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## Bringing a Green Vision to a Green Print

by Campbell Wood

November 30, 2010

**Lexington, KY** - By going green with the second edition of *Becoming What You Want to See in the World*, by Lexington author Mary Claire O'Neal, River Birch Publishing has saved an estimated 22 trees (three tons of wood), seven million BTUs of energy and 9,993 gallons of water while reducing greenhouse gases by 2,075 pounds and solid waste by 607 pounds. This environmental impact data was calculated by the Environmental Defense Fund, a service that is offered to green publishers. In addition, the recycled paper used required no chlorine in its processing, sparing the environment the toxic by-products, dioxins and furans, which are harmful to animal and human health.

"When the first edition came out in 2006," said O'Neal, "this level of green publishing wasn't available in Lexington, though we were able to use some post consumer recycled content in that first run." The new green edition is made with paper stock that is 100 percent recycled and 100 percent post consumer waste. The use of and demand for post consumer recycled paper boosts consumer recycling programs and reduces the cutting of trees for paper production. Paper simply identified as recycled is often comprised of industry scrap that got cut from the first run and never made it out the door to the marketplace.

Part of this story is O'Neal's penchant for researching best practices and combining them with her streak of determination. She founded River Birch Publishing in 2005 after careful study of the book publishing industry. River Birch joined the Independent Book Publishers Association, which opened up resources and information. Running an independent publishing company is different from self-publishing, and it's more complex.

O'Neal had River Birch follow the practices of large publishing houses. For its first title, her book *Becoming What You Want to See in the World*, garnered a National Indie Excellence Award and a national Best Books Award. The audio book version won Foreword magazine's 2007 Book of the Year Award in the category of audio book nonfiction.

O'Neal also produced an audiobook CD with her narration. "The packaging on the audio CD set was the highest recycled, post consumer waste available at the time," O'Neal said.

Shortly after the first edition was printed, O'Neal learned of the Green Press Initiative. River Birch Publishing became the first and, to date, only Kentucky publisher to become a member of the Initiative, making a commitment to use high levels of post consumer recycled paper in all publications. The Green Press Initiative has set benchmarks and guidelines for green publishing. GPI calls on publishers to eliminate papers that contain fibers from endangered forests, to use at least 20 percent paper that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (which recognizes best practices in forest management), and to maximize production efficiency and reduce waste.

When the first edition of O'Neal's book had nearly sold out, she searched for a local printer that could deliver a high quality green edition. She wanted to go with 100 percent post consumer recycled fibers. Her search led to Thoroughbred Printing. "Mike Abbott of Thoroughbred Printing was invaluable in doing research to find paper stocks that were 100 percent post consumer waste," O'Neal said.

"This would have to be the greenest project that we've done," said Mike Abbott, VP of sales at Thoroughbred. "It met the criteria of the Green Press Initiative and has the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification."

Thoroughbred Printing is the only Lexington area printer that has joined up with FSC to give projects their certification. FSC certification for a project, explains Abbott, has a "chain of custody," whereby the paper for a given project or publication can be tracked through the paper seller to the paper mill and back to the logger and the forest of the paper's origin. To gain that certification the forest must be managed with sustainable practices. In the

case of River Birch's green edition, the chain of custody leads back not to a forest, but to certified post consumer waste.

These days many publishers are saving money by having printing done in China or India. "I'm glad to say that River Birch didn't job this book out overseas to get a cheaper price," O'Neal said. "It may have cost more, but in the end I'm proud that the book is green and locally produced."

*Becoming What You Want to See in the World* is an outgrowth of O'Neal's work as a communication consultant, coach and professional speaker. She is the president elect for the National Speakers Association/Kentucky. The new green edition is an expression of the values she brings to her work – to bring care and excellence with positive influences into the world. She speaks for her self when she writes in the introduction to the green edition that River Birch "cares about the health of this planet and all of its people, creatures, plants and minerals."