

# 2010 Eco-Efficiency Success Story



**CHAIRS Limited**  
Dartmouth, NS

## Well Seated for Environmental Excellence in the Supply Chain

CHAIRS Limited was established in 1989 in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, with the vision that high quality ergonomic chairs could be produced locally. Specializing in custom manufacturing, the company's chairs are personalized for each individual's body type. The chairs are designed to combat many workplace related maladies, such as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, and to increase range of motion, ensure proper body alignment, improve posture, aid in proper circulation, and enhance comfort. After mastering chair design, as part of healthy work environment, CHAIRS Limited is now contributing to a healthy natural environment.

Historically, furniture manufacturing has produced large amounts of scrap waste. CHAIRS Limited recognized the need to change this accepted practice. The company is effectively reducing, reusing and recycling materials across their entire fabrication process. Over the past year, 907 kilograms of wood scraps, 1,361 kilograms of steel, 6 cube vans of foam and 3,161 kilograms of plastic have been sent to partnering companies, to be reused or recycled. Additionally, CHAIRS Limited diverts waste from landfills by offering chair refurbishing so that old chairs can have a second lease on life. The company also participates in community outreach projects such as their 'Cash for Clunkers' program. This program refurbishes old chairs, tests their quality and then donates them, in part, to Habitat for Humanity and the Re-Store. Furthermore, the company works with local children's groups, such as Scouts and Brownies, giving them fabric and leather scraps for arts and craft projects.

To reduce the impact of its shipping process across Nova Scotia, CHAIRS Limited reuses packaging bags and boxes after deliveries are complete and ships full truckloads whenever possible to reduce fuel consumption and cost. Moreover, all materials used by CHAIRS Limited are purchased within North America, to further minimize transportation requirements and to ensure product quality.

In addition to waste reduction initiatives, CHAIRS Limited is also energy conscious. A lighting evaluation was recently conducted in the warehouse and office area and, as a result, old T12 fluorescent lights will be replaced with more efficient T8 bulbs. This initiative will reduce energy use and improve the company's carbon footprint, which is calculated annually.

CHAIRS Limited's environmental commitments are not simply adopted by top management in principle; all employees contribute to the cause. Proper waste management signage is placed throughout the facility and an Environmental Officer position has been created as part of the safety program. Awareness programs have also been implemented, including an "Anti-Idling" policy for all staff and company vehicles. The company also has a "Green Section" in their library which holds all environmental initiatives, both brainstormed and implemented, over the past eight years. This allows CHAIRS Limited employees to easily look up and build on past ideas.

As a result of their successful waste management initiatives and progressive environmental policies, to date, CHAIRS Limited is demonstrating its strong commitment to continuous improvement of its manufacturing and transportation practices. The ultimate goal—improve the health and well-being of Nova Scotia and its employees one chair at a time.

