

## **Tandus' recycling program helps hospitals divert old carpet from landfills**

Green building construction and renovation efforts often focus as much on what is going out the door as what is going in. After all, recycled construction materials can contribute toward LEED™ points.

Take carpet, for example. According to industry statistics, the amount of “end-of-life” carpet entering the waste stream from healthcare facilities and other segments is growing daily. Each year, approximately 5 billion pounds of carpet is discarded, with 96 percent of it ending up in a landfill.

One Premier contracted supplier – commercial carpet manufacturer Tandus of Dalton, GA – has a long history of environmental innovation. Since it began its “closed-loop recycling program” (through its C&A Floorcoverings brand) in 1996, Tandus has diverted more than 100 million pounds of reclaimed vinyl and vinyl carpet from landfills and incinerators and turned it back into 100 percent recycled content backing for its floorcoverings. Rather than use virgin raw materials, the company buys back old vinyl-backed floorcoverings, regardless of original manufacturer, and its sustainable warranty guarantees that it will be recycled in its entirety. All C&A products receiving certification are 100 percent recyclable today and are currently being recycled in the company’s existing closed-loop carpet recycling process.

Many Premier facilities, including Peninsula Regional Medical Center of Salisbury, MD, and Valley Health System of Winchester, VA, have realized the environmental benefits of recycling old carpet. Peninsula Regional, for example, recently diverted more than 1,000 square yards of old carpet from the landfill in working with Tandus on a renovation project; Valley Health’s 2004 renovation project returned more than 4,000 square yards of old carpet before replacing it with new floorcovering from Tandus, according to Ridley Kinsey, Tandus’ general manager for healthcare markets. Valley Health earned Tandus’ Environmental Stewardship Award for its commitment to recycling 4,500 square yards of carpet through the company’s closed loop recycling program.

“Our decision to champion sustainable practices is an evolution in the right direction,” said Valley Health Project Manager Glenn Price. “Recycling used carpet so that it is not landfilled, incinerated or stored is a conscious effort on our part to promote recycling by one of our preferred vendors who can provide this service for us – anyone, for that matter.”

“Valley Health is one of several healthcare customers from around the country who recognize the significance of sustainable practices and the long-term environmental attributes C&A provides,” added Lee Schilling, Tandus senior vice president.

### **Tandus' latest innovations**

In September 2006, Tandus introduced a new high-performance, high-recycled content broadloom backing system called LifeLong™, and environmental broadloom adhesive, Greenbond™ B-19, in its Monterey and Crossley carpet lines.

Ralph Grogan, Tandus senior vice president, said the new products are the most recent results of Tandus' "ongoing search for the best balance of environmental responsibility and product performance. Every day, our research continues into new and alternative recyclable materials," Grogan said. He added that Tandus Technologies focuses its R&D efforts on developing the next-generation product by evaluating and prototyping products that make use of alternative as well as new polymer or biobased systems.

Floorcovering materials in the LifeLong line feature 22 to 37 percent recycled content (depending on style), and comply with CRI Green Label Plus, an independent testing program that identifies volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and establishes indoor air quality standards.

Greenbond B-19 is third party-certified by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) to contain 20 percent post-consumer recycled content and is packaged in pails containing a minimum of 40 percent recycled content. SCS is a third-party testing and certification organization and evaluates a wide variety of environmental and food safety claims.

Kinsey said the carpet industry is working to standardize one "environmental standard" for carpet. The SCAS (Sustainable Carpet Assessment Standard) certification program has four certification levels – Bronze, Silver, Gold/EPP and Platinum/EPP. The standard is designed to address all key stages of the product life cycle and incorporate environmental and human health issues. The standard evaluates a product in six key areas: public health and the environment; renewable energy/energy efficiency; biobased/recycled content; manufacturing; reclamation/end of life management; and innovation. (For more information regarding the standard, visit the SCS Web site at <http://www.scscertified.com>.)

In September 2006, C&A Floorcoverings earned Platinum Environmentally Preferable Product (EPP) certification on two entire product lines, ER3® modular tiles and ethos™ cushion rolls, and Gold EPP certification on its ER3 cushion rolls and ER3C-10 product lines through the SCAS certification program. Additionally, ER3 modular tiles and ethos cushion rolls have achieved Platinum certification to the California Gold Sustainable Carpet Standard while ER3C-10 was certified as Gold. This standard requires products to meet, at minimum, the Gold/EPP level of the SCAS standard and contain 10 percent total post consumer content, along with 14 other attributes in addition to the SCAS standard. Kinsey said C&A is the first carpet manufacturer to obtain third-party certification of its entire line of ER3 modular carpet and ER3 six-foot structured back carpet, as well as obtain third-party verification for recycling its products back into carpet.

C&A earned product certifications to the new SCAS under SCS' Sustainable Choice™ program. Third-party certification of products assists customers in making informed



decisions about the environmental attributes of building materials and can be included in specifications as part of the product evaluation and submittal process.

“C&A was the first carpet company to truly embrace independent, third-party certification of environmental claims,” said Kirsten T. Ritchie, SCS’ director of environmental claims certification. “At the core of any ‘innovative new product’ is an innovative company that is willing to break new ground and pursue strategies that ultimately benefit the end user.”

“At Tandus, we have long asked our customers to measure us by our accomplishments – not by our goals,” added Schilling. “These certifications are the result of many years of hard work and demonstrate that what is right environmentally can also make very good business sense.”

*Premier Contract: Tandus Group PP-FA- 073 Flooring: Carpet  
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