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The Green Movement and Paragon Steel

by Jim Stavis

It seems that just about everywhere you turn these days, the world is turning Green, literally. I remember the days when it was simply a color, but now it is a movement. We can thank Al Gore for bringing it into the forefront. And now it is not only beneficial to the planet, but it is downright cool to be Green.

Previously Green-minded activists failed to inspire the broader public, not because they were wrong about the problems, but because the solutions they were offering were unappealing to most people. They called for people to stop driving their cars, turn down their thermostats and stop watering their lawns. They

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PARAGON STEEL

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rejected technology, business and prosperity in favor of returning to a simpler life. No wonder the movement got such little traction. Asking people in the richest country to turn their backs on the very forces that drove such abundance just wouldn't work.

Now with global warming heating up, a new Green movement is taking shape, one that embraces environmentalists' concerns, but rejects their worn out solutions. Technology is the driving force for creating solutions. Business has become the vehicle for change and prosperity will help build the world we want. All the while scientific exploration, innovative design and cultural evolution are the most powerful tools we have in our arsenal. Yes, entrepreneurial zeal and market forces will propel the world into a bright, Green future.

Steel as a product is fully recyclable. As a result, it has become a popular choice for construction and manufacturing and in the conservation of raw materials. In recent years, we at Paragon Steel have begun to sell to a number of solar and wind power technology companies that did not exist a few short years ago. We are selling increasing amounts of steel to construction companies that specialize in Green construction where energy usage and waste is next to nothing. We are selling to transportation companies that build alternative modes of travel that will help reduce auto emissions. Plus, we are selling to manufacturing companies that make equipment to reduce emissions in factories and that generate power more efficiently. The Green movement has created a host of new technologies and companies that create these remarkable new products.

With the changes we have seen, we realize that the Green movement is a



burgeoning new enterprise. Paragon Steel is striving to be on the front line of these changes with a wholehearted commitment to benefiting the environment. There are four key principles that we strongly believe in.

1) Renewable energy is plentiful energy. Burning fossil fuels is a filthy and now expensive habit. Plus, the supply will not last forever. Recently, a growing list of renewable alternatives promises clean, inexhaustible power: wind turbines, solar, geothermal, wave power and the use of waste to generate power. The challenge for these technologies is to deliver these products in large enough quantities to offer an alternative to what we now are addicted to.

2) Efficiency creates value. The number one U.S. industrial product is waste. As a society, we must consume less water, power and materials. Think better insulated houses, filled with energy-saving light bulbs, cars that sip instead of guzzle and lower energy consuming appliances.

3) Cities beat suburbs. Urban settings may not be as popular, but building homes closer together is a more efficient use of space and infrastructure. It also encourages walking, promotes public transit and fosters community. Besides, we are running out of open space that is beneficial to the environment.

4) Quality is wealth. More is not better. Better is better. We don't need more stuff, but we should use the stuff we already have and use it well. Ecofriendly designs and nontoxic materials already exist and there is still plenty of room for innovation.

When I was in college many moons ago, I signed up for a class in ecology thinking it was an offshoot of econ. I could not have been more surprised. One thing I will always remember was the professor lecturing us that the responsibility of one generation is to leave the planet in better shape than we found it for the next generation. When I consider that statement, it makes me realize how much work we still have to do.



Paragon Steel Turns 20

Back in 1988, it was just an idea. What if you could provide a high service component to a traditional steel marketplace where the customer's needs were number one? Could it be successful? Twenty years later, we know the answer to be a resounding YES. Today, virtually every steel distributor has upgraded the service levels provided. We now not only sell the steel, but process it, fabricate it, and even install it exactly when and where the customer wants. Twenty years ago, this proposition would be unheard of. What shall tomorrow bring?

We are proud to have withstood the 20-year test of time. We have seen many competitors come and go during this period. As we have seen so many changes, we feel truly blessed to have had loyal customers, vendors and especially employees who have been part of our journey. From a humble office located above an Irish pub in Long Beach, we have grown beyond our wildest dreams 20 years later. We want to thank all of those who have supported us along the way.