Sustainable Acquisition Success Story

Product Spotlight on Los Alamos National Laboratory

Los Alamos National Laboratory Reusable Moving Bins

Stacked Plastic Reusable Moving Bins

At Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), frequent project changes and reorganizations leave Laboratory workers moving office locations on a regular basis. The moves have created several challenges for the Laboratory including a significant cardboard waste stream and the safety risk presented by personnel moving their own items. Todd Berkebile and Brett Chandler from the Infrastructure Planning Office came up with the idea to move staff at LANL using reusable plastic bins with specially designed dollies to minimize safety concerns and reduce the cardboard waste stream. The idea was pitched to senior management and $33,000 in funding was granted for the pilot phase. The program later received an additional $50,000 due to the high demand for the moving crew and reusable bins and will receive $10,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. The moving crew consists of three teamsters, two carpenters, and nine laborers who are deployed from the Maintenance Group. In addition to moving staff, the crew picks up and drops off furniture for reuse in office spaces and provides carpentry services.

Implementing the program has presented several challenges including the need to develop a strong business case to obtain funding, safety challenges with the moving crew, obtaining authorization to deploy staff as the moving crew, as well as challenges with training the moving crew to properly secure the bins on dollies (top heavy loads and moving the dollies up the moving truck ramp). To support this effort, Janet Annelli with the Logistics Training Group, worked with Todd and his team to create training videos focused on correct use of the bins and dollies. Another challenge was educating staff on how to use and pack the reusable moving bins properly. To assist with this, Todd and Brett created a pre-move information document and sent it out prior to each move.

The toughest challenge has been finding a way to distribute, collect, and track the reusable moving bins. On average, 50 bins per year are lost at a cost of $2,000. Todd and Brett found that people sometimes share, borrow, and keep the bins for storage. The time needed to track the bins presents an issue because the moving schedule is impacted by the time spent locating and picking up misplaced bins. The team tried affixing a LANL logo and property number to each bin, but it has been difficult to apply this technique since the bins arrive in phases. To address this, Todd is working with a company called ToolWatch to barcode and use scanners to track bin location and owner.

This initiative saved the Laboratory $4,233 in FY 2019, avoided 3,528 cardboard boxes from going to waste, and eliminated the potential combustible cardboard issue caused by the cardboard boxes being stored inside facilities. Office moves are now more efficient due to the utilization of a professional moving crew.

Keys to Success

Challenges

- Significant cardboard waste stream.
- Safety risk presented by personnel moving their own items.
- Educating staff to use the reusable moving bins and pack them properly.
- Distributing, collecting, and tracking the bins and dollies.

Solution

- Purchasing reusable plastic moving bins and dollies.
- Instituting a professional moving crew.
- Creating a training video about the safe transport of bins with dollies.
- Tracking the bins using the LANL logo/property or ToolWatch.

Results/Benefits

- Over $4,000 in cost savings and reduced waste from no longer using cardboard boxes.
- More efficient moving process and improved worker safety due to use of a professional moving crew.
- Mitigated combustible loading issue since fewer cardboard boxes are located in facilities and offices.

Lessons Learned

Engaging all levels of the workforce is critical. Without an engaged moving crew that shared ideas and contributed to the development of the process, the transition to reusable plastic bins would not have been successful.

Product Spotlight

Product Type: Reusable Moving Bins and Custom Dollies

Manufacturer: Quantum Storage

Vendor Model Number/Contact Information: Reusable Moving Bins – QDC2717-12 (SP), Dollies – DLY-2415, https://welchequipment.com

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