee was pleased to welcome its newest member, Veronica Haas from Total Plastics, Inc. We were especially delighted to have a representative from Total Plastics, Inc., join us again, because we haven’t had anyone from that company on the committee since Russ Walters, former co-chair and one of the founders of the committee, retired. Of course we always do welcome new committee members and I encourage anyone who is thinking about getting involved to contact me or the IAPD staff.

So, yes, the committee is changing and evolving, but we are as committed as ever to helping promote the “greenness” of plastics every chance we get. If you have suggestions for what we could be doing better, or for specific information that would help you, please let us know. We’re here to help you achieve your environmental and sustainability goals.