

A Belleville firm has taken the lead in fighting the greenhouse gases that are destroying the world's ozone layer.

Interface (Canada) Inc., which is the world's largest manufacturer of commercial carpeting, recently began participating in the federal government's Count Me In program, aimed at getting individuals and corporations to make changes in the way they live and operate.

A "solution workshop" was held at the Banquet Centre at Alhambra Square recently by Enviro-RIS, the delivery agent for the government's program. It will give the same workshop to about 30 companies across Canada.

Rahumathulla Marikkar, manager, technical and environmental at Interface, says the objective of the workshops, along with launching the program, was to have a symbolic day where employees either car pooled, rode bicycles, roller bladed, or took public transit to work.

Prince Edward-Hastings MP and Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief and his assistant, Peter Annis, took the bus to the Banquet Centre for the event. It was, Vanclief admitted, the first time he'd ridden public transit in his entire 55 years.

The objective is to help Canada achieve its greenhouse emissions target set at a conference in Kyoto, Japan in 1997. The country's goal is to reduce greenhouse emissions to six per cent less than their 1990 levels, by the period 2008 to 2012.

Interface, whose motto is "Doing well by doing good," has implemented numerous power-saving devices and programs in the last five years, that have resulted in reducing the company's power usage by 70 per cent, while cutting 480,000 tons of carbon monoxide (and other gas) emissions that are the main cause of the greenhouse effect. Today the company receives 25 per cent of its power from "green sources," the first company in Canada to do so. Specifically, the company has improved its lighting, improved equipment and motor efficiencies, launched preventative maintenance and compressed air programs, devised ways to capture waste process heat that now warms the building, eliminated all water waste discharges, eliminated all heavy metals from the manufacturing process, cut the amount of waste going to landfills, and reduced off-gassing from carpets by 94 per cent.

Marikkar says the company

introduced a home-energy savings program for employees that sees them receive points for energy saved. Those points are turned into financial bonuses and last year the smallest bonus received was \$1,700.

With the Count Me In program, employees are given a "CO2 Savings Ruler" sheet that lists ways of cutting down on energy consumption. The list starts with big items, which save large amounts of energy, and continues with smaller energy saving tips. For example, building an R-2000 home, insulating basement walls, buying a fuel efficient automobile and using public transit are all considered large energy savers. These can reduce CO2 emissions by

more than 1,500 kg a year.

The next stage includes such things as car pooling, buying energy efficient windows, installing solar water heating panels, and low-flow shower heads. These tips can reduce emissions by 500 to 1,500 kg a year.

The third category lists using a bicycle carrier to ship packages, recycling at home, driving slower, turning off computers at night, turning off lights, avoiding non-recyclable packaging, composting, checking car tire pressure, installing fluorescent light fixtures, and using a clothes line for drying garments. These ideas can cut emissions by between 100 and 500 kg annually.

The last category, includes

planting trees, mowing the lawn less often, using refillable printer cartridges, installing motion detectors for lights, operating the dishwasher only when it's full, removing roof racks from automobiles and fixing leaky facets. All of which help reduce emissions.

To assist employees in cutting their power consumption, the Count Me In program has a pledge sheet with six categories: transportation, home heating, lights and appliances, water and water heating, miscellaneous and other. Under each heading are four to 10 ideas that a participant can check off as their personal pledge to take action on them. They also receive a "wheel" that allows them to calculate the amount of CO2 emis-

sions eliminated through the various methods. Interface will then use the Internet to communicate employees' progress to Enviro-RIS.

Its innovative approach to business has resulted in the company being featured in the periodical, Canadian Industry Program for Energy Conservation Success Stories, published by Natural Resources Canada, and in the book Cool Companies, by Joseph Romm. Now the company has set its sights on another lofty goal: to introduce a "perpetual lease" program for commercial flooring that will see it manufacture, install, and maintain carpets, and at the end of their life cycle, remove and recycle them.

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