

Media Notice

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IMMEDIATE NOTICE

One of the country's first Green Pioneers in the Twin Cities asks for votes in national contest

THE RESTORE REFILL STATION HAS KEPT MORE THAN 10 TONS OF PLASTICS FROM LANDFILLS; CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS LAUDS PATENTED TECHNOLOGY AND RESTORE PRODUCTS FOUNDER AS GROWTH ENGINE IN CITY'S GREEN ECONOMY

TWIN CITIES — April 17, 2009 — For almost 20 years since founding Restore The Earth Store (the first Minnesota green store Uptown in 1991 and the second in the nation), Laurie Brown has done her part to keep the environment healthier and safer by inventing a patented technology that can keep plastic cleaning and detergent bottles out of landfills. Now she's asking and anyone who supports smarter and more sustainable ways to reduce waste to vote for her company until April 26 in a national contest sponsored by *Business Week* magazine, which hopes to pick a winning company from a field of 25 for "America's Most Promising Social Entrepreneurs."

Voting is easy and fast to do at the Restore Products website where you can also watch a brief video of how the Restore Refill Station works: www.restoreproducts.com

The RESTORE Refill Station is a patented in-store kiosk that allows consumers to bring back empty product bottles of Brown's five leading non-toxic, highly rated cleaning and detergents and refill them. The smart machine reads a bar code, mixes the product, refills the bottle, and prints out a discount coupon, thus reducing costs for manufacturers, retailers, and consumers while keeping plastic out of landfills and reducing water consumption. Brown deployed the Refill Stations in six stores throughout the Twin Cities in 2002. Today there are machines in 22 stores in seven states (including Whole Foods and others). Her Restore cleaning and detergent products are now carried in more than 300 stores, while the Refill Station has launched in Europe and will be tested soon with other brands in European grocers.

"Minneapolis is the birthplace of the RESTORE Refill Station and thanks to Twin Cities consumers, it can now be shared soon in Europe and possibly with other liquid brands in the U.S.," says Brown, who invented the Refill Station. "Winning this competition would send a strong message to consumer products companies throughout the world that consumers want things to change. Americans use over 4 million plastic bottles per hour and consumers are tired of throwing them away. Packaging should no longer be treated as waste by our society when really it is a wasted opportunity for manufacturers

to save on packaging and for consumers to feel good and take an action to improve our environment by refilling their bottle. Imagine if a large laundry brand were to install RESTORE Refill Stations in all of the Wal-Mart locations across the country, we estimate that it could save 22.5 million pounds of plastic from reaching the landfill each year."

"Minneapolis is ahead of the curve in supporting our innovative green businesses," said Mayor R.T. Rybak. "It takes all of us, in our own ways, to do our part to fight climate change by reducing our consumption and reusing and recycling as much as possible."

"Laurie Brown's Minneapolis-based company is exactly the right kind of green engine that the City champions to drive our growth in the 21st century," said Mike Christenson, Director, City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning & Economic Development. "I urge all supporters of this exciting business to vote during the next two weeks. By reducing manufacturing, packaging waste and shipping costs, Restore improves the economics and diminishes the carbon footprint of any liquid product," he added.

Restore is poised to capitalize on the convergence of several macro trends, including the rising consumer demand for sustainable products, emerging government initiatives to reduce packaging, and growing corporate interest to cut costs by improving shipping and packaging efficiencies that also benefit the environment.

About Laurie Brown

Laurie Brown started RESTORE Products Company in 1991 with a dream: to make natural cleaners that were as safe and healthy as they were effective. **She pioneered the region's first "green retail store"—Restore the Earth Store—in Minneapolis in Uptown between 1991 and 1997. Using her own capital and a grant from the state's Office of Environmental Assistance, the private-public partnership yielded patented technology for the refill machine and a pilot program.** Among the many environmentally friendly products and services offered by the store was Brown's own line of cleaning detergents. The bulky detergent refill station took up nearly a quarter of the store's premium space. Today's model stands only 12 inches wide, 17 inches deep and 31 inches high and can refill multiple types of cleaning products and potentially any liquid product while giving grocery or commercial customers an incentive to return again with an instant dollar-off coupon as they finish the refill.

There are currently 22 RESTORE Refill Stations in use throughout the country, and major consumer products companies are working out details for potential in-store consumer tests with their own brands.

"The question is not *if* other grocery stores and mainstream manufacturers will follow suit by bringing this next level of naturally sound and profitable retailing and packaging solution to their customers, but *when*," says Brown.

For more information, visit the company's Web site at www.restoreproducts.com.

For more insights into the impact of plastic bottles on the environment, see separate Fact Sheet that follows.

For more information — or to interview Laurie Brown about her technology and the Business Week voting contest — please contact Martin Keller at Media Savant Communications Co., 612-279-8585, mkeller@mediasavantcom.com, or Krista Bergert, 612-673-5015, krista.bergert@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Restore Refill Station
Restore the earth one bottle at a time!
U.S. Plastic Use and Its Impact on the Earth's Carbon Footprint

- It takes 700 years for a plastic bottle to begin to degrade.³
- Every hour Americans use 4 million plastic bottles; only one-fourth are recycled.³
- According to an April 2007 article in *Science and Technology*, "a recent nationwide online survey showed that 72 percent of the American public does not know that conventional plastic is made from petroleum products, primarily oil. Moreover, 40 percent of the respondents believe that plastic will biodegrade at some point. This contributes to the problems of energy dependence, greenhouse gas emissions and depleting resources. In fact, nearly 10 percent of U.S. oil consumptions—approximately 2 million barrels a day—are used to make plastic."
- An estimated 95 percent of all plastics used in the United States are not recycled, even those thrown into a recycle bin, due to the relatively small market for recycled plastics.¹
- In 2003 only 5 percent of all plastics were diverted from landfills nationwide.¹
- 35-40 percent of all solid waste is packaging.
- 9.5 percent of the nation's non-recycled garbage is plastic, which equals approximately 3.8 million tons per year.²
- In California alone, HDPE plastics (the type of non-clear bottles labeled #2 used for household cleaning detergents) represent roughly 189,549 tons of the overall disposed waste stream, and PET plastics (clear bottles labeled #1, such as those used for bottled water) make up 216,134 tons.¹
- Plastic, while lightweight, is bulky and difficult to compact for shipping or to bury in landfills.¹

- Although plastics take up only about 7 percent of all landfill space by weight, they use between 10 percent and 20 percent by volume.¹
- **Plastic is the fastest-growing material taking up space in landfills, and because it is not biodegradable it represents a permanent kind of litter.**¹
- Most plastics today are made from petroleum and natural gas, yet the very first plastics were made from cornstarch.¹
- On the production side, the byproducts of the petroleum used to make the plastic resins can become hazardous waste, and oil spills on the land and in the water poison wildlife and pollute habitats.
- Reducing the amount of plastic used will conserve natural resources, including fossil fuels, and help to decrease overall pollution. **On the disposal side, the refilling of plastic bottles using state-of-the-art refill technology in grocery stores will make a huge impact on reducing the wasteful practice of one-use disposable packaging for water, beverages, and household and personal care products.**

Forward-Looking Trends

- California mandates a 50 percent reduction of solid waste by 2010.
- European countries force container deposits/take back systems to reduce solid waste.
- Wal-Mart has pledged to reduce solid waste from US stores by 25 percent in three years.⁵

1 California Integrated Waste Management Board's 2003 Statewide Waste Characterization Study.

2 Environmental Protection Agency 2003 data.

3 *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.

4 The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has been tracking prices of plastic resins for 58 years, 2006.

5 *Fortune* magazine, July 26, 2006.