

EPA looks at new water-efficiency label

Saving water continues to be a big issue for property owners and developers looking to cut costs at their properties.

One development that may be coming their way is from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is planning a national program to promote water-efficient products to consumers. One of the tools under consideration is a water-efficient product-labeling program similar to Energy Star, the government program that identifies energy-efficient products.

Representatives from Laundrywise, the educational arm of the Multi-Housing Laundry Association, have supported the idea of a "Water Star" label and recently provided input into developing such a program. They have asked EPA to look not only at appliances, but also at plumbing and other systems, including the use of laundry rooms. They believe that a water-efficiency label will help encourage apartments to adopt common laundry facilities to conserve water.

Meanwhile, Alliance Laundry Systems' latest product, Speed Queen Model SWFB61, is a high-efficiency front-loading washer that is Energy Star qualified, according to Director of Multi-Housing Dick Casey at Alliance in Ripon, Wis.



A user tries out Alliance Laundry System's auto-injection system for laundry solutions.

The washer uses about 14.5 gallons of water per cycle compared to the 20 gallons that a traditional front-loading washer uses, or the 30 gallons used by some top-loading machines, he said.

Alliance also has another new Speed Queen washer, SWFB62, that features an automatic solution dispenser that dispenses detergent, fabric softener or bleach at the appropriate time, Casey said. The new products are marketed through Alliance route operators.

Automatic Laundry in Newton, Mass., is one of Alliance's distributors. Automatic Laundry President Scott Scarpato said he is seeing more apartment owners trying to add value to the laundry rooms by making them as nice an environment as possible.

Metropolitan Properties of America looks at laundry rooms as an amenity, said Vice President John McCarthy.

One of his strategies is to build laundry rooms next to business centers, fitness rooms or even social rooms that have a television or a pool table for residents.

This allows people to enjoy other activities while doing their

laundry.

For more information, visit www.speedqueen.com.