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POWDER COATING: POLLUTION CONTROL MEANS PROFITS, TOO
'Dry Painting' Combines Environmental Benefits, Economic Performance

Washington, D.C. — As Congress kicks off the debate on amending the Clean Air Act, one of the nation's newest high-tech industries is showing how environmental protection plus performance can be a formula for profits.

"Powder coating proves that you don't always have to choose between fighting pollution and growing your business," says Greg Bocchi, Executive Director of The Powder Coating Institute. "Our industry helps companies meet EPA's tough air pollution regulations, and helps them operate leaner and more profitably."

In powder coating, often called "dry painting," electrostatically-charged dry particles of pigment and resin are sprayed onto products ranging from automobile parts and vacuum cleaners to roofing tiles and decorative glass bottles. The powder particles are then heated in an oven, permanently fusing them to the surface.

"It's a virtually pollution-free process," says Bocchi, "that meets the strictest EPA Clean Air Act standards on volatile organic compounds (VOCs) or hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). That means companies don't have to sustain large capital outlays on pollution control equipment."

Particles that wind up on the floor or walls of the spray booth instead of the part are not wasted—they can be recovered and reused, saving more money and conserving resources.

"As important as it is, however, environmental protection is just part of the story," adds Bocchi. "Powder coating combines pollution prevention with efficiency, high quality and a healthy bottom line."

Powder coating creates strong, colorful, finishes that are more durable than liquid paints, and resist corrosion, scratching, wear and fading. Powder coating costs less to apply than liquid paint, operating costs are lower, and less overall labor is required.

"Companies start out looking at powder coating to comply with the clean air laws, but wind up choosing it to raise their profits," says Bocchi.

Powder is now used in a wide and growing range of industries, including major

appliances, power tools, motorcycles, automotive parts, lawn and garden furniture, sporting goods, toys, aircraft parts, architectural parts, office equipment, and baby strollers and furniture. And more widespread use of powder is on the way. The Big Three automakers have launched an historic collaboration on a facility to test spraying powder clearcoats on their automotive bodies.

"Powder coating is truly the technology of the future, here today," says Bocchi.

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