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Contact: Ryan Hayter, Hayter Communications, (360) 874-2170, haytercom@cs.com  
Don Atkinson, Richlite, (888) 383-5533, don@richlite.com

**RICHLITE: A NEW KIND OF CONSTRUCTION PAPER**

Richlite Introduces New Colors to Environmentally Sustainable Paper-Based Countertop Product Line

Manufacturer Creates Industry's First Hemp Counter Surface Material

**TACOMA, Wash. (April 1, 2003)** – Rainier Richlite Company, manufacturer of Richlite paper-based counter surfaces, today announced the introduction of three new colors to its product line, including Merlot (dark red), Indigo (deep, rich blue) and Sage (dark green). The new tones complement Richlite's original color offerings: Slate Black (soapstone look), Nutmeg and Baguette (formerly called Camel).

Additionally Richlite introduced the industry's first countertops made of hemp. Richlite Hemp counters are an aesthetically appealing, durable and environmentally sustainable alternative to stone and other popular solid surface materials. The counters are made of paper with fibers from fast-growing abaca, a palm-like plant grown in the Philippines and Ecuador commonly called hemp. Similar fibers have been used in textiles for more than 6,000 years. Richlite Hemp and the three new colors will be available for sale through Richlite dealers in July.

Richlite counters are durable and resist stains, knife marks and extreme heat. The countertops are made of a dense material that easily washes clean and won't hold on to bacteria. Richlite is recognized for its sanitary performance appreciated by chefs in the home and in high profile commercial kitchens.

Richlite grew in popularity in the kitchen and bath market over the past year due to a shift in the company's business focus, though the product has been used in commercial kitchens and food processing facilities for decades. Established in 1943, Rainier Richlite Company started producing natural fiber composites for aerospace and industrial markets in the 1960s. The material was used for tooling purposes by Boeing and later adopted by the marine industry as a boat building material. Richlite has been used for cutting and baking surfaces in commercial kitchens since the 1970s.

Richlite sales on the commercial food side of the business continue to flourish due to the surface's sanitary properties and low maintenance requirements. Today architects and designers choose Richlite for commercial and residential projects to capture the warm ambience and soft touch the unique surface brings to a room.

The material comes in multiple sizes and widths. Standard sheets are available in 4'x8' to 5'x12' sizes and 30" half sheets to match a variety of design tastes. The product is readily available in 1/8" to 1/4" thickness.

Rainier Richlite is committed to reducing its impact on the environment through clean manufacturing processes and by using only renewable and recycled resources. Richlite is sold through a network of dealers throughout the United States and Canada. To find a local Richlite dealer visit [www.richlite.com](http://www.richlite.com) or call 888-383-5533.

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