

# New on the menu

Food Services is taking a big bite out of waste at Boeing cafeterias—and helping improve the environment **By Kathleen Spicer**

**A**t Boeing cafeterias in St. Louis, employees use plates made from 100 percent recycled paper rather than Styrofoam containers for carryout lunch items. Styrofoam has also been eliminated at Boeing cafeterias in the southwest.

In the Seattle area, a pilot program is saving several hundred tons of compostable cafeteria waste from being dumped in landfills every year.

It's a success story that is playing out from Philadelphia to Seal Beach, Calif., to the Puget Sound region as Food Services, part of Boeing Shared Services Group, is significantly reducing Boeing's environmental footprint in day-to-day cafeteria operations.

In addition to traditional conservation activities, such as recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles, new initiatives under way around the company have inspired opportunities for Boeing, employees and local suppliers to work together to practice responsible environmental stewardship.

Ken Botham, Food Services manager for the Northwest region, said collaboration with food service providers is the

centerpiece of the improvement strategy.

"We've developed strong partnerships with our main food service providers to achieve healthier menu items for employees and better conservation processes," Botham said.

Several initiatives have gained momentum this year. Fryer oil recycling was implemented at all locations; resource-saving kitchen equipment, such as the energy-efficient, multiuse ovens at the Boeing site in Everett, Wash., is



## Catering to the environment

Boeing is working with its food service suppliers around the United States to improve daily conservation practices. These include:

- Recycling programs for aluminum cans, plastic bottles, cardboard, paper and used cooking oils (all locations)
- Reducing plastic packaging and moving toward environmentally progressive materials such as compostable serving trays and food containers (partially implemented at some locations)
- Reusable carry bag and mug programs (most locations)
- Food-composting programs (Northwest region)
- Reducing energy and water consumption for cafeteria lighting and equipment (under way at most locations)

- Reduction of Styrofoam (partially implemented at some sites)
- Partnering with Boeing Wellness to create healthful food options (all locations) that support sustainability, such as antibiotic-free chicken and pork and cage-free eggs (Northwest region)

To learn more, visit <http://foodservices.web.boeing.com> and the Environment Information Center at <http://ehs.web.boeing.com/enviro> on the Boeing intranet.

significantly lowering operating costs and energy consumption.

As a result of the pilot project in St. Louis—the switch from Styrofoam containers to recycled paper for carryout lunch items, and to washable plates for those who eat in the cafeterias—Boeing has cut the amount of Styrofoam in trash by 50 percent and reduced the amount of Styrofoam sent to landfills by 8,816 pounds (3,999 kilograms) each quarter, according to Laurel Lutz, Food Services manager in St. Louis. “It’s been a great way to involve our customers and partner with them on the benefits and cost-savings of recycling,” Lutz said. Cafeterias in the Southwest region

have also eliminated Styrofoam in their cafeteria operations.

These Food Service activities also support Boeing’s goals to improve recycling rates and energy efficiency 25 percent by 2012.

“The road to sustainability and socially responsible food service operations is a long-term journey, but it’s the right direction to take,” Botham said. “Our goal is to evaluate local efforts as they become available and work with our suppliers to integrate new conservation technologies and emerging environmental practices while continuing to meet business needs.” ■

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**PHOTO: (Far left)** ARAMARK chef Ron Windom serves a meal to Food Services manager Laurel Lutz at the Building 100 cafeteria in St. Louis. All St. Louis cafeterias now use recyclable plates for carryout meals and washable plates when dining in. **RON BOOKOUT/BOEING**

**(Lower left)** Eurest Dining Services executive chef Derrell Mullin (foreground) and chef Darren Masterton use energy-efficient ovens in the Building 40-92 cafeteria in Everett, Wash., to prepare lunch items for employees. The new ovens cut utility costs by almost half. **GAIL HANUSA/BOEING**

**(Below)** New containers like the one pictured here with Eurest general manager Tony Parker are now used in Northwest cafeteria kitchens to make collecting compostable food waste easy and efficient. **CINDY DANA/BOEING**



## Cafeteria waste to nutrient-rich soil

Whether empty egg cartons or organic food scraps, coffee grounds or food-soiled napkins, a significant amount of waste is no longer going from Boeing cafeteria kitchens in the Puget Sound region to landfills.

What began as a food composting pilot program at the Kent, Wash., site is expanding throughout the region. In partnership with Boeing food service provider Eurest Dining Services, the goal of the Shared Service Group Food Services program is to reduce waste to landfills and improve sustainability practices in daily food service operations. Other examples of compostable organic waste include waxed products and oil-soiled cardboard.

Cindy Dana in Site Services Food Services said results of the composting effort show that Boeing cafeterias in the region generate about 350 tons (320 metric tons) of compostable waste each year that now is diverted from landfills.

The process begins by sorting food waste into compostable and non-compostable. The compostable waste then is put in recycling containers that are picked up by Cedar Grove Composting, a local facility 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the Renton factory. The waste is composted and converted into a nutrient-rich soil.

The goal is a 95 percent recycle rate in all Puget Sound cafeterias and employee dining areas in the next five years, according to Ken Botham, manager of SSG Site Services Food Services.