

Green is Very Green Indeed for GE



By Karen R. Smith

What is ecomaginationsm? To quote GE's 2006 Annual Report, "Ecomagination is a business strategy to meet customers' demands for more energy-efficient, less emissive products and to drive reliable growth for GE—growth that delivers for investors long term. Ecomagination also reflects GE's commitment to invest in a future that creates innovative solutions to environmental challenges and delivers valuable products and services to customers while generating profitable growth for the Company."

Water is one of GE's top five strategic growth platforms and ecomagination is the company's most successful initiative in recent memory. Now GE is bringing ecomagination to residential water treatment with the launch of the first ecomagination-certified product attending this industry, the Homespring™ Central Water Purifier. (See *WC&P* December 2005.)

Andrew Warnes is widely known as a result of his tenure as the International Director of the Water Quality Association, where he worked primarily on European regulatory issues on behalf of the US water treatment industry. Prior to that, he was the Director of International Sales & Marketing for Sta-Rite Industries; he also led growth into international markets for Kinetico Incorporated.

Warnes began in water treatment 15 years ago, when he left the military after Desert Storm. Today, he's more excited than ever about the opportunities available to those in residential water treatment.

"Several months ago, you gave me the chance to write an article about

whether the fortunes of the residential water treatment industry are tied to the home construction market (see *WC&P* March 2007). The research proved to me that, at least here in the US, the residential water treatment industry is closely linked to new home sales—so much so that there has been an approximate one-to-one correlation between new homes sold and POE units sold for at least the

past 16 years. This tells me that the industry has significantly larger opportunities that are currently untapped and it needs to do a better job at marketing itself—and I'm not content just to sit back and ride the housing cycle," he stated.

Warnes believes the industry is ready for a more dynamic approach to marketing and that GE is the company that can do it. "GE has the respect, the reputation and the resources to change the way the residential water treatment industry is perceived by consumers. Ecomagination is an initiative that can change perception and I'm thrilled to be right in the middle of what I consider to be a watershed moment in residential water treatment," Warnes said.

Warnes is Product Manager for GE's Homespring Central Water Purifier line. The technology is unique—the device uses the same hollow-fiber membrane technology that has been used for years in full-scale municipal drinking water treatment plants treating up to 100 mgd. "We put this membrane technology into a compact, automatic package that home and business owners can purchase at a reasonable cost and that regulators are comfortable with when we make a bacteriological purification claim," Warnes summed up.

The Homespring is the first GE residential ecomagination product for water treatment. It incorporates proven hollow fiber ultrafiltration (UF) membrane technology that provides safe and reliable water to homes, small communities, businesses, rural locations and areas lacking adequate infrastructure. "We pursued the ecomagination certification to truly prove the Homespring's unique points of dif-



GE Chairman Jeff Immelt speaks at the Universal event

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Global locations: 160 countries
Employees: 310,000 as of 1/1/2007

GE Chairman Immelt and Governor Schwarzenegger speak with NBC Anchor Lester Holt at the Universal event



ferentiation. This was in addition to the independent testing and certification that the Homespring already has, which includes NSF 42 and 53 as well as WQA and Biovir certification to the US EPA *Guide Standard and Protocol for Microbiological Purifiers*."

To earn ecomagination certification, the device had to pass through an independent third-party review and audit of its environmental, economic and operational benefits to customers, Warnes explained. The certification process verified the ability of Homespring to make the ecomagination claims.

On May 24th, GE celebrated the second anniversary of ecomagination with a gala *Green is Universal* event hosted by Chairman and CEO Jeffrey R. Immelt at NBC Universal's Universal City. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was there to speak on sustainability's new bottom line and the role that energy policy plays in making new technologies viable for businesses and governments.

At the event, more than 600 customers experienced the power of the ecomagination portfolio and a series of partnerships and product launches were announced. GE unveiled its Ecomagination Homebuilder Program, a first-of-its-kind package of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, advanced building design, even a unique energy-efficient mortgage from GE Commercial Finance and the Homespring Central Water Purifier.

GE Water & Process Technologies CEO Jeff Garwood hosted a water sustainability symposium during the event, with presentations delivered by water industry leaders like Bill Reilly, Founding Partner of Aqua International and former US EPA Director; Don Correll, President

and CEO of American Water and Tim Brick, Chairman of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Beyond this event, GE is spreading the ecomagination word in other places as well. The initiative was highlighted at the recent *40 Large Cities Climate Summit* hosted by New York City's Mayor Bloomberg, where GE's Vice President of ecomagination, Lorraine Bolsinger and the Mayors of Seoul, South Korea and Sao Paulo, Brazil discussed how green development can facilitate economic growth, jobs growth and lower municipal operating costs.

Warnes is proud of GE's real commitment to Ecomagination—a commitment being recognized in the marketplace. "GE reported ecomagination revenues from energy and water-efficient products and

environmentally advantageous services rocketed past \$12 billion in 2006, up 20 percent from 2005, while the order backlog rose to \$50 billion," he noted, which means that for GE, green is truly green.

GE Water & Process Technologies' ecomagination solutions help customers cost-effectively achieve energy efficiency and increase the supply of usable water. "Overall, we help our customers conserve about 20 billion gallons of water ev-



GE VP of Ecomagination Lorraine Bolsinger introduces Governor Schwarzenegger to the GE Eco Home exhibit

ery year (enough to meet the daily water requirements of more than 100 million people) and set standards that meet and exceed environmental regulations."

"The timing of our ecomagination certification for Homespring could not be better. By going to market with Ecomagination products, we ride the wave of an established brand and gain a high-profile image," Warnes said. ♦

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