

★ SPECIAL SECTION: GovernmentVAR

Government Goes Green

RECYCLING AWARENESS CREATES DEMAND FOR 'GREEN' PRODUCTS

Not all green opportunities in government IT sales are about saving energy, as a number of VARs are getting significant business from another emerging green trend: finding more earth-friendly ways to get rid of old technology equipment. In other words, finding a better place for it than the landfill.

Atlanta-based Apto Solutions Inc. has partnered with EDS Inc., Plano, Texas, for a Navy/Marines contract—a significant award estimated at \$4.1 billion—to process hundreds of thousands of pieces of legacy IT equipment for recycling or reuse. As with the need for more energy-efficient systems, government customers are looking to the recycling/redeployment of equipment as a way to cut costs.

"We're seeing tremendous interest at

the federal, state and local levels for IT asset recycling and recovery solutions," said Jeff Clark, Apto vice president. "These solutions provide strict environmental compliance, and also reduce the capital expense and liability of hardware replacement. In many cases, it means millions of dollars back to the customer ... If used as a significant part of a green IT vision and at the front end of the sales process, it could be the deciding factor to win the government contract."

Another VAR, Baltimore-based E-Structors Inc., is finding a channel niche in the recycling of old desktops, laptops and mobile devices. Launched in 2003, E-Structors shreds electronic equipment into 1.5-inch pieces—ensuring that all valuable data is irretrievable—and recycles them, resulting in zero waste at a

time when the landfill impact of IT products is also emerging as a concern, given that disposed computers contain lead, mercury and other dangerous materials.

E-Structors customers have included the Department of Justice, Department of Defense, the Social Security Administration and many of Maryland's local county governments. E-Structors President Michael Keough compares the computer recycling movement to that of the past generation's paper recycling movement.

"Obsolete computers and electronics are large contributors to the nation's landfills," Keough said. "In the future, there will be a greater demand for products that can be more easily refurbished—unlike today's computers that we must completely destroy to recycle."

—Dennis McCafferty