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**The Space Needle Gets a Shower:  
Kärcher to Clean Seattle's Famous Landmark**

NEW YORK, NY – May 13, 2008 – Seattle's best-known landmark and popular tourist attraction is due for a bath. Now, thanks to the cleaning specialists Kärcher GmbH & Co. KG, the Space Needle is expected to be squeaky clean in five to eight weeks' time, assuming Seattle's weather cooperates.

Kärcher, which cleaned Mount Rushmore in 2005, is donating its services in the "green cleaning" of the Space Needle, which was built in 1962 and receives 1.5 million visitors per year. The German-based company's first high-profile cleaning project was the Statue of Christ in Rio de Janeiro in 1980. In 1985, Kärcher made its initial foray into the U.S., working with the restoration team at the Statue of Liberty to clean the granite base of the statue with high-pressure washers.

The ecologically friendly cleaning method Kärcher developed for Mount Rushmore will also be used at the Space Needle. "The process is one-hundred percent green," says Frank Schad, press officer for Kärcher. "The cleaning process, accomplished with very hot water and high-pressure washers, replaces the need for detergents and ensures that the Space Needle is restored to its shining glory when we're done."

One team of three highly qualified rappelling professionals descends from the top of the Space Needle, cleaning only with very hot water shot from high-pressure washers as they go. A rope-access safety supervisor mans the ropes and rappelling equipment from above. Kärcher contracted the rappelling team, based in Reno, Nevada, from Skala, Inc.

Cleaning via the rope-access technique, Schad notes, was refined when Kärcher cleaned Mount Rushmore and avoids having to erect costly scaffolding around the Space Needle, as was done in [year] when the landmark was painted. The cleaning is to take place at night, from eleven

p.m. to six a.m. each day, so that the Space Needle can remain open to the public for the duration of the cleaning.

Supervising the entire cleaning project is Kärcher's Thorsten Möwes, "an expert who knows everything about dirt," according to Schad. Möwes rappels down behind the team and inspects the cleaned surfaces, thus guaranteeing consistent results for the 605-foot structure. Assisting Möwes in the care of the machines during the cleaning are two Kärcher-USA colleagues based in Camas, Washington, near the Oregon border.

The challenges the Kärcher team faced in their advance planning, testing and analysis included the unusual shape of the Space Needle, the dense cityscape and the proximity of important buildings nearby, particularly the Experience Music Project museum designed by Frank Gehry. Since there are no harmful particles in the waste water, and disposing of the water is in complete compliance with local, state and federal regulations, there is no need to process the waste water; the waste water will flow into the city's regular drainage system. High-pressure washers actually use less water than an ordinary garden hose, because although the spray looks like a lot of water, reducing the diameter of the tube means the water runs thinner yet faster.

"We're using virtually pure water," Schad explains, "so it will drain just fine, even with the dirt it carries away." The surface grime on the Space Needle is comprised of grease from the Space Needle's SkyCity restaurant; pollution from carbon emissions; bird droppings; and plain old dirt.

Another big challenge, Schad says, is cleaning in the dark, the first time the Kärcher team has ever done that. Seeing the difference between the cleaned and yet-to-be-cleaned surfaces requires additional light in the form of headlamps. The risk of rappelling in the dark is minimized by using the redundant system of gear in place for all cleaning professionals.

The family-owned Kärcher was founded in Stuttgart in 1935 by the entrepreneurial engineer Alfred Kärcher. The company first produced electric heaters and specialized in industrial heating equipment. With the development of a submersible heating element, the company's future was sealed, and by 1950 Kärcher had designed and patented his first hot-water high-pressure cleaner. The company, which has maintained its headquarters in Winnenden, near Stuttgart, since 1939, has 6,591 employees and a sales volume of 1.38 billion Euros per year.

Coincidentally, Seattle's Space Needle was also first conceived in Stuttgart. In 1959, inspired by Stuttgart's tall TV tower, the first ever of its kind, the World's Fair Commission chairman made a sketch that was brought to fruition by the time the 1962 World's Fair opened in March of that year.

Kärcher decided early on to donate its services in the cleaning of monuments and landmarks both as a goodwill gesture and for the opportunity to receive valuable feedback from workers, officials and scientists involved in the cleaning process. This feedback in turn enhances Kärcher's research, development and manufacture of new products, their primary business.

“Cleaning the Space Needle is an honor,” Schad adds. “The people of Seattle are rightfully proud of such a national treasure in their midst. Now it will be sparkling clean once again.”

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Web sites: [www.karcher.com](http://www.karcher.com)  
[www.spaceneedle.com](http://www.spaceneedle.com)

To schedule an interview with Kärcher's Frank Schad and Thorsten Möwes or an on-site visit during the cleaning, and for more information about Kärcher, contact Mantra Public Relations at 212-645-1600.