



## Phoenix Coffee Helps the Earth - One Cup at a Time

*Local Coffee Pioneers Switch to Compostable To Go Cups and Introducing New “Green Fee” to the Retail Coffee Industry in Cleveland.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cleveland, Ohio. (July 4, 2010) – Locally owned Phoenix Coffee is pleased to announce our switch to biodegradable to go cups in all of our cafes and operations, the only cafe business in Cleveland using this model. We are partnering with another local company, Rosby Resource Recycling ([www.rosbycompanies.com/resourcerecycling](http://www.rosbycompanies.com/resourcerecycling)) to compost not only these cups and lids, but also approximately 40% of Phoenix Coffee’s total solid waste output, including our coffee grounds, tea leaves, food scraps and cream cartons.

### **Green Fee to Reduce Waste**

Yet, going green is a gradual process, and one that sometimes requires taking risks and introducing new business practices to consumers. With these new cups Phoenix Coffee offers a new choice. When a customer purchases a “to go” beverage they may either bring their own mug (and get an additional \$.10 discount) or buy one of our new compostable cups for \$0.10 (ten cents) each. This "green fee" is our way of encouraging everyone to adopt sustainable habits, such as bringing their own mug and minimizing the use of disposables whenever possible. This kind of “sustainable thinking” is something that Phoenix Coffee values, and the green fee is one way to bring sustainability into everyday conversations in our cafes. In Ireland, the country reduced the use of disposable shopping bags by 96% by introducing a similar "green fee". We hope to reduce the use of disposables in our business by more than 100,000 cups this year, and to compost just as many, thereby reducing our ecological footprint. While we initially expected some backlash and complaints about the new fee, so far Phoenix staff reports they have heard plenty of praise from customers. Barista Trainer Laura Gill from our West 9<sup>th</sup> Café recently reported that when she explained the change to one customer, the customer responded “That’s great! I’ve been meaning to use my travel mug more, I just always forget it at home.” Like us here at Phoenix Coffee, Clevelanders seem excited and happy to be able to participate in reducing environmental waste whenever they can.

### **It Isn’t Easy Being Green**

Our new cups are the culmination of more than a year's worth of thought and effort. Many years ago Phoenix debated the use of paper vs. Styrofoam cups. While everyone initially thought paper was the more environmentally friendly choice, it turns out Styrofoam takes less energy to produce. Furthermore, we found a local company to recycle our Styrofoam. Because of our ability to recycle the Styrofoam and the lower energy usage, we determined Styrofoam was the most environmentally responsible option given our choices. Unfortunately, the company that was recycling our Styrofoam went out of business, forcing us to backhaul the Styrofoam to the manufacturer in order to continue our recycling practice. However,

this backhauling was awkward and inconvenient, which was one of the factors that pushed us towards the switch to the compostable cups. It was still a difficult decision for Phoenix Coffee, and one every small business owner struggles with: what's the best environmental choice for food containers that balances a business's needs for affordability, practicality, and availability?

It took several years for the biodegradable to go food container industry to provide products that were readily available for distribution to small retailers, do not cost a fortune, and most importantly don't dissolve quickly into a hot mess of hot dripping coffee, sticky mochas and other beverages all over our counters and our customers.

### **Biodegradable Cups Are the Future**

Our new cups were painstakingly designed by our talented in-house designer, Sean Higgins, to be unique, colorful, and playful. The cups feature hand crafted illustrations of iconic Phoenix regular customers and our staff along with fun quotes and trivia. Our new cups show the world that sustainable products need not be generic and boring.

The new cups are made by Stalkmarket, an industry leader in biodegradable food containers and other products. Stalkmarket provides a wealth of educational materials regarding biodegradable materials on their website: [www.stalkmarketproducts.com](http://www.stalkmarketproducts.com)

### **The Need for Biodegradables**

To go beverage containers have become a fact of life in today's busy grab and go world. Consumer behavior doesn't change overnight. Still, Americans continue to produce tremendous amounts of landfill wastes. The Clean Air Council for example estimates Americans toss out enough paper & plastic cups, forks and spoons every year to circle the equator 300 times," while the National Recycling Coalition estimates, "Americans throw away 25,000,000,000 Styrofoam coffee cups every year." These are pretty horrifying statistics in our book. By using biodegradable to go cups and adding on our reasonable green fee, we are educating consumers, increasing sustainable business practices, and reducing landfill and other environmental wastes.

It's Phoenix Coffee's way of helping the planet, one cup at a time.

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### **About Phoenix Coffee**

Roasting artisan coffee in Cleveland, Ohio for twenty years. We have five coffee sanctuaries around the city, and a roastery in the heart of downtown. We see it as our job to champion the cause of great coffee here in Cleveland, and to build coffee culture and community in the process.

[www.phoenixcoffee.com](http://www.phoenixcoffee.com)