

September 26, 2007

Being green

Green—my favorite color—may be the most popular these days. More and more manufacturers are working to have their products labeled green, which has become synonymous with environmentally friendly. Advertisers use it to promote everything from automobiles to shampoo. Websites, magazines, TV programs, movies, and political groups that focus solely on the green movement have appeared.

North American steel mills tout the green value of their improved production methods and recycling, and they'd like to see the movement spread globally to help level the *long green* playing field, while protecting the environment.

The **American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI)** is kicking off the second year of **The New Steel Campaign**, an advertising program targeting Washington policymakers with the objective of closing the gap between "outdated perceptions of the industry and the reality of today's globally competitive and vibrant North American steel industry."

A **page devoted to the New Steel Campaign** on the AISI Web site states, "America's steelmakers set an environmental standard the world's steelmakers should follow.

"American steelmakers lead the way in recycling and environmental performance. We're ahead of Kyoto greenhouse emission goals by 240 percent, and we're developing innovative technologies to continue setting new benchmarks. Unfortunately, not all global steelmakers share this commitment. Lax environmental standards are one way some overseas steelmakers aren't shouldering their fair share. Protecting the Earth is a global responsibility that requires global solutions. Because there's one single place we all call home."

Among the ads in the campaign is one entitled "The Clean Little Secret." The ad copy is a testament to the North American steel industry's green evolution.

"More steel is recycled each year than all other materials combined. But that's just part of steel's environmental story.

"Three-fourths of all American steel ends up recycled into new products, part of the steel industry's comprehensive environmental commitment. Over the past decade, American steelmakers have reduced the energy required to produce one ton of steel by 28 percent—and we've already reduced emissions to levels well below Kyoto standards. Innovation and technology have transformed America's steel industry into one of the world's most competitive, sustainable, and environmentally progressive."

A description of the campaign on the **Steel Recycling Institute's** Web site includes a quote from AISI President and CEO Andrew D. Sharkey: "The educational campaign was launched in May 2006 as America's steel industry recognized a need to inform policymakers of the advanced technologies and reduced environmental footprint that characterize today's globally-competitive industry. An underlying message of the campaign is this: given equal opportunity to compete, America's steel industry can take on any steel sector in the world. But that requires other nations to abide by the same set of environmental rules. A premise of the campaign is that as policymakers understand the modern profile of America's steel industry, they can better shape sound public policy that recognizes steel as a strategic industry to America's national and economic security."

The efforts of North American steel recyclers and producers to reduce their environmental footprint are admirable. Some examples can be found in **Our Stories** on Nucor's Web site. I found the **photograph accompanying the story about competing with another government** to be especially illustrative of the need to do as much as possible to reduce industrial pollution.

I applaud the measures domestic steel companies are taking. I'd like to see an updated list of the Pearson Economy Research Institute's **Toxic 100 U.S. air polluters**, which was last released in 2002, to see just how far they've come. A major steel company was No. 2 on that list that no company wants to make, especially in this green age.

We have to remember, **it's not that easy being green**.

