

BOULDER COUNTY  
**BUSINESS  
REPORT**

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**Eco-Products inks deal to sell goods via  
Amazon.com**

By Pam Martin

BOULDER - Eco-Products in Boulder has signed a three-year deal to sell its biodegradable goods through online retail giant Amazon.com.

Eco-Products compostable product line is made from ingredients like corn and sugarcane, and includes utensils, cups, plates and coffee-cup sleeves. The products' zero-waste impact on the environment is what caught the attention of Seattle-based Amazon.com (Nasdaq: AMZN).

"They approached us because they wanted to sell a wider selection of green products," said Luke Vernon, vice president of operations at Eco-Products. "They also wanted to offer more in the food-service category so we were a good fit."

While Vernon maintains the company has competition in the industry, Eco-Products' niche lies in its ability to offer a full selection through a single brand. "Most of our competitors sell cups only or utensils only. We make it easier for the buyer by having everything in one place."

Preparations for the April 16 launch on Amazon took about 45 days. The company had to upload item data for the approximately 150 items offered on Eco-Products' Web site including pricing, case dimensions and digital images.

"They have a really easy-to-use interface," Vernon said. "They have very specific requirements on both the size of the files and the look of the images, which created a lot of legwork on our end. Our information had to conform to what other Amazon suppliers have got on the site."

Every product offered for sale on the company's Web site must also be sold on Amazon for the same price.

"It allows Amazon to compete with our Web site," Vernon said. "What they're doing is trying to prevent people from buying once on the Amazon site and then switching to our Web site to place orders."

Amazon's cut is 15 percent. What a company like Eco-Products initially sacrifices in margins eventually will be made up for in increased sales volume. Amazon expects it will take a couple of months for sales to ramp up, but without any historical sales data the online retailer was unable to provide Eco-Products with projection numbers.

Eco-Products is warehousing the goods at its facilities in California, Pennsylvania and Colorado. It is shipping them to customers who order on the Amazon site, but this could change if and when sales increase.

At press time, Eco-Products had processed about a dozen orders since the launch on April 16. Orders have been in the \$100 to \$300 range, primarily from restaurants and corporate offices, the company's typical end-users.

Synchronicity struck when Boulder nonprofit, Eco-Cycle, created a portal on its Web site that links directly to Eco-Products' offerings on Amazon.com.

"Eco-Cycle told me it gets about 75,000 hits per month on its Web site," Vernon said. "They wanted to be able to allow people to buy these products through the Eco-Cycle site."

He said Amazon had offered a portal and some software development tools that made it easy for the nonprofit to provide the service. The link launched on Earth Day, April 22, and can be found at [www.ecocycle.org](http://www.ecocycle.org).

Founded in 1990, Eco-Products has plans to open a 9,700-square-foot retail location, tentatively called Ellie's Organic Home Center, in the Village Shopping Center in Boulder.

Sept. 1 is slated as the target opening date and will showcase Eco-Products staples as well as an array of eco-friendly products for the home and garden. The store will showcase organic pillows and cotton bedding, locally sourced organic wine, environmental cleaning supplies as well as eco-friendly clothing, nontoxic paints and more.