

While recently attending a ZEP sponsored “green seminar” in Orlando and listening to a member of the USGBC U.S. Green Building Council along with one of our chemists, I reflected on what “green” means to the KEC industry. Not much, right now, it occurred to me. But in the future? Much more.

The best line in the presentation was when the USGBC expert said, “if you are not overwhelmed and confused, you are not doing 'green' correctly”. I looked around the room at a cross section of Central Florida companies and institutions trying to learn about “green” to determine how it would affect them, their companies, their families and our planet. This is not a rewind to the 70's and 80's where green ideas blossomed, but were soon forgotten as soon as a generation matured, got a mortgage and started graying. “Going green” is here to stay and will continue to become a driving force in building/facility operation, air quality, energy saving and preserving our fragile environment. Lawmakers are drafting legislation, allocating resources, developing accountability standards and considering non-compliance issues/actions. This paradigm shift will be a learning curve for all involved, and is not without potential peril.

It really should not come as a surprise that the KEC industry has always been part of an overall “green” mission statement: delivering products and services that are good for people, property and the environment. Responsibly removing a flammable substance from an air system to improve air quality and reduce energy expense is a very “green” procedure. The problem remains that this procedure is usually a race against time where traditionally strong chemicals are utilized to reduce man-hours onsite. The vast majority of restaurant operators simply want to know their system is running properly and a current sticker is prominently displayed for the

fire marshal. Then there is that other group; government buildings, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, military facilities, high profile corporate kitchens, chains that are

opening up “green” locations, large retail giants, global entertainment providers, international hospitality groups and others that strive for the PR value in trying to “green up” their reputation. These are locations where change will take place first. This change will also happen in other departments first, but sooner or later the kitchen will receive its due attention. Sanitizers, floor maintenance, drain care, food storage, employee hygiene, dish washing and laundry will all see options and solutions that address “green” improvements. And yes, even the chemicals used in KEC, along with their lifecycle (disposal), will be scrutinized some day at a national level.

You may be familiar with LEED Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification that is driving the more high-profile properties to examine every aspect of their “footprint” and where improvements can take place.

Several other organizations and ideals are beginning to pick up steam including: CHPS Collaborative for High Performance Schools, Green Hotels Assoc., Green Building Coalition, EPP Environmental Preferred Purchasing, Healthy Schools Campaign, Green Guide for Healthcare and RPN Responsible Purchasing Network. Third party certifications of products and procedures are taking hold in purchasing departments and in bid specs. Greenseal, Ecologo and the EPA's DfE Design for the Environment are just a few that are making headway fast. This is all positive, except for one aspect: everyone has differing opinions about what constitutes “green” or what category of products they will focus on.



My company, ZEP Inc., has been producing “green” chemical formulations for decades, but because of the diversified client base of industries we service ZEP has established a criteria that cuts across literally all “green” current classifications:

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| <b>Contains post consumer packaging</b>      | <b>No ozone depleting ingredients</b> |
| <b>Contain recyclable packaging</b>          | <b>No phosphates</b>                  |
| <b>Contain biodegradable surfactants</b>     | <b>No carcinogens</b>                 |
| <b>Non-corrosive</b>                         | <b>No “butyl” solvents</b>            |
| <b>No chlorine bleach</b>                    | <b>No chlorinated solvents</b>        |
| <b>No ammonia</b>                            | <b>No reproductive toxins</b>         |
| <b>No A.P.E.'s (Alkylphenol Ethoxylates)</b> | <b>No heavy metals</b>                |
| <b>No VOC's or VOC compliant</b>             | <b>No phthalates</b>                  |

This has not been an easy task especially when end-use performance must be within or above accepted guidelines along with cost of use. Now I speak to reality: No one reading this IKECA Journal is going to use a “green-type” chemical to do a first-time cleaning in an Oriental kitchen. We all know a strong batch of whatever your favorite “brew” is along with elbow grease and time tested superior procedures is the only way to survive the ordeal. But, when cleaning those “maintained” low volume systems often found in some of the above mentioned “other locations” it might be time to explore if a “green” option exists and while you are at it how about looking at options for your waste-water disposal other than

down the drain? The positive news for the KEC industry is options do exist and you have a window of time to begin their evaluation. No one needs to be a “deer in the headlights” concerning this “green” movement. We are all in this together and must remain devoted long-term to all the potential benefits “going green” could mean to our employees, customers, the environment and perhaps even more important; that KEC has been and will continue to be a recognized critical “green” cleaning necessity that everyone takes seriously.

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# Meet Bob

## Bob owns a very successful restaurant.

Bob hired the guy in the tank top to clean his kitchen exhaust system. He was the lowest bidder and did the job in record time. Bob couldn't believe his luck.

Then Bob called the guy in the heavy coat, who put out the fire that was caused by the grease that wasn't properly cleaned from the kitchen exhaust system in Bob's restaurant, which isn't so successful anymore.

Bob should have called an IKECA Member.



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