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**Earth Day 2020**

**Certified Linen and Uniform Services Urge Businesses to Sustain ‘Green’ Practices**

ALEXANDRIA, Va., April 16, 2020—Business “environmental friendliness” and “sustainability” are often perceived as referring to the same quality. The COVID-19 coronavirus has separated these terms as the latter becomes more associated with business resilience. Linen and uniform service providers certified for sustainability are highlighting these two concepts as cause and effect. To mark the celebration of the 50th Earth Day (April 22), these commercial laundries are encouraging their business customers to stand by their resource conservation practices as a key to prosperity in the post-pandemic economy.

In communications with their 250,000+ U.S. customers, these Clean Green certified linen and uniform services companies see Earth Day 2020 as a potential milestone for sustainable business designations, noting their greater importance as most communities remain challenged by COVID-19. Across numerous industries, organizations’ revenues are threatened and supplies are difficult to procure. Their implementation of practices that conserve resources prepares them for scarcity. Techniques that control water and energy use and recycle supplies reduce their expenses and pass the resulting cost benefits to customers.

To achieve such efficiencies, businesses striving to increase sustainability can look to suppliers who are flexible, responsive and able to overcome scarcity themselves. TRSA, the Association for the Linen, Uniform and Facility Services Industry, has developed guides to selecting suppliers with sustainability certifications for hotels and restaurants, two of the hardest-hit industries by the coronavirus and primary users of linen and uniform services. These designations include LEED, Green Seal, UL 880 and more.

TRSA introduced Clean Green in 2011, prompting ASTM International to adopt the program’s required best practices as its own green standard for supplying, laundering and maintaining reusable textiles for all kinds of businesses.

Most of the 50+ Clean Green certified companies, single- and multi-location operations throughout North America, have earned the certification have maintained it since the program’s inception, achieving best-in-class resource conservation. They have built their operations on industry fundamentals that emphasize reuse over disposal and prompt businesses to share textile inventory and have it washed in large, high-efficiency outsourced laundries rather than buy their own and wash it in smaller on-premises laundries (OPLs).

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Textile reuse achieved paramount attention recently with the coronavirus-caused shortage of disposable isolation and surgical gowns, scrub suits, and cubicle curtains. Vice President Mike Pence raised the notion of substituting reusable, laundered healthcare clothing. TRSA responded to his inquiry by pointing out the sustainability and economy of laundering such items on an industrial scale.

As consumers see empty shelves once abundant with paper towels for cleaning at home and paper napkins for dining, business operators are reminded that they have long used reusables from linen and uniform services for their equivalent purposes. These include microfiber and cotton towels for wiping surfaces in commercial buildings, machinery parts, and more; and polyester napkins in casual and upscale restaurants.

Businesses who rent employee apparel from linen and uniform services are not saddled with the costs of buying their own to outfit workers. When workforces are reduced (another coronavirus consequence), excess uniforms are returned to the service provider’s inventory. This reduces the afflicted business’s costs and saves uniforms from unnecessary disposal, reducing solid waste.

In recent decades, U.S. linen service companies 100 percent dedicated to serving hotels have comprised the industry’s fastest-growing segment. U.S. hotels have lagged their counterparts in other nations in the use of large outsourced laundries, preferring to operate OPLs themselves. Today more of these businesses are recognizing the cost benefits of outsourcing, substantially caused by the greater water, energy and chemistry efficiencies of larger-scale laundering.

When local safety and economic obstacles to COVID-19 recovery subside and businesses rebound, they will celebrate their sustainability. In Earth Day promotions of Clean Green certification in recent years, TRSA has urged such recognition of such certified linen and uniform services by the businesses who use them.

Looking forward, “As a ‘new normal’ economy emerges, environmental stewardship seems certain to be more highly valued across industries. Businesses that meet customer needs without depleting scant resources needed for future generations are likely to get more attention. Linen and uniform services anticipate Earth Day 2020 will mark an important turning point in recognition of the importance of B2B sustainability certifications, Clean Green among them,” said TRSA President and CEO Joseph Ricci.

**About TRSA**

TRSA (www.trsa.org), based in Alexandria, VA, represents the nearly $40-billion linen, uniform and facility services industry. Employing more than 180,000 people at over 1,500 facilities in North America, our industry supplies, launders and maintains linens, uniforms, towels, mats and other products. These help businesses (including retailers, manufacturers, healthcare facilities and restaurants), government and other organizations enhance their image and provide clean, safe environments for their employees and customers. Most Americans benefit at least once per week from the hygiene and safety of products provided to the industry’s customers. TRSA verifies and quantifies our industry’s commitment to sustainability and cleanliness through our Clean Green and Hygienically Clean certification programs. TRSA increases the industry’s productivity, sustainability, safety and professionalism through education, research, benchmarking and information-sharing.

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