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New Puget Sound company builds recycled plastic outdoor products, offering a healthy, maintenance-free alternative to wood

Outdoor products such as benches and tables made from 100 percent recycled plastic boast an impressive list of benefits. They are extremely durable, maintenance-free, attractive and environmentally friendly. Recent developments in the building supply industry have added another important benefit: Products made from recycled plastic are also free of toxic substances.

By the end of 2003, the building industry will no longer produce or use arsenic-treated wood. (Arsenic is a known human carcinogen.) The action affects all wood treated with chromated copper arsenate, which is commonly used to build decks, picnic tables, benches and raised garden beds. The phase-out will have a dramatic effect on the \$4 billion a year pressure-treated-wood industry.

Durable Plastic Design, LLC., (DPD) based in Redmond, Wash., was formed several months ago to meet the increasing demand for quality outdoor products manufactured from plastic lumber. The company sells garden products, commercial grade benches and tables, and dock and pool boxes – all made from plastic lumber. Co-owners Marc Lagen, Eric Ulfwengren, Chris Laush and Victoria Knoll have extensive experience in designing, fabricating and selling recycled plastic products.

Because they are long-lasting, low-maintenance and graffiti-resistant, plastic lumber products have become increasingly popular with city and county agencies. Installed in schools and public parks, at bus stops and marine docks, the benches, picnic tables and other items made from 100 percent recycled post-consumer plastic, such as milk jugs, water and juice containers, divert tons of waste from the landfill.

DPD's products will not split, fade or chip, and in most cases, cleaning takes no more effort than using a standard garden hose. Products designed by the Durable Plastic Design team have been installed in more than 25 Puget Sound schools and about 30 municipal transit and park sites.

In addition to outdoor furniture, DPD also manufactures raised bed garden kits. The garden bed frame is non-toxic, maintenance-free and environmentally friendly. The DPD raised design offers gardeners a number of benefits including:

- improved water and air circulation with lower soil compression and better acidity levels,
- higher yields than with traditional gardening techniques,
- an extended growing season because the design allows soil to warm quickly and cool slowly, and
- concentrating fertilizer and water so less of each is required.

By the end of the summer, Durable Plastic Design will begin manufacturing plastic lumber for the building industry.

More information on Durable Plastic Design, LLC, and its products is available by visiting www.durableplasticdesign.com.

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