



DATE: March 23, 2009

CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215

## **Automation Plating to Pay \$100,000 in Civil Penalties for Hazardous Waste Violations in Tucson**

PHOENIX (March 23, 2009) – Automation Plating, a California based electroplating company in Tucson, has agreed to pay a \$100,000 civil penalty for hazardous waste violations in the latest settlement resulting from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality’s “Plating Initiative.”

Since 2007, seven Arizona electroplating facilities that were not in compliance with hazardous-waste rules have been brought into voluntary compliance.

“As a result of this initiative to increase oversight of the electroplating industry, most of the facilities inspected by ADEQ improved procedures to ensure that hazardous waste is managed appropriately,” said Patrick Cunningham, ADEQ’s acting director. “The goal of this initiative is to better protect human health and the environment in Arizona.”

ADEQ launched the initiative after plant inspections in 2004 and 2005 showed that many electroplating facilities were not in compliance with the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), which regulates hazardous waste.

Most problems with electroplating facilities involve mismanagement of chromium VI, an odorless, tasteless chemical which has been known to cause lung and stomach cancer, asthma and other respiratory ailments, ulcers, anemia, allergic reactions, developmental problems in children, and damage to the male reproductive system.

In 2005, after a worker was trapped in a chemical tank at Automation Plating’s Tucson facility and killed, the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) forwarded the case to ADEQ.

During the subsequent inspection and a 2007 inspection conducted by PDEQ at ADEQ’s request, PDEQ found many RCRA violations, including failures to minimize the risk of a hazardous waste release, to prevent leaks from tanks, to respond to a leaking tank, to label containers of hazardous waste, to train employees to manage hazardous waste, to conduct weekly inspections, and to have an emergency plan.

In addition to the civil penalty, Automation Plating has also cleaned up its site and conducted an assessment for ADEQ to confirm that all hazardous waste was cleaned up.