



# MAKING AN EFFORT MAKES AN IMPACT

You've heard it said a thousand times (and have probably even said it yourself): "One person isn't going to change the world." But we all know that's a cop-out. Every major trend or movement in history had to start somewhere – with someone – before spreading to the masses.

**W**hether you're a trendsetter or a follower, your actions produce reactions in an endless chain of events. Take, for example, the way we choose to relate to the environment. Virtually everything we do in business and in our personal lives affects the world's ecological balance. From the cars we drive and the fuel we burn to the way we heat and cool our homes to the amount of trash we produce and the way we dispose of it, we all impact the environment every day.

It's everyone's world and everyone's responsibility to take care of it. For years, O'Neal has been taking steps to reduce waste, comply with government regulations, and be an environmentally friendly company. But there's never been a coordinated, company-wide effort to promote environmental awareness and action...until now.

O'Neal President **Bill Jones** recently set the wheels in motion to create a program aimed at making the company much more pro-active in its efforts to "go green" while encouraging employees to do the same.

"I'm certainly not an environmental activist (I drive an SUV)," said Bill, "but I feel strongly that each of us should do what we can to not only protect but improve the

environment. I think of little things like picking up trash, recycling, turning off lights, and adjusting thermostats that may seem relatively unimportant, but can have a huge impact over time. And our company can be more involved in this effort by promoting carpools, investing in energy-efficient lighting and heating, and utilizing on-board computers in our trucks to reduce fuel consumption. We can collectively have a significant impact in our communities and improve the environment around us. With this in mind, I asked **Shirley Fagan**, Senior Communications Specialist, to lead our environmental awareness effort, which is now called O'Neal Green. I hope it becomes a way of life around O'Neal."



Progress is underway on many fronts. Considering the many varied aspects of O'Neal's business, there's a multitude of opportunities for "greening up" day-to-day operations. Advanced technology combined with a mindset for conserving resources can go a long way toward making a difference in the warehouse, on the road, and in the office.

O'Neal's green efforts extend across all areas of the business – from installing more energy-efficient equipment and lighting in warehouses to recycling and reducing waste in offices to encouraging carpool and equipping trucks with on-board computers that constantly monitor the vehicles' operations.



### In The Warehouse

The company has formed an Automation Technology Team with the broad assignment of improving material-handling capabilities and exploring the latest technology for cutting metals. As new equipment is needed, for example, burning tables that use water to collect debris are now being replaced with dry-cut tables that utilize a downdraft to rid the machine of dust and debris. This actually produces a better product, saves water, and eliminates the need to dispose of dirty water.

Each person on the team has very specific tasks aimed at helping achieve the overall goals. Team members are: **Gerald Brockman**, Regional Vice President, Mid-South Region; **Kevin Cooke**, Corporate Manager of Process Improvement; **Bob Driscoll**, Regional Operations Manager, Southeast; **John Elrod**, Manager of Non-Steel Purchasing; **Greg Schroeder**, Regional Operations Manager, Mid-South Region; **Dave Simpson**, Regional Vice President, Atlantic Region; **Brian Swainhart**, Operations Manager, Greensboro; and **Scott Young**, Regional Operations Manager, Midwest Region.

Industrial-grade lighting is vitally important to warehouse operations, but there's a substantial difference in cost and energy-efficiency depending on the type of lighting used. As replacement lighting is needed in warehouses, O'Neal is now changing from traditional high-bay fixtures to fluorescent tubes, which are 40 percent more energy-efficient, last three times longer, and provide better light.

As new construction projects are undertaken, energy-efficiency and technology are high priorities. An office building is now under construction at the Tube Processing Center in Lebanon, Tennessee, and left over materials are being recycled rather than discarded. A major renovation at the Pittsburgh District warehouse recently included insulating several bays in the 100-year-old building that had always been difficult to heat. Translucent fiberglass panels at the tops of walls were also installed to provide natural light to work areas.

At O'Neal's request, Alabama Power Company has conducted an energy audit of the Birmingham District, Mobile District, and the Coil Processing Facility and made suggestions for ways to conserve energy. Capacitors, for example, can reduce

the amount of electricity used by machines without affecting their operation – using less current for the same amount of work. Additional ideas such as this are being passed on to other districts.

### On The Road

On-board computers are now in all O'Neal trucks. This is huge. The computers monitor the operating efficiency of trucks in virtually every way and result in tremendous savings to the company while reducing waste and pollution. The computers keep records of idle time, driving speed, use and wear of brakes, number of stops, and an array of other data. They include GPS, which helps drivers take the most direct routes to their destinations. They can notify customers of a truck's estimated arrival time so that they can be ready to receive the delivery with minimal wait time. And they even provide the necessary information for fuel-tax reporting.

It's now documented that O'Neal's on-board computers increase each truck's mileage by about 1/4-mile per gallon, which means using less fuel for the same job, less wear and tear on engines, brakes, tires, etc., fewer emissions, and company-wide savings of about \$1 million per year – in fuel alone.

The company is also investigating bio-diesel to replace diesel as a cleaner-burning fuel for trucks. Meanwhile, the Birmingham District has begun purchasing ULSD (ultra-low-sulfur diesel) fuel for its delivery fleet and plant equipment. This is currently the most environmentally friendly fuel on the market.

Carpooling is being encouraged among employees at the corporate office by offering incentives such as reserved parking. And all O'Neal company cars must achieve a minimum of 25 miles per gallon.

### In The Office

Most large company offices tend to be fairly wasteful. Maybe that's because people are too busy with their jobs to stop and think about the environment, or maybe it's because everyone

knows the company pays the bills. Whatever the reason, O'Neal is taking steps at its corporate office to save energy, reduce waste, and remind employees of many simple things they can do to be more environmentally responsible at work and at home.

A good example is using re-manufactured toner and ink jet cartridges in printers, resulting in a 30 to 40-percent cost savings as well as a substantial environmental impact since three quarts of oil are used to make each original cartridge. Recycling the re-manufactured cartridges saves even more.

An even better solution is to not print hard copies at all unless they're really necessary. Many HR forms are now sent by e-mail instead of hard copies. And now many corporate departments are sending district reports by e-mail. This saves not only toner and ink, but paper as well. The back sides of non-confidential papers are being used for copying. And, as an alternative to copying, many documents are scanned and e-mailed.

Thirty billion plastic water bottles are thrown away each year, so O'Neal has filtered water coolers in offices as an alternative. The corporate office quit using Styrofoam cups years ago, but now even fewer paper cups are used when people simply bring their own coffee cup or water bottle from home.

Recycling bins for aluminum cans and newspapers are located in company offices. Three-ring binders are being recycled. And signs posted throughout offices remind people of easy, effective actions such as recycling; turning out lights when they leave a room; turning off computers, heaters, fans, etc. when leaving their work areas; and plugging all items into a power strip to make the task of remembering to conserve energy as easy as flipping one switch.

### Across The Districts

O'Neal Green is a nationwide movement. And good ideas and initiatives are pouring in from everywhere. Here are just a few of the actions being taken at various district operations.

The Pittsburgh District is currently evaluating a fuel called Hydrox gas, which is produced in a machine by electrically separating water into hydrogen and oxygen. The resulting gas can be used for cutting plate and could potentially replace fossil fuel. Also, as part of its recent refurbishment, the district installed new-generation direct-fire heating systems that consume about 50 percent less gas than previous models. Several high-speed overhead doors have also been installed to quickly seal off the heated areas of the warehouse when the doors are opened in the winter.

The Peru District is recycling office paper, and all

aluminum cans from the district are taken to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for recycling. The money made from these cans is used by the VFW to purchase memorial flags for veteran's tombstones on Memorial Day.

The Houston District reports that, almost two years ago, its warehouse lighting was changed to save energy and increase light levels with high-intensity fluorescent tubes that not only reduce the lighting bill on an ongoing basis, but earned the district a healthy rebate from the local power company.

O'Neal-Louisville has also installed high-efficiency fluorescent lights in its warehouse.

The Waterloo District had Iowa State University conduct a study of its plant lighting and compressed air system, resulting in suggestions for substantial energy and cost savings. The district has solicited quotes and is moving forward with requests for the upgraded systems. In the Waterloo office, everyone has a separate bin at his or her desk for recycling waste paper.

Similarly, the Ft. Wayne District recycles paper and adjusts building thermostats when the facility is unoccupied.

The Roanoke District is retrofitting its paint booth lighting to electronic ballasts that offer a 40-percent savings; replacing selected 1,000 watt HID plant lighting with HOT5 fluorescent lighting for a 50-percent savings; recycling welding consumables; recycling aluminum cans; and using high-speed electric hand dryers instead of paper towels.

At O'Neal-Tampa, they recycle aluminum cans; lock the thermostat control to prevent fluctuations during the day; maintain A/C equipment and change air filters often; use high-efficiency office lighting and an energy-efficient refrigerator; and

have three waste paper receptacles in the office, where all paper is collected, shredded, and recycled once a month.

And, in a bold, ambitious move, the Shelbyville District is strongly considering ISO14001 certification, which would focus on reducing or eliminating all materials that would normally go into landfills.

### A Better World

The success of O'Neal Green will be measured in a number of ways: by direct cost savings; by using less energy; by using products that require fewer resources to manufacture; by producing less waste; by recycling more; and by promoting a culture that genuinely respects the environment and strives to ensure that the world we leave behind is better than the one we inherited. But the real success will come when there doesn't need to be a special program to promote these ideas. Success will come when simply doing the right thing is second nature to companies and individuals alike. ☺

