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Shaw Industries Announces New Environmental Policy to Drive Manufacturing Processes

Company commits to more sustainable recycling practices

“Most Progressive Policy in American Industry”

DALTON, Ga. – December 4, 2003 – Shaw Industries Inc., a Berkshire Hathaway company and the world’s largest carpet manufacturer, has adopted an unprecedented new environmental policy, committing the company’s carpet manufacturing processes to follow nature’s organic cycle of renewal.

The policy, unparalleled in the floor covering industry, commits Shaw to developing sustainable carpet products that can be continually broken down and reused again – returning carpet to carpet through closed-loop or “cradle-to-cradle” recycling. Rather than using traditional approaches that recycle used carpet into other products that could eventually end up in a landfill, the company will utilize this progressive approach to maintain continuous responsibility for its product material.

Through its unique e.g. (Environmental Guarantee) program, Shaw will collect, transport, and recycle any carpet tile made with EcoWorx[®], its popular environmentally sustainable carpet backing.

“We believe our new environmental policy is the most progressive policy in American industry,” said Julian Saul, president of Shaw Industries. “We are committed to being an industry leader in creating eco-effective ways to produce carpet – it’s the right thing to do for our business and the environment.”

Shaw’s environmental policy includes the following provisions:

- Environmental sustainability is our destination and “cradle-to-cradle” is our path. Our entire corporation and all stakeholders will value and share this vision.
- Through eco-effective technology, we will continuously redesign our products, our processes and our corporation.
- We will take responsibility for all that we do and strive to return our products to technical nutrient cycles that virtually eliminate the concept of waste.



- We look forward to a solar-powered future utilizing the current solar income of the earth, anticipating declining solar costs and rising fuel costs as technology and resource depletion accelerate.
- We will lead our industry in developing and delivering profitable cradle-to-cradle solutions to our free-market economy. Economy, equity and ecology will be continually optimized.
- We will continue to deliver unsurpassed safety, quality, beauty, performance and value to our customers.

“Our previous statements of environmental policy described our efforts toward sustainability as a journey,” said Saul. “This new statement gives us a well-defined destination, a clear path ahead and a purposeful stride. We see sustainability as an essential business practice for our corporation, our suppliers, and our customers.”

New Environmental Policy in Practice: EcoWorx Carpet Backing

Shaw EcoWorx carpet backing demonstrates the essence of the new environmental policy by providing a sustainable flooring solution that makes good economic, functional and environmental sense for all stakeholders.

In addition to offering an alternative to the industry standard PVC backing at a comparable cost, EcoWorx is developed with 40 percent less weight, while maintaining or improving all performance categories. Shaw guarantees it will pick up EcoWorx at the end of its life, at no charge to the customer, and recycle it into more EcoWorx, enabling the company to use the same materials in a perpetual loop. When paired together with Shaw EcoSolution Q[®] carpet yarn, the end product can be sustainably recycled—carpet to carpet and backing to backing.

Introduced in 1999, EcoWorx has rapidly become the backing of choice for Shaw carpet tile customers. By the end of 2003, Shaw expects 75 percent of its total tile production to be EcoWorx and looks forward to a future built on the continued success of the product.

Shaw also received acknowledgement for EcoWorx from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a recipient of a Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award. The honor recognizes Shaw for developing a carpet tile that may be sustainably recycled and has less embodied energy than traditional PVC carpet tiles, while maintaining equal or greater performance. With the new environmental policy in place, purchasers are guaranteed truly sustainable products today, such as EcoWorx carpet backing and EcoSolution Q carpet tile, as well as future product developments that meet the highest standards of sustainability.

Ensuring the Policy: Cradle-to-Cradle Design Protocol



To test its materials for sustainability, Shaw now uses the Cradle-to-Cradle Design Protocol, a third-party system created by renowned designer William McDonough and German chemist Michael Braungart. The Cradle-to-Cradle Design Protocol assesses each individual material used in a product to determine whether it's safe for the ecosystem. Shaw's Eco Solution Q fiber and EcoWorx backing are among the first products in the world to be fully assessed through the Cradle-to-Cradle Design Protocol.

EcoWorx was introduced in 1999, entering the marketplace alongside Shaw's Permabac® PVC carpet-tile backing, popular in the industry for many years. At its introduction, EcoWorx won the Most Innovative Product Award at NeoCon, the world's trade fair for interior design and facilities management. EcoWorx has rapidly become the backing of choice for Shaw carpet tile customers.

With EcoWorx, Shaw has developed a carpet tile with 40 percent less weight, while maintaining or improving all performance categories the company's customers expect, at the same cost as previous products.

But the most important feature of EcoWorx may be its environmentally sustainable design, which enables Shaw to recycle it in a perpetual loop that makes good economic, functional and environmental sense for all stakeholders. "We see EcoWorx as a cradle-to-cradle product for today and for the future," Saul said.

Even prior to implementation of the Cradle-to-Cradle Design Protocol, Shaw has made tremendous strides in environmental conservation. Since 1992, the company has reduced emissions from its manufacturing plants by more than 95 percent. Over a five-year period, the company also reduced by 40 percent the amount of water required to make one square yard of carpeting.

About Shaw

Shaw Industries, the world's largest carpet manufacturer, produces and sells carpet, rugs, ceramic, hardwood and laminate flooring for residential and commercial applications throughout the world. Shaw's commercial brands include Shaw Contract Group, Patcraft and Designweave.

A subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., Shaw is headquartered in Dalton, Ga. The company, with 30,000 employees, manufactures more than 600 million square yards of floor covering annually.

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Editor's Note: For a copy of Shaw's complete environmental policy, or to arrange interviews with Shaw management, please contact Kaycee Allmond, manager of marketing communications, at



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