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White House Recognizes Federal Electronic Challenge Successes

White House Gives Award to Agency Using EPEAT Green Computer Standard to Buy Computers

Washington, DC – At a White House ceremony yesterday, the White House Office of the Federal Environmental Executive awarded the Department of Veterans Affairs a coveted Closing the Circle Award. The award recognizes the VA's outstanding efforts as part of its Federal Electronics Challenge commitment to reduce the environmental risks associated with its computer purchases and disposal. In presenting the award, the White House called particular attention to the VA's purchasing effort as an important part of its overall electronic stewardship initiative. In its draft Request for Proposals for computers issued in July 2005, the VA included the EPEAT green computer standard to help make its computer purchasing decisions.

According to Ed Pinero, the Federal Environmental Executive who presided over the award ceremony, the VA's participation in the Federal Electronics Challenge "represents the unique ability of the federal government to use its purchasing power to drive environmental innovation."

The EPEAT standard is an easy-to-use purchasing tool to help purchasers rank computer desktops, laptops and monitors based on their environmental attributes. The three-tiered EPEAT rating system includes 23 required criteria and 28 optional criteria. The optional criteria are used to calculate an environmental rating to determine if the equipment receives EPEAT Bronze, Silver, or Gold recognition.

Although the EPEAT rankings are not yet posted, EPEAT is referenced in almost \$22 billion worth of computer contracts, including contracts issued by the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and NASA. All EPEAT registered products will be listed in an online database on the EPEAT website at <www.epeat.net> in mid-July.

EPEAT was developed over a three year period in an extensive multi-stakeholder process funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that included more than 50 stakeholders representing environmental groups, government officials, large volume computer purchasers, subject matter experts, electronics recyclers, and manufacturers. When developing the standard, the group integrated a wide variety of existing environmental standards and requirements into the EPEAT "umbrella" standard, including: European RoHS, WEEE, and EU battery directives and the U.S. Energy Star, EPA's Plug-In Guidelines for Materials Management, Rechargeable Battery Recycling Coalition recommendations, Coalition of North Eastern Governors Model Toxics in Packaging Legislation, and various environmental labeling standards.

Barbara Matos, one of the VA employees who accepted the White House award on behalf of her agency, marveled at how easy it is to incorporate EPEAT into the purchasing documents. "The group that developed the EPEAT standard really makes it easy for purchasers. They've done all of the hard work to determine which environmental concerns are most important and verified that high performance equipment meeting the standard will be available in the market at no additional cost."

In congratulating the VA for its White House recognition, Jeff Omelchuck, the Executive Director of the Green Electronics Council that oversees EPEAT's implementation, explained, "We're thrilled to see the VA recognized for its commitment to buying 'green' computers. We look forward to the day a few years down the road when every organization requires EPEAT."

About Green Electronics Council – The Green Electronics Council partners with environmental organizations, government agencies, manufacturers and other interested stakeholders to improve the environmental and social performance of electronic products. In April 2006, it received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to promote and implement the EPEAT green computer standard. Additional information on EPEAT is available at <www.epeat.net>. Additional information on GEC is available at <www.greenelectronicscouncil.org>.

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