

## Partner Case Study Maine State Government



In December 2007, Maine State Government became one of the first Partners in the State Electronics Challenge (SEC). SEC program implementation in Maine was particularly notable because it involved all departments

in state government, resulting in far-reaching and sustainable changes. Representatives from the Office of Information Technology (IT), Purchasing, Surplus, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the State Planning Office collaborated to make this effort a success. In 2008 Maine was awarded silver-level recognition for its work in computer equipment purchasing and end-of-life management.

### The Challenge Begins

Greening government was nothing new in the State of Maine, since Governor John Elias Baldacci launched the Clean Government Initiative in 2001. Environmentally responsible management of computer equipment was also an area in which the State of Maine had considerable experience, leading the nation in establishing stringent recycling standards for residential and business equipment. What was new to the State of Maine when it joined the SEC was taking an inward look at its own computer asset management practices— from purchasing through end of life – to make sure that it represented clean and green government.

Making a commitment to join the SEC was not difficult. In addition to Maine's Clean Government Initiative, several Maine government staff sat on the SEC Advisory Board that helped shape the SEC program. The State initially chose to focus its efforts on purchasing since an Executive Order in 2004 directed the state to purchase environmentally preferable products.

The first real hurdle for Maine, and most other new SEC Partners, was completing the Baseline Reporting Form (BRF) about current practices. The BRF required tracking down the

right people – the ones with access to data and knowledge of state practices – that could answer questions about contract language for computer procurement, whether computers on desktops had

power management features enabled, and what happens to computers when they leave employees' desks. It was worth the effort, according to the Maine State Planning Office representative leading the SEC team. The BFR was an effective tool to engage the right people in dialogue, raise awareness of current practices (and their shortcomings), gather data to inform decisions, and identify areas for improvement.

The SEC team, with functional representation from State IT, purchasing, surplus, environmental protection, and planning offices met periodically throughout the year (and continue to meet) to establish goals, provide support, and review progress on SEC implementation. Ultimately, this network wove key functions together to provide more cohesive oversight of the State's computer assets, leading to environmental benefits and cost savings.

### Purchasing EPP Computer Products

Joining the SEC was timely as Maine was preparing to issue a Request for Quotes (RFQ) for computer equipment. With guidance provided by the SEC, the State included specific language requiring that computers bought by the State meet the "silver level" green purchasing standard known as Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT®). The State also required vendors to report on the number of units meeting the different EPEAT registration levels (Bronze, Silver, Gold.)

In 2008, Maine purchased 2,678 computer products. All of the computers purchased by the agency qualified as environmentally preferable products – they were EnergyStar

"Once top-level administration in IT and Purchasing were involved, the challenges of getting the right staff to the table were solved."

compliant and/or contained fewer toxins and also improved power management during use.

### Next on the Agenda

Following its successful first year, the SEC team identified its next challenge – improved operations and maintenance of its computer inventory. Energy efficiency, resulting in cost savings and greenhouse gas reductions, is on top of the list. Maine is evaluating software for centralized power management of computer systems as well as “smart” power strips to reduce the power consumption of other electronic devices. Initial studies of the Return on Investment (ROI) to purchase power strips make a compelling case for the investment, as long as employees use them. The State is also looking at extending the useful life of its computers by 1 - 2 years through memory and system upgrades.

More than 4,000 desktops, monitors, and notebook computers were recycled so as to further reduce the impacts to the environment. The recycling vendor adheres to one of the most stringent set of environmental performance guidelines in the U.S., which were established by the Maine Department of Environmental Management.

### Environmental Benefits

At the end of 2008, the State submitted data to NERC on its accomplishments, including the number of EPEAT registered products purchased and the number of computer units reused and recycled. This data was entered into the Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator. The State of Maine accrued the following benefits through its SEC program efforts in purchasing and end-of-life management.

SEC Environmental Results for Maine <sup>1</sup>		
Measure:	How Much?	Equivalent To:
Energy usage reduced	12.8 million kWh	The electricity to power 1,066 households for a year
Greenhouse gases avoided	907 MTCE <sup>2</sup>	Removing 609 cars from the road for a year
Municipal solid waste avoided	106 metric tons	Wastes generated by 53 U.S. households annually
Hazardous wastes avoided	44.6 metric tons	
Toxics reduced <sup>3</sup>	357 lbs	

“One of the most important aspects [of the SEC program] is the environmental benefits report provided by NERC to its Partners. It’s a vital tool for public policy makers to showcase their accomplishments and support their choices.”

<sup>1</sup> Calculated using the Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator, V 2.0, 3-2-09.

<sup>2</sup> Metric tons of carbon equivalents

<sup>3</sup> Includes lead, mercury, cadmium, and hexavalent chromium.