



66 Dollars saved per month on your water bill by fixing one leaky toilet

75 Gallons each person in Sonoma County uses per day, on average

30 Dollars in savings on energy bills over every compact fluorescent light bulb's lifetime

2,500,000 Homes that could be lit if each American household replaced one regular light bulb with a CFL

Osmosis Goes Green and Saves

Osmosis Spa, located in the small town of Freestone, has been a local tradition for more than 20 years. Hailed as the nation's sole purveyor of the Japanese enzyme bath, Osmosis, via its creator Michael Stusser, has long been an advocate of sound environmental practices.

Now Osmosis is blazing another trail by becoming a fully functioning "Green Spa." While good environmental practices have been part of the spa's culture since its creation, sustainability has developed into a central value at Osmosis. Working with a team of local artists and craftspeople, the Osmosis staff refinished the spa with eco-sensitive materials, from recycled driftwood from the Pacific coastline and textiles from organic sources to non-toxic paints composed of natural raw ingredients such as clay, plant oils, and latex from rubber trees.

The ultimate goal is to decrease energy use, increase recycling, composting, and other environment-friendly waste management practices in order to improve the spa experience and conserve Sonoma County's natural resources, while at the same time saving money.

Proposed modifications to its heating and air conditioning systems will save hundreds of dollars in energy costs every year. The installation of a water filter has already greatly reduced the amount of bottled water purchased, saving the spa around \$600 per month (and decreasing waste from the plastic bottles). In addition, the spa is taking steps toward zero waste and consequently a much lower garbage bill.

Michael Stusser remarks that the public perception of the environment and natural resources is changing, and people are be-



ginning to seek out and patronize businesses that are adopting these green values. The demand for these types of businesses, and the consumer tilt toward supporting them, have encouraged businesses to take steps toward environmentalism. However, Stusser also sees potential in this new "greening" trend. In his mind, hospitality businesses in particular have an important opportunity to influence consumer taste and demand, and Osmosis Spa is anxious to meet this challenge. For more information about Osmosis, see its website: www.osmosis.com

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Petaluma Knows How to Build It Green

For a week in early October, Petaluma celebrated the launch of its "Build It Green" Program. Hosted by the City of Petaluma's "Green Team," each day of the week highlighted ways that area developers and community members can make building development more environmentally and fiscally efficient.

The goal of this program is to develop healthy communities

that produce cleaner air, use water and energy more efficiently, and conserve natural resources.

Measures that are incorporated into a building project (new building or remodel) can earn "Green Points."

These are calculated and documented by independent, third-party Green Points Raters, who submit an application to the Petaluma Build It

Green program on behalf of the building owner or developer.

Any building that is certified as earning 50 "Green Points" is eligible to be Green Point Rated, receive a certificate from the City, and be recognized on the City's website. For more information, visit the website at: www.petalumabuilditgreen.org.



Habitat for Humanity of Sonoma County Opens ReStore

Habitat for Humanity of Sonoma County has opened a local 3,000 square foot ReStore shop conveniently located in the historic Railroad Square area to sell new, surplus, and salvaged building materials.

High-end materials such as new Flos and Vibia light fixtures and tile by Sonoma Tilemakers is donated by local home improvement stores, manufacturers, retailers, and homeowners. Some of the material is culled to use on Habitat's home building projects, while most of the material is sold at the store. The

store is staffed by supervised volunteers and by partner families that contribute "sweat equity" towards their Habitat home building projects. Types of building materials needed for donation and sold at ReStore include: windows, doors, tile, sinks, water heaters, mantles, columns, flooring, lighting, hardware, cabinets, irrigation, and roofing.

ReStore not only helps keep materials out of the landfill, but also makes good building materials more affordable by selling items at 50% to 70% below

retail prices. Proceeds from sales help make the store self-sufficient, and benefits Habitat for Humanity's mission of providing decent affordable housing to local eligible families.

The Habitat ReStore is located on Tenth Street at Cleveland Avenue in Railroad Square. For details, call 578-7707 or visit www.sonomacountyhabitat.org.



Green is Good for Business

Historically, corporations thought keeping an eye on the environment also meant taking an eye off shareholders. That has changed dramatically in the past few years. Now reminders are everywhere that a growing number of companies see the interests of investors and those of the environment as closely aligned. So what explains this about-face? Simply put: profits. Most of today's environmental initiatives are not just well-choreographed PR campaigns intended to fool consumers. Instead, many corporations are going green because they've recognized the gigantic profit opportunities in doing so — and the competitive danger of lagging behind.

Good old-fashioned cost-cutting may be the easiest way for companies to reap bottom-line benefits from initiatives that also happen to have environmental payoffs. Wal-Mart stores, long known for pressuring suppliers on prices, asked a supplier to slim down the packaging on a

private-label brand of toys called Kid Connection. That single effort will not only enable Wal-Mart to ship 497 fewer containers a year at a savings of \$2.4 million but also will spare some 3,800 trees and save more than 1,000 barrels of oil. And Chief Executive Lee Scott said recently that Wal-Mart could save \$52 million a year with just a one-mile-a-gallon improvement in gas mileage for its huge fleet.

Then there's the revenue side of the equation. As the urgency of global climate change is more widely recognized, products that decrease emissions are going to generate massive profits. Some of the beneficiaries of this trend may surprise you. Who would have thought, for example, that companies such as General Electric and Boeing would see new opportunities in a world of \$70-a-barrel crude? But orders for Boeing's \$150 million, 250-passenger 787 Dreamliner jet, which uses 20 percent less fuel than comparable models,

jumped from 56 in 2004 to 235 in 2005 as oil prices soared to record levels.

Hybrid cars are probably the best-known success story. Few people, however, know when the saga began. Auto makers such as Toyota and Honda started investing a decade ago to enable their product lines to compete in a "carbon-constrained" economy are capitalizing on environmental regulation in Europe, China, and elsewhere as well as skyrocketing pump prices. Other companies, meanwhile, spent the past decade introducing new lines of gas-guzzling and sport-utility vehicles (and years lobbying against tougher emission standards) instead of innovating. The moral: Forward-thinking businesses that realize environmental standards must tighten will thrive.

Source: Business Week, 5/8/06

“Wal-Mart could save \$52 million a year with just a one-mile-a-gallon improvement in gas mileage for its huge fleet.”



2006 Best Practices Report Released

The Sonoma County Business Environmental Alliance, in partnership with the BEA Allies and the Economic Development Board, is pleased to bring you the 2006 Best Practices Report.

This report is the result of the responses of 110 businesses to a survey regarding their best practices.



Available online at www.sonoma-county.org/bea/pdf/best_practices06.pdf

Key findings of the report include:

- A majority of responding Sonoma County businesses pursue voluntary environmental practices, due to a desire to contribute to a healthy community as well as take advantage of energy and water cost savings.
- The most popular conservation methods are waste reduction and energy conservation.
- Fewer than one in four companies set specific conservation targets.

Sonoma County business people identified several key challenges to increasing the environmental efficiency and reducing the resource consumption of their businesses. Cost and budget restrictions were the primary issue, followed by lack of education or interest of employees and stakeholders and lack of information about solutions and programs. In an effort to address these issues, the BEA is working to make information about low-cost programs and opportunities more available to Sonoma County businesses.

Sonoma Valley Future: Water Recycling for All?

Starting with Sonoma Valley, Sonoma County Water Agency officials are moving to upgrade sewage treatment plants, improve the quality of treated wastewater, and pipe it to businesses, schools and farms that can use it.

As the first of three recycled water projects to roll out in Sonoma County over the next few years, this project will set precedent for how agriculture and other users make use of the water.

"In the long run, it extends our

water supply and there is no reason why you should not do landscaping and agriculture with treated water," said Valerie Brown, supervisor for the Sonoma Valley.

"Immediately, there is no cost benefit, but in terms of the future water supply, this is huge," said Amy Harris Mai, senior environmental specialist with the county Water Agency.

Projected population growth and water demand are driving the project. The Sonoma Valley population is expected to in-

crease 18 percent by 2020 and water demand is likely to increase 30 percent, according to the project's draft environmental impact report. The Sonoma aqueduct, the report notes, is "barely able to keep up during peak summer demand periods."

Use of disinfected tertiary recycled water is allowed on crops, playgrounds, vineyards, and fish hatcheries, as well as just about anything that stops short of putting it directly into your tap.

Source: The Press Democrat, 10/24/2006

Events Update

The Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce, the City of Santa Rosa, and the Business Environmental Alliance have organized a Water Conservation Summit to let the business community know about the urgency of water conservation and what government agencies will be expecting from local business.

This summit will be held on November 8, 2006 from 7:00-11:00 am. For more information about this event or to attend, please look online at www.santarosachamber.com or contact the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce at 707-545-1414.



BEA Mission:

The Business Environmental Alliance (BEA) promotes the economic benefits of responsible environmental practices and provides resources to enable businesses to implement these measures.

BEA Steering Committee

Scott Kirk, Co-Chair
Beyers Costin

Paul Harris, Co-Chair
Imagine Sonoma

Ed Bertain
Hydrotech Environmental Systems

Julie Collins
Kendall Jackson Wine Estates

Tom Conlon
GeoPraxis

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BEA Allies

AGC California, North Bay
Black Chamber of Commerce
Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce
Cotati Chamber of Commerce
Engineering Contractors Association
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
National Electrical Contractors Assoc.
North Bay Council
North Coast Builders Exchange
No. California Engineering Contractors
Petaluma Area Chamber of Commerce
Redwood Empire Remodelers Assoc.
Rohnert Park Chamber of Commerce
Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce
Sebastopol Chamber of Commerce
Sonoma County Farm Trails
Sonoma County Lodging Assoc.
Sonoma County Tourism Bureau
Sonoma County Winegrape Commission
Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau

A project developed by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board



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Bay Area Success Stories

Oakland Athletics:

The StopWaste Partnership in Alameda County helped the A's and McAfee Coliseum to become the first major league team and venue to introduce cornstarch-based cups, which look like ordinary plastic. Instead of heading to the landfill, they're separated from trash and sent to a composting facility, where they biodegrade into a rich soil amendment. At the volumes purchased by the Coliseum, the cups are priced comparably to their traditional plastic counterparts. For information on local recycling programs, see www.recyclenow.org



Multi-Contact USA:

Multi-Contact USA headquarters, located in Santa Rosa, has helped to ease the statewide energy crisis and increased productivity by installing and operating a state-of-the-art, 11 kilowatt photovoltaic array. Capable of supplying in excess of one-third of its daily energy usage, this system enables MC-USA to maintain normal business operations up to eight hours during the occasional energy outages and infrequent rolling blackouts.

County of Sonoma:

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, in cooperation with the City of Santa Rosa, is working on a water conservation project aimed at educating the public on the issue of water conservation and practical applications to address this issue. The project is divided into three phases, spanning a period of three years. The primary goals of this project are to conserve water resources, provide community education, set a positive example, improve the aesthetic image of the County center, and to save taxpayer dollars on irrigation. The planned operations will reduce water use by 2.4 million gallons a year and reduce weeds by 80% during the dry season.



If you are interested in becoming a BEA Partner or receiving a free water assessment, please contact the BEA at (707)565-7257 or bea@sonoma-county.org.

