



National Association of Neighborhoods  
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Neighborhood Organizations Can  
Benefit from "Buy Quiet" Programs  
Started by Local Governments

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Neighborhood organizations can do much to bring about quiet in their neighborhoods. One action is getting involved in city, county or state "Buy Quiet" programs. Buy Quiet programs are established when cities start buying quieter models of products and equipment and start specifying quiet in their contracted services. As many governments are discovering, quieter products are available that do not necessarily cost more.

When you think about it, city owned, operated, or contracted products and services often contribute greatly to the noise we're in. Garbage trucks and construction equipment are two examples. If quieter products are available that cost no more, why shouldn't they be purchased instead? Your neighborhood has a "right" to quiet. Perhaps your neighborhood organization may wish to contact the city and find out if they're "buying quiet."

Getting the city to "buy quiet" will not solve all the noise problems in your neighborhood, but it can begin the process through which your neighborhood can work with your local government to quiet things down. This is because by its nature "Buy Quiet" has important "educational" benefits. Once governments have tried "buy quiet," local officials are usually much more interested in and sensitive to community noise problems.

In this time of tight budget constraints on all neighborhood organizations and on all governments, why, you might ask, would governments be motivated to "buy quiet" in the first place. Because it is in their interest to do so. Here is something they can do now to show you the public that they are beginning to be sensitive in solving noise problems and will cost very little -- perhaps nothing extra! Some cities, such as Brookline, MA, therefore, have even sought out neighborhood residents to demonstrate quiet equipment to them.

Buy Quiet not only is good "PR" for governments, it is "good business" because it:

- costs little or nothing extra; Quieter products of all types are available at competitive prices. Many governments have discovered this.

- requires little additional effort; Information needed to Buy Quiet has been developed and is available through the

National Institute of Governmental Purchasing. It is easily incorporated in city purchasing practices.

- usually saves energy and money. Quieter products tend to be better engineered. Consequently, they are usually more energy efficient, require less repairs, and last longer.

The many organizations working cooperatively to promote "buy quiet" include the National League of Cities, an organization of local elected city officials, and the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), an organization of governmental purchasing agencies and officials. MAN strongly supports it and later this year will be sponsoring a series of workshops featuring Buy Quiet.

Buy Quiet programs have already been established in such major cities as New York City, St. Paul, MN, New Orleans, LA, and Austin, TX.

Because "Buy Quiet" works to the benefit of everyone - the city, the neighborhood and the manufacturer - it is something that people will want to talk about. Thus, it can be an excellent vehicle for fostering closer communication between the neighborhood and the city on noise and on other matters. In addition, some of these quieter products may be the consumer type which you or your neighborhood organization may wish to consider purchasing. Therefore, even if your city has established a Buy Quiet program, you may want to find out what is going on. If your city has not established a program, perhaps you can "make it happen".