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Subject: Earth Day “Letter to Editor”

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Dear Editor:

Today, nearly every business is reliant on a foundry product with 90 percent of all manufactured goods containing metal castings. An average American home has more than one ton of castings including bathtubs, furnaces, pipes, and appliances. The casting industry's importance in our lives is absolute and yet as with most industries there are environmental impacts associated with manufacturing these vital products.

Indiana is one of the largest foundry states. Most of our foundries are small family owned businesses employing nearly 14,000 Hoosiers competing in a global market with countries who pay little attention to their environmental responsibilities. Indiana foundries not only effectively compete in this market but also lead as environmental stewards in their recycling efforts.

Nationally, more than 14 million tons of scrap steel is recycled annually, scrap that might otherwise go to our landfills. Steel represents only one recycled metal stream among several used by foundries to make castings. Utilizing scrap metal not only conserves raw materials that would otherwise require mining, but also using recycled material over raw material requires 95% less energy use in the manufacturing process. Less energy use translates into less raw materials being used by others such as utilities and ultimately lower air emissions and water discharges. Given that every pound of steel recycled saves enough power to light a bulb for 26 hours, the industry saves enough power to light all of Chicago's homes for a year.

Foundry recycling goes on beyond metal scrap though. While 100 million tons of sand is used each year in foundry processes, 94 percent is reused an average of 8-10 times before disposal. Not only does this reduce mining demands upfront, but it also saves landfill space for materials that have no other alternative but disposal as an end result.

And, the recycling doesn't end there. Foundry sand that can no longer be reused within the foundry process can still be easily integrated into alternative uses in society. For example, construction materials and processes including road building; general construction; asphalt, concrete, brick, glass, plaster and other materials development; landfill cover; agriculture, and more, all can utilize spent foundry sand. In fact, Indiana leads the nation in alternative uses for foundry sand in their effort to save landfill space, conserve raw materials and energy, and generally capitalize on the many layers of environmental benefits of foundry recycling.

As we pause to appreciate the planet we live on and our responsibility for it, it's appropriate to recognize Indiana foundries as an industry that is leading the way toward better environmental stewardship and a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Blake R. Jeffery, CAE
Executive Director