

## Protecting our Employees and Children... Your Clean Green Program

BY TERESA COCHRAN, PRESIDENT, SUN VALLEY GREEN

In April at the NJCM annual meeting, NJCM and Sun Valley Green announced their "New Jersey Mayors Clean Green" partnership to eliminate the use of toxic cleaning products in publicly owned buildings, including schools. This is an important step for New Jersey to help make the Garden State safer, and a more environmentally friendly place to live.

Sun Valley Green, a woman-owned company, was established with a sole mission to rid states, cities and school systems of toxic cleaning products. We are working with cities and progressive Mayors such as those in New Jersey to spread the green movement in an easy, effective manner. Since it is currently estimated that indoor pollution costs more than \$50 billion in the U.S. alone for healthcare, absenteeism, lost production, and lost revenue it is important to make changes quickly. With the simple step of replacing what the city is already buying in cleaning products with Clean Green environmentally friendly products New Jersey cities will save money on their supplies and should see a savings in reduced healthcare and workers compensation costs. It is a win-win for everyone.

The USEPA warns that:

- Up to 30 percent of all buildings contain indoor air contamination
- Allergic reactions to indoor air environments account for more than 10 million work days missed by US employees each year
- Six of every 100 janitors lose time from work due to an on-the-job chemical injury each year, with injuries ranging from respiratory problems to burns to eye
- Human exposure to air pollutants indoors is 2-5 times, and as much as 100 times, higher than outdoor levels.

Considering these numbers and the impact toxic cleaners are having on our society it is imperative to start "Green cleaning." Green cleaning refers to the process of using cleaning substances that do not contain harsh chemical ingredients (such as ammonia) found in many conventional industrial cleaners. FDA reports that on average 58.2lbs of chemical cleaning products are used per janitor per year and 35% of chemical cleaners

require extreme care during use because they can blind or cause severe skin and respiratory damage to an unprotected user.

Green cleaners help alleviate these health ailments—they are completely safe and totally environmentally friendly. They are made from biodegradable detergents and emulsifiers derived from substances such as: peroxide, corn, orange, and soybeans. Using green cleaners decreases air pollution, water pollution, ozone depletion and global climate change as well as reduces health problems associated with allergens, chemical sensitivities and contaminants, such as mold and bacteria.

The benefits of Green cleaning are enormous and impact health, environment, and economic factors:

- They help decrease air pollution, water pollution, ozone depletion and global climate change
- They reduce health problems associated with allergens, chemical sensitivities and contaminants, such as mold and bacteria.
- They contain low VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) levels that emit fewer fumes and are gentler on the facility itself.
- They help reduce costs to building management, tenants, and/or the janitorial company including costs associated with sick leave, health care, and productivity loss. In addition, green cleaning practitioners use energy-efficient equipment and focus on preventative maintenance to reduce expenses.
- They enhance an organization's reputation and brand equity, because being socially conscious has become a desirable business trait.

Sun Valley Green's line of Clean Green, Green Seal certified environmentally preferable cleaning products eliminate toxic chemical exposure of janitorial staff, government employees and students while improving the indoor environmental air quality without sacrificing cleaning effectiveness. With the NJCM endorsement, Sun Valley Green will travel the state teaming with Mayors to educate city administrators, procurement officials and school superintendents on the dangers of toxic cleaning agents and the importance of going green.

We are excited about the partnership and have already started the process of working with a number of mayors in New Jersey. We look forward to working with all the mayors of New Jersey. It is through your leadership that, together, we can make a real difference in the quality of life for our cities' employees, children, residents and visitors. ■

*Teresa Cochran founded Sun Valley Green to rid city buildings and schools of the toxic chemicals found in traditional industrial cleaners. As a mother of two boys, her goal is for Sun Valley Green's Clean Green products to protect children from indoor toxins in cities throughout New Jersey and across the country.*