

A banner with the text "News of Interest" in a light, sans-serif font. The background is a grayscale image of a person's hands holding a pen over a document, with a large, faint number "1" visible behind the text.

# News of Interest

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## **Ashkin Reveals Green Predictions for 2009**

Predicting the future of environmental issues has become more difficult in the past few months. Because of the economic downturn, some predictions considered likely last summer may now be called into question.

However, Stephen Ashkin, President of the Ashkin Group and Founder and Executive Director of the Green Cleaning Network, says that while no one can predict the future with certainty, he feels comfortable predicting some probable trends for 2009.

Ashkin believes there will be a slowdown in the green industry. "However, in the long term, businesses, governments and institutions will continue to be green-focused in their building and operating plans and programs," he says.

Similarly, he believes the US Green Building Council's LEED rating system, along with similar programs, will shift their focus from new construction to evaluating existing buildings, in which green cleaning plays an even more significant role.

"I also believe 'green' will be more closely tied to saving money," he says. "Those green products or services that can save end users money will excel."

Among Ashkin's other predictions:

- Customers will experience increased market pressure to become sustainable, and efforts to move to green procedures and products will prove to be a differentiator in the marketplace.
- Janitorial manufactures and distributors will stay committed to green cleaning. "We simply know too much about the potential hazards of conventional cleaning products," says Ashkin.

- The Obama presidency will see green as a way to stimulate job growth and the economy. Many are already calling these prospective programs a “Green New Deal.”
- Recycling programs will suffer due to the collapse of markets for recycled materials; however, “closed-loop” take-back programs will grow in the U.S.
- Green cleaning will go international, spreading to developing countries around the world.
- New green cleaning products will raise the bar on performance and further reduce costs.

Adds Ashkin, “More state legislation requiring green cleaning in schools and other public-funded facilities will [likely] be passed.”

Ashkin also believes calls for a “national green label” will grow in 2009. “Consumers are confused because of the proliferation of different green certifying organizations with different criteria and standards,” he says. “One [green] label will end this confusion and help bolster the environmental movement as well.”