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## Green Is Good

I've never bought into the view that says the world is made up of "tree huggers" who care more about the spotted owl than unemployed workers and businesspeople who are prepared to pollute rivers, lakes and the air to make a quick buck. Just ask Wal-Mart CIO Rollin Ford, who says, "What's good for the planet is good for business." RFID leads to greater efficiency, he says, and efficiency leads to sustainability.

Our cover story in this issue reveals that Wal-Mart isn't the only company embracing RFID as a green technology (see The Green Technology). For instance, RecycleBank, a company that works with municipalities to help encourage recycling, is using RFID to measure how much households recycle and provide cash incentives for them to do more. And RFID is being credited for making car-sharing programs work in communities around the globe.



Governments also are supporting a number of initiatives to use RFID to improve the environment. The European Commission, for example, is funding a project called Indisputable Key, which seeks to use the technology to better manage forestry resources. And the two busiest ports in the United States are using RFID to reduce the length of time trucks sit idling, waiting to collect or discharge cargo. The program not only reduces the amount of fumes spewing into the air but also improves efficiencies and security.

Consumer electronics manufacturers and retailers are looking at how RFID could help recycle obsolete devices and dispose of products with heavy metals more effectively, while at the same time improving supply-chain efficiencies (see One RFID Tag From Cradle to Grave). Many companies would like to use RFID to manage the entire life cycle of electronic products, from the moment they're manufactured until the time they're recycled.

RFID's impact is being felt beyond the supply chain as well.

At sports events worldwide, including this summer's Olympics in Beijing, the technology is being used to improve security and enable fans to buy items at concession stands without waiting on long lines. RFID is even having an impact on the sports themselves—from NASCAR races to Thoroughbred horse races and two-legged races (see RFID Is a Winner in the Sports Arena).

Innovation is flourishing not only in RFID applications but in the technology itself. We have an exclusive look at two next-generation UHF systems that use a sophisticated technology called “beam-steerable phased-array antennas.” Both systems promise to cut deployment costs while delivering a new level of performance previously thought impossible (see Product Developments: RFID 2.0). These systems could encourage more companies in a variety of industries to use RFID to improve supply-chain efficiencies. And as Rollin Ford says, greater efficiency is good for the planet.



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