ENERGY MATTERS

Enlightened Idea: Retire Those Old Appliances

(NAPSA)—Replacing an old appliance with a more efficient one can be easier on your pocketbook—and the environment.

Where Do Old Appliances Go?

Once, appliances ended up in landfills. That was true 20 years ago. Today, they're typically recycled, transformed into a new car, cans, or any number of other steel products. This saves enough energy to power about a fifth of all U.S. households each year.

Each used appliance provides an average of 66 pounds of steel, says Greg Crawford, Vice President of Operations for the Steel Recycling Institute.

Recycling is a four-step process:

1. Collection is the first step. Many retailers and delivery services pick up appliances.

2. Next, processors carefully disassemble the appliances and remove coolants, mercury switches, oils and other hazardous liquids.

3. Now the appliance is ready for shredding. A machine called a hammermill, armed with metal mallets, shreds the appliance into small pieces in mere seconds. The recycler then uses magnets and other things to separate metals and "fluff materials," mostly plastics.

4. Finally, manufacturers reconstruct materials into new products in "minimills" after recyclers sell them the metal.

"A 10-year-old refrigerator uses twice as much energy as a new ENERGY STAR qualified model,"

If every U.S. household with a refrigerator over 10 years old replaced it with a new, energy-efficient model, annual energy savings would be enough to light every household in Washington, D.C. for 40 years.

says Marsha Penhaker, of the U.S. Department of Energy. "That's why ENERGY STAR is encouraging the three R's for aging refrigerators and other inefficient appliances: retiring it, recycling it into new steel, and replacing it with an ENERGY STAR qualified model. In one fell swoop we're saving precious resources and reinstalling more efficient products."

ENERGY STAR is a government-backed program helping businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency. To learn more, visit the ENERGY STAR Web site, www.energystar.gov, or the Steel Recycling Institute's Web site, www.recycle-steel.org.