

## **Winter 2007 Eco-notes**

### **The Secret After-Life of Milk Jugs**

Ever wonder where those plastic milk jugs end up after you dutifully place them in recycling bins? Contrary to popular belief, they do not just end up in the landfill, but instead go on to an infinite life of serviceability and productivity. GLI Systems Inc., a local Jacksonville company has invented and patented a gutter protection product that is made from 100 percent post-consumer materials. Milk jugs are made from high density polyethylene, which is a petroleum-based material, but can be re-used and recycled almost indefinitely. With the addition of carbon black for UV protection, the newly remanufactured product has a projected 3,000-year lifespan. Their RainTube gutter product resembles agricultural irrigation pipe, but is specially designed to fit into existing gutter systems to protect them from clogging with debris. It is also hydrologically engineered to take water through the system faster, which makes gutters more effective at protecting buildings, and makes it ideal for higher yields in rainwater catchment systems.

Co-founder of GLI Systems, Inc., Steve Spratt, who formerly ran a building preventative maintenance service in California, says he "didn't set out to invent a green product." But recently, the company walked away with four international green building industry awards presented at the U.S. Green Building Council's "Build Green Exposition" held in Chicago this past fall. RainTube won in four of seven categories: the Sustainable Product Award, for the highest overall product sustainability rating; the Global Climate Change Award; the End of Product Life Award; and the Installation, Use, and Maintenance Award.

RainTube gutter products, and optional RainSock for additional protection, qualify for LEED certification credits for erosion control, recycled building materials, rainwater collection, building durability, and innovative design. It has also earned Cradle-to-Cradle recognition because the product is post-consumer recycled material that is completely recyclable after its 100-plus year service life. GLI guarantees the material's performance for life. The average home will use 227 recycled gallon milk jugs in a typical installation. For more information, see [raintube.com](http://raintube.com) or call 866-724-6356.