

EPA Chief Browner & U.S. Senators Praise Metal Finishers At National Press Event For Work in Common Sense Initiative

The administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Honorable Carol Browner, joined U.S. Senators John Chafee (R-RI) and Jack Reed (D-RI) on October 27 for a plating plant tour and national press event in Providence, Rhode Island, to applaud the metal finishing industry's progress on the Common Sense Initiative (CSI). The event brought together leadership from the industry's three trade associations—the AESF, the National Association of Metal Finishers (NAMF) and the Metal Finishing Suppliers Association (MFSA)—as well as environmental groups, wastewater treatment authorities, other stakeholders, and top New England regional EPA officials.

The EPA planned the program to highlight the recent endorsement of the industry's "Strategic Goals" project by the CSI Metal Finishing Steering Committee. The agreement is the very first reached by industry, environmentalists and government leaders under the Initiative. It aims to give companies that voluntarily participate the opportunity to go "beyond compliance" in exchange for more flexible regulatory treatment, streamlined permitting and reporting requirements, and the potential for regulatory relief from current hazardous waste rules. For companies that wish to exit the industry but are anxious about the liability consequences connected with

site clean-up, the agreement makes doing so easier by offering technical transition assistance and the potential for limiting liability.



Administrator Browner publicly praised industry at the conference: "I commend and thank the metal finishing industry for its leadership in developing this comprehensive program, leading the way for other industries to follow."

Industry's Commitment To Environmental Progress Highlighted at Victory Finishing

A tour of Victory Finishing Technologies kicked off the morning program. Ed Marandola, Jr., Victory Finishing's owner and CEO, guided Administrator Browner, the two senators and other elected officials through the facility for a briefing on the metal finishing process and wastewater treatment issues.

In the press conference that followed, metal finishers joined environmental group officials and others at the podium to thank the CSI Steering Committee for its hard work and highlight the significance of the Strategic Goals Program.

Congressmen Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) and

Robert Weygand (D-RI) also participated in the event and voiced support for the agreement.

Administrator Browner noted the critical role metal finishers have played in the CSI. She told the audience that "For three years, members of the metal finishing industry,

along with federal, state and local government officials, environmentalists and community leaders, have joined together to find solutions that work for the industry and for the environment. The result will be more protection of public health for communities and greater flexibility for industry in complying with

environmental laws. I commend and thank the metal finishing industry for its leadership in developing this comprehensive program, leading the way for other industries to follow."



Providence-Attleboro Branch member Ed Marandola, Jr., chief executive of Victory Finishing Technologies in Providence, hosted the conference, which included a plant tour. His company is one of the first to be signed up for the Strategic Goals Program.



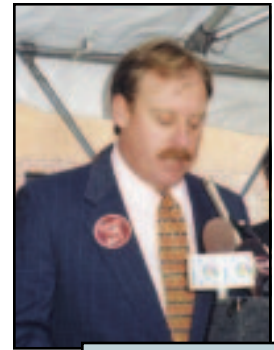
Attendees at the press conference included (L-R) Bob McDowell, NAMF past president; Bob Benson, EPA's Office of Policy, Planning & Evaluation; Bill Saas, MFSA representative and Government Advisory Committee chairman; and Kenneth Gatchel, AESF president.



Bob McBride, NAMF president, and Brenda Whalen, MFSA representative who coordinated the development of the Metal Finishing Guidance Manual, a project funded by the EPA.



(L-R) Christian Richter, vice president of AESF/NAMF/MFSA legislative affairs; Bill Saas; and Ernie Walen, MFSA vice president.



Representing environmentalists was Curt Spaulding of Save the Bay, who assisted in arranging the event.

Senator John Chafee, who chairs the Senate Environment committee and is leading legislative efforts to overhaul the controversial Superfund program, said, "the EPA's Common Sense Initiative demonstrates what I've always believed—that environmental protection and economic development need not be at odds with one another. Indeed, great things can be accomplished when government and industry work together toward our common goals of a strong environment and sound economy."

Metal finisher David Marsh, who has served as one of industry's key representatives on the CSI Steering Committee, underscored the achievements of the industry over the last 25 years and the hard work ahead on actually implementing the landmark agreement. "Make no mistake about it. The Goals Program is an ambitious undertaking. Success will come only by a firm commitment made one company at a time. I do have the utmost confidence, however, that we in the metal finishing industry will do our part to make Strategic Goals a success," Marsh stated. (Please refer to sidebar for full text of industry remarks.)



NAMF Past president Bob McDowell (left) has been announced as industry's project manager for the Strategic Goals Program. At right is Steve Scales, president of the AESF Providence-Attleboro Branch.

Robert McDowell, Sr. Announced as Industry's Project Manager For Strategic Goals Program

Robert J. McDowell, Sr., immediate past president of the NAMF, has been chosen as the industry representative project manager for the Strategic Goals Program (SGP). In this position, he will coordinate the metal finishing industry's participation in the project.

The SGP is a cooperative effort between the EPA and the AESF, NAMF and the MFSA to "test new ideas" that are both bold and "common sense" in nature for improved environmental protection by the metal finishing industry. The program was created by key industry leaders and other important stakeholder groups for "cleaner, cheaper and smarter" environmental performance by metal finishing companies in the U.S.

Companies that voluntarily sign up for the program indicate their willingness to achieve a set of National Performance Goals. As a reward for achieving these goals, companies will receive regulatory flexibility and incentives for improved environmental performance, as well as access to financial and technical resources.

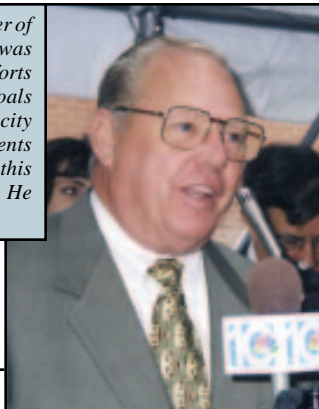


Congressman Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) also participated in the event and spoke in support of the agreement.

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Industry representative David Marsh, owner of Finishing Services Inc. in Ypsilanti, MI, was praised by Administrator Browner for his efforts and hard work in making the Strategic Goals Program a reality. "If it weren't for his tenacity in finding common ground in difficult moments among the various stakeholder groups, this agreement may never have been reached. He never gave up," she stated.



David Marsh Presents Industry Statement;

"The Strategic Goals Program is About Getting Results"

Today is a historic moment. Never before in the making of our nation's environmental policy have people and organizations with such seemingly diverse goals and interests come together to try such innovative things.

I'd like to thank Senator John Chafee for being here today. His many years of leadership and dedication to environmental protection have made this nation a better place. He has played a key role as a consensus-builder who is committed to getting things done. We in industry, particularly those of us in small manufacturing, thank you for your clear thinking about what it takes to make our laws work better.

I'd also like to thank Carol Browner for her vision of how we can have "cleaner, cheaper, smarter" environmental protection. Her being here today sends a strong message to all of us that she is committed to make the Common Sense Initiative work for the metal finishing industry. For that we are deeply appreciative.

For three years, metal finishers from across the country have worked with the EPA, the environmental community, and state and local regulators to craft the Strategic Goals Program. This program represents some creative thinking, a lot of hard work, and a commitment by all parties to a nationwide plan for the metal finishing industry that we hope will fundamentally change the way our regulatory system works.

From the industry's perspective, the Goals Program is about getting results. Getting results in the form of a cleaner environment. Getting results in operating our businesses more efficiently, in order to stay competitive. And getting results in more effective, more informed—and less costly—"common sense" regulation.

All the participants who crafted the program agree that these goals can—and should—go hand in hand. This is what the Common Sense Initiative is really all about. And the metal finishing industry's national leadership is here TODAY because we believe we CAN have a regulatory system that works better, and that we can play a role in testing novel concepts and ideas to bring this about.

Over the past 25 years, our industry has changed dramatically. On balance, we are tougher and more competitive. We are well versed in our environmental obligations, and through our technical know-how and commitment to doing the right things, we have established ourselves as one of the most credible and creative small manufacturing sectors in the U.S. economy today.

And in the same way that metal finishers in this country in the last two decades have helped transform our industry and advance our environmental performance, we are clearly ready to take some new risks and tackle the challenge of going "beyond compliance."

Make no mistake about it. The Goals Program is an ambitious undertaking. Success will come only by a firm commitment made one company at a time. I do have the utmost confidence, however, that we in the metal finishing industry will do our part to make Strategic Goals a success. —David Marsh, owner, Finishing Services Inc., Ypsilanti, MI

One of Bob McDowell's first priorities is to get as many companies as possible to sign up for the program. He will be identifying those companies—both jobshops and captive shops—that will want to be a part of the Strategic Goals Program.

The aim of industry leadership is to get broad participation from metal finishers in this strictly voluntary program," says McDowell. "The program has tremendous potential for finishers. We have a chance to change the system as we know it today, as well as an opportunity to show EPA and the nation that companies at all levels of environmental performance can show continuous improvement. For those companies that need help in transitioning out of the industry, this program will assist them, too." P&SF

Editor's note: Bob is now in the process of identifying companies in various regions of the country that are willing to participate. If you are interested in the program and are considering signing up, please contact him at:

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Fax: 716/425-7501

e-mail: rmcowel@rochester.infi.net

Your Company Can Become A Charter 100 Company Member

Get details at the AESF/EPA Conference—
January 26–28

Complete details on the Strategic Goals Program will be announced during the AESF/EPA Conference on Pollution Prevention & Control. Commitment forms will be available there so that companies may sign up for the program. As industry representatives have stated, participation in this effort is industry's opportunity to fundamentally change the way the regulatory system works in the United States.

