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“Green Dining” Best Practices for Chefs and Corporations Cut Environmental Impacts and Costs

Proven practices serve up savings and consumer appeal

(New York – June 23, 2009) Corporate cafeterias, museums and restaurants across the country are about to take a bite out of foodservice costs by sparing the environment.

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and Restaurant Associates (RA) today unveiled their Green Dining Best Practices – a comprehensive set of science-based recommendations for environmentally friendly foodservice. The practices have been tested by two RA clients – Random House and Hearst Corporation – early results will save over \$85,000 each year at the two sites, cut 275 tons of carbon pollution and reduce landfill waste by 60 tons annually, among other environmental benefits.

In a National Restaurant Association survey of trends for 2009, environmentally friendly equipment and sustainable practices topped chefs’ lists of hot trends and top cost-savers. The Green Dining Best Practices, available free of charge at www.edf.org/greendining, focus on aspects of the foodservice and restaurant industry with the biggest environmental impacts, including food purchasing (addressing specific products like meat, produce and seafood), facility operation (improvements in the use of energy, waste, and water), packaging, transportation of food, and the use of toxic cleaning chemicals. The best practices provide clear, objective, science-based advice for dining managers and chefs to make smart choices in their kitchens to improve environmental performance across the board.

“Consumers today know what they want: delicious food at affordable prices that’s good for them and for the planet. This is a tall order, but it’s one we can meet,” said Ed Sirhal, president of Restaurant Associates. “Using these best practices as a guide, we unearthed opportunities for cost and environmental savings that were right there for the taking. We encourage companies throughout the foodservices industry to do the same.”

Restaurant Associates has committed to rolling out the green dining best practices in all 110 of their facilities nationwide, and has engaged the Green Restaurant Association to audit and certify those efforts by 2011. The company has also committed to increasing the amount of sustainable seafood on its menus, offering clients “bottleless” water dispensers as an alternative to bottled water, reducing the carbon footprint of the meats and proteins they serve 20 percent by July 2010 and also reducing energy use in their facilities.

“Dining out – whether it’s a workday lunch or a Saturday night out – has become an American institution. Chefs and food service managers have so many opportunities to help their clients stay healthy and lighten their load on the planet,” said [Gwen Ruta](#), vice president of Corporate Partnerships at EDF. “As foodservice companies recognize how easily they can cut costs and environmental impacts, we expect these best practices to spread throughout the industry.”

EDF works with leading corporations to create environmental innovations that lead to sector-wide change. Its first corporate partnership ever was with McDonalds to reduce packaging waste in the 1990s. EDF has also worked with Compass Group to reduce the use of antibiotics in animal agriculture and to improve fish farming practices. EDF accepts no funding from these or any other corporate partners.

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Environmental Defense Fund, a leading national nonprofit organization, represents more than 500,000 members. Since 1967, Environmental Defense Fund has linked science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships to create breakthrough solutions to the most serious environmental problems. Environmental Defense Fund has a 20-year track record of success in partnering with business. To maintain its independence and credibility, EDF accepts no money from corporate partners; generous individuals and foundations fund its work. For more information, visit www.EDF.org.

Restaurant Associates is recognized as the nation’s premier foodservice, restaurant and catering company, operating over 100 prestigious dining locations. Restaurant Associates, based in New York City, provides premium food services to museums, performing arts centers, aquariums, corporate dining, educational facilities and off-premise catering events in New York City, Boston, Hartford, Atlanta, Washington D.C. and Philadelphia. Restaurant Associates is a subsidiary of Compass Group, The Americas Division, the world’s leading foodservice organization. www.restaurantassociates.com