

## **As 'Take-Back' Program Enters Its Tenth Year, Royal's Recycling Efforts Expand the Sustainable Nature of PVC**

**Woodbridge, Ontario** (January 4, 2012) – *Durable, long lasting, low maintenance, attractive and high quality* are words commonly associated with vinyl building products made with PVC (polyvinyl chloride). One word not typically used in the same sentence as PVC, however, is *sustainable*.

Royal Building Products is working to change the perception of PVC and vinyl building materials.

"We have a good story to tell," said Andre Touchette, regional president for Royal Window and Door in Montreal. "As environmentalists compare the cradle-to-grave impacts of our products and alternative materials, the perception of PVC and vinyl building products is steadily improving."

Indeed, when the entire lifecycle is considered, PVC and vinyl building materials are environmentally friendly – friendlier, in fact, than many so-called "green" alternatives.

Here are some examples:

- PVC consumes less energy during manufacturing than many competing products, saving fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- PVC requires little or no maintenance, such as painting or treatment with preservatives; its durability means that PVC needs to be replaced less frequently than other materials
- PVC building products are energy efficient; ENERGY STAR roofing membranes made of PVC reflect sunlight, ENERGY STAR vinyl window frames conserve energy in buildings, and the smooth inner walls of PVC pipe reduces friction and requires less energy to pump water
- PVC is lighter in weight than many alternative building materials, thus requiring less fuel to transport the finished product to the site where it will be used

Finally, it is important to note that PVC and vinyl building products are easily recyclable.

"Royal is committed to sustainable manufacturing, and that includes recycling PVC scrap," said Mark Orcutt, executive vice president, Royal Building Products.

"We have many regrind machines set up throughout North America," Orcutt said. "We regrind 100 percent of our scrap produced internally, and the recycled PVC is then shared throughout our organization and incorporated into new building products. What our Window and Door business can't use because of the need for higher purity is sent to our Siding business. And what our Siding business can't use is sent to our Pipe business, which can use all types of recycled PVC."

For nearly a decade, Royal also has been working to expand the sustainable nature of PVC and vinyl building products by partnering with outside fabricators, building contractors and other

organizations to ensure that their scrap and unused inventory is recycled rather than sent to a landfill.

The effort began in 2002 as a pilot project involving Royal Pipe Systems in western Canada, the city of Abbotsford and a local contractor in British Columbia to recycle scrap pipe discarded during the installation of municipal water mains and sewage lines. While the pipe “take-back” program generates a limited amount of recyclable material – about 1,500 pounds a year – the effort has successfully demonstrated that the lifecycle benefits of PVC can extend beyond cradle-to-grave.

“By recycling PVC pipe, we now have a sustainable product that offers *cradle-to-cradle* environmental and energy-saving benefits,” said Lorne Smyth, vice president, business development and marketing, Royal Pipe & Fittings Solutions.

In 2008, Royal’s Window and Door business rolled out its own take-back program that initially included 16 fabricators in eastern Canada. The program focuses on recycling the scrap materials – “end cuts” – that are a byproduct of the fabricators’ manufacturing process.

“Over time, we want to expand our efforts from post-fabrication recycling to post-consumer recycling,” Touchette said. “There are strong efforts moving forward to put a post-consumer take-back program in place, but there is currently not enough volume of product to justify the investment.”

The primary hurdle, he explained, is that vinyl windows and doors last so long that it could be years before a meaningful volume of material is available to be recycled.

The longevity of vinyl building products, however, has not deterred other Royal operations from doing what they can to recapture and reuse PVC scrap.

At Royal Mouldings in southwestern Virginia, for example, the company has a customer take-back program for end cuts and mitered corners, as well as PVC saw dust. During the first half of 2011, the Royal Mouldings plant in Marion had recaptured more than 86,000 pounds of recyclable material compared with nearly 52,300 pounds in 2010.

“We view the take-back program as an opportunity to partner with our customers to do the right thing for our communities,” said Brian Thomas, Royal Mouldings plant manager. “It can help prolong the life of current landfills and reduce the amount of natural resources that must be consumed to produce virgin products.”

Before scrap is collected from fabricators in the field can be recycled, all non-PVC material – such as hardware, weather stripping and dirt, if the material is waste from a construction site – must be removed. Then, the scrap PVC is fed into a grinder, and the small pellets that emerge are combined with virgin PVC compound and extruded into new pipe, vinyl siding, decking, fences, window and door components, and other building materials.

In addition to the environmental advantages, Royal customers are finding that recycling PVC and vinyl building products offers other benefits. In Canada, for example, manufacturers are taxed on waste volume. Royal’s take-back program enables its fabricating customers to receive a tax break – as well as a payment that the company provides for each pound of recyclable scrap that is returned to Royal Building Products.

Similarly, as owners and contractors look for ways to make homes and businesses more sustainable, vinyl building products that are both recyclable and contain recycled content are becoming increasingly sought after.

“We are finding that a majority of fabricators are getting requests from consumers about their environmental footprint,” Touchette said. “Some of our largest customers are now promoting the presence of recycled materials in their products.”

Finally, companies like Royal Building Products are discovering that a focus on recycling and sustainability enhances employee engagement and retention.

“Our employees are proud to be part of a company like Royal Building Products that cares about the environment and that offers products that can make a sustainable difference,” Orcutt said.

### **About Royal Building Products**

[Royal Building Products](#), a subsidiary of [Georgia Gulf Corporation](#) (NYSE: GGC), manufactures and distributes leading materials for the home remodeling, building and municipal construction markets. For over 40 years, the company’s commitment to quality, innovation and customer relationships has attracted the loyalty of a growing number of building professionals, homeowners, architects, engineers and distributors to its products. With operations throughout North America, Royal Building Products offers the renovation, remodeling and new construction industries a broad range of innovative products including [siding, trim, accessories, soffit, rain ware, mouldings, deck, fence, rail, window profiles and patio doors](#). Royal Building Products also manufactures [pipe and fittings](#) for the electrical, municipal, irrigation, plumbing and industrial construction industries. For more information, please visit our website [www.royalbuildingproducts.com](http://www.royalbuildingproducts.com). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and “Like” us on [Facebook](#).

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