

'It's good business to be green'
**Serigraph accepted
 into DNR's select club**

By LAURA BAYARD - GM Today Staff

May 18, 2006

Serigraph Inc. is turning green.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources honored the West Bend-based lithograph printing company this week for its reduction of hazardous waste and emissions and welcomed it into the Green Tier program, which accepts companies willing to work toward environmental improvement.

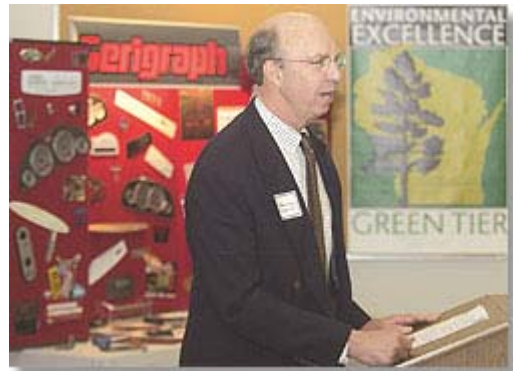
"Celebration of a new Green Tier agreement is always a big day for me," said Wisconsin DNR Secretary Scott Hassett. "This is a clear signal that we are taking another step forward in what I feel is the next step in environmental protection and regulation."

The program's goal, Hassett said, is to help green companies find ways to solve environmental problems creatively without getting caught up in some of the more time-consuming regulations.

Companies accepted to be a part of Green Tier, the only program of its kind in the United States, must demonstrate they have taken steps toward improving their environmental control processes and have surpassed what is required by government regulation.

"We're very proud to be one of the ones working with the DNR," said John Torinus, Serigraph CEO. "We think it's good business to be green, and we think it's good stewardship to do so."

Gloria McCutcheon, DNR southeast regional director, praised Torinus for going green in an industry that doesn't



Amber King

John Torinus, CEO of Serigraph Inc. in West Bend, speaks at the the company's Green Tier Acceptance Ceremony on Monday.

always allow for simple solutions to environmental issues.

"He was an early ally and recognizable leader in promoting Green Tier," McCutcheon said.

The company received the DNR's Partners for Clean Air award in 1999 and the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce's Business Friends of the Environment award in 2003. Serigraph is only the second printing company accepted into the Green Tier program. But the work doesn't stop here

"We have to commit to continue environmental improvement. You can't just go static," said Tom Ravn, Serigraph's manager of environmental health and safety.



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"In return, we want quicker turnaround **Government officials, DNR representatives and other visitors to Serigraph Monday received a view of the company's biofilter in Plant 2 during a facility tour. The EPA-approved system helps the lithograph printing company eliminate volatile organic chemical emissions released during the printing process.**

he said. "It's not relaxation of environmental requirements, but it's more flexibility under the existing requirements."

For companies trying to compete in a global market, many regulations can become time consuming and burdensome when trying to

attract customers.

"Sometimes, it takes quite a while to bring equipment in and get a permit," Ravn said. "We've had situations where we need to install equipment in several weeks and we can't install it because we're waiting on a permit."

What's more, different states have varying levels of regulation, Ravn said.

"We've got to compete not only globally, but also with other states," he said.

For Serigraph's side of the bargain, the company has been working to decrease volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions and reduce waste for years. Since 1998,

a biofilter at Plant 2 - the company operates four plants - has eliminated many of the pollutants that once were released.

The biofilter contains organic media with microorganisms. "A lot of them are the same that you would find in any organic media, be it compost or ground," Ravn said.

VOC emissions from the printing process are sent through the organic media. Microorganisms feed off the pollutants in the air and convert them into carbon dioxide and water vapor. The biofilter also can clean Serigraph's wastewater, thereby eliminating the need to dump polluted water. The company also has managed to recycle some wastewater, cutting its annual dumping by more than 1 million gallons.

The downside is the biofilter costs about \$100,000 per year to operate, Ravn said, but the company has a plan to reduce that amount.

"We think that what we can do is by expanding our use of U.V. and by introducing better solvents, we may be able to offset these emissions and the biofilter wouldn't be needed," Ravn said. "We're looking now to eliminate the air emissions altogether."

Already, Serigraph has switched a portion of its printing to a U.V. process. No VOC emissions come from the ink used in that process, and the clean-up solvent creates very low emissions, Ravn said. The company's goal is to switch entirely to U.V. printing.

"Then we're going after the clean-up solvents," he said. "The challenge is to find one that is going to be compatible with our operations."

At one time, Serigraph released 169 tons of emissions a year. Now, the company is down to 40 tons from all four of its plants, Ravn said.

Green Tier recognition is only the start for Serigraph.

"We will be re-evaluating our progress and we will be looking at other opportunities where we can improve our performance," Ravn said. "It's an ongoing process."

At a glance

Serigraph Inc.

CEO: John Torinus

HEADQUARTERS: 3801 E. Decorah Road, West Bend

PHONE: 335-7200

WEB SITE: www.serigraph.com

EMPLOYEE TOTAL: 840

Green Tier up for national award

Wisconsin's Green Tier program, managed by the Department of Natural Resources, is one of 18 national finalists for an Innovations in American Government award from Harvard University's Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation.

This year, more than 1,000 public programs applied for the award.

Green Tier encourages environmentally responsible companies to go beyond meeting regulatory minimums for pollution control. The program started as a pilot in 1996 and is based on a collaborative system of contracts and charters participating businesses can craft.

Wisconsin DNR Secretary Scott Hassett plans to travel to Harvard next week to make a presentation about the program. This spring, seven finalists will be selected to receive a \$1,000 cash award.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

This story appeared in the West Bend Daily News on May 18, 2006.