

Case made for 'greener' law firms in the state

By Matt Perkins
DAILY NEWS STAFF

One of John Tener's biggest hopes for Massachusetts lawyers in the near future is to see them "green" up their firms, and practice a more environmentally friendly way of thinking.

And some of the ways to achieve that can be as simple as using a computer instead of paper to keep in touch.

"I just put a stamp on an envelope for the first time in weeks. I have sent hundreds of e-mails in the meantime," said Tener, a Natick resident and partner at Robinson & Cole LLF in Boston.

Tener isn't the only one with a greener vision for law firms. As a member of the Mass. Bar Association's recently developed Energy and Environmental Task Force, he and other lawyers are pushing the idea of "greener" firms in the state.

"Lawyers must absolutely do their part to fight global warming," said MBA President David W. White, Jr. "That starts with energy conservation, and it also includes promoting alternative energy sources."

Earlier this week, White kicked off the Lawyers Eco Challenge, One Planet, One Voice, a year-long initiative urging lawyers to perform "greener" tasks. The task force encourages energy conservation.

"There are dozens of things you can do today: changing light bulbs, shutting down computers, making sure the lights are turned off (when you leave the office)," White said. "When you replace a computer, make sure it's energy compliant. If

you're building a new office space, make sure it's (environmentally friendly)."

Taking his own advice, White has even installed motion detector lights into his office's conference room and library, and switched to energy-efficient light bulbs.

White said he came up with the idea for the challenge and task force around the same time his colleague and former Northeastern law school classmate Nancy Reiner, a lawyer with Brown Rudnick and chairman of the task force, gave him a call with a similar notion.

"It's funny," Reiner said. "I had called him to talk about it, and he said 'I just had the same idea.'"

Reiner was inspired by the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, which Seattle (Wash.) Mayor Greg Nickels initiated in 2005 to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, which pushes research and education on climate change.

"I saw that the U.S. Mayors have a U.S. climate protection agreement, so I thought why wouldn't law firms want to have an agreement so we can work to save some energy?" she said. "Lawyers are usually the forefront of important movements, and this is an important movement."



Tener

