case study

PROJECT: . . .Pennsylvania State University
LOCATION: . .College Park, PA
PRODUCT: . . .Armstrong Ceiling Recycling Program

The Challenge:

Minimize solid waste production by enhancing policies and processes that reduce solid waste generation through reduction, reuse and recycling.

Pennsylvania State University's commitment to "green" building practices is embodied in a unique program called the Environmental Stewardship Initiative. One of its objectives is to continually move the university toward more sustainable practices.

The Solution:

The newest process implemented as part of that goal is participation in the Armstrong Ceiling Recycling Program which enables building owners to ship old ceilings from renovation projects to an Armstrong ceiling plant as an alternative to landfill disposal.

According to Al Matyasovsky, Supervisor of Central Support Services at Penn State, the first major project to include ceiling recycling is the remodeling of the campus's Business Administration Building. Included in the demolition stage is the recycling of 50,000 square feet of old acoustical ceiling tiles.

He also notes that a project does not have to be a large one to recycle old ceiling tiles. The key to smaller jobs is the ability to consolidate the old tiles. Armstrong keeps a trailer centrally parked at the campus to facilitate the process. As tiles are removed, they are simply loaded into it. Once the trailer is full, it is hauled away and replaced with an empty one.

Matyasovsky believes the time and cost of stacking and wrapping the discarded tiles is about the same as that of hauling them to the transfer site. Where he believes savings will be achieved is in the elimination of the local tipping fee.

However, cost is not the only consideration. "As a university, we want to remove as much as we can from the waste stream, and recycling ceilings is just one more example. This was an excellent opportunity and we wanted to take full advantage of it."