Facilities Services Sustainability Work Group

University of Oregon
Campus Operations, Growing Sustainability

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Message From F.S. Sustainability Work Group

Feedback, Please

The Sustainability Work Group needs your help. Keep us informed of your thoughts, ideas, and feedback as you read these newsletters. And feel free to send in ideas for stories. Forward all comments to:

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In This Issue ...

1. Earth Day 2011
2. Overlooked Green Features
3. Bamboo: Growing the Future
4. Sustainability Superstar
5. BETC
6. Dashboard
7. Students Making a Difference

Earth Day 2011

There was a time in United States history where factories could spew out toxins as there was no regulation on pollution. This was before the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Clean-Air Act, The Clean Water Act.

Environmental issues were not a priority in the United States, until Earth Day. Earth Day is a day that is intended to inspire awareness and appreciation for the Earth's natural environment.

Earth Day was founded in Spring of 1970 by United States Senator Gaylord Nelson as an environmental teach-in first held on April 22, 1970. Senator Gaylord Nelson created Earth Day as a way to "force this issue onto the national agenda." 20 million Americans demonstrated in different U.S. cities, and it worked! In December 1970, Congress authorized the creation of a new federal agency to tackle issues concerning the environment. In 1990 Earth Day became an global event, organized in 141 nations. Earth Day is celebrated in more than 175 countries every year. April 22nd signifies the spring in the Northern Hemisphere and autumn in the Southern Hemisphere. President Richard Nixon started the EPA as a direct result of the Earth Day movement.

What's Missing?

When "green buildings" are designed, a lot of thought goes into big choices. Architectural design, building materials, material disposal (recycling), lighting and heating/cooling are big factors that are considered. Whether or not to use solar panels for electricity is also a common discussion. This green planning is often lost in the smaller details, leaving inefficient appliances where people don't think to look: the bathroom. Here are two options that can make "green buildings" truly eco-friendly.

The Dyson Airblade

Drying your hands after you've washed them is crucial - wet or damp hands are a breeding ground for bacteria. Paper towels are slow, wasteful, messy and can't be recycled but most hand dryers circulate bacteria in the air. The solution is the Dyson airblade. The Dyson airblade filters out 99.9% of bacteria - making it cleaner than normal dryers or paper towels. It is energy efficient and has a 70% smaller carbon footprint than paper towels. It also properly dries hands in about 12 seconds - faster than any other option. This is a smart way to conserve energy, save trees, and maintain clean facilities. These have already been installed in the Jaqua Center.

Dual Flushing Toilets

Originally developed in Australia to help relieve frequent water shortages, dual flushing toilets uses a different technology. The first feature is a dual flushing option. There is a small (around .8 gallons, depending on model) flush for liquid waste and a 6 liter (around 1.6 gallons, depending on model) flush for solid waste. This averages to 1 gallon per flush as opposed to older model 3 to 5 gallons per flush or a newer efficient 1.6 gallons per flush. The second feature is a 4 inch trap - the average North American toilet has a 2.5 inch trap - which helps speed waste removal and prevent clogging. It also uses a wash down technology instead of syphoning, which carries waste farther with less water. These have been installed in various buildings on campus and are helping us to save valuable water resources.

Bamboo: Growing the Future

Bamboo grows in many varied and extreme climates, from cold mountains to the tropics. Bamboo already grows here, unwanted in gardens and cultivated for decor.

But bamboo is an important opportunity for Oregon. Throughout the world, in many industries, bamboo is a newfound gold mine of possibility. It can be used in anything from beauty products, to clothing, and even as strong building materials for housing,

scaffolding for larger construction projects, and even footbridges. Its strength and durability make it suitable for tasks such as motorcycle helmets (shown above) and laptop casings. Its anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties make it ideal for clothing, kitchenware, skin care products, and even air freshening (in Japan, bamboo charcoal is used in cupboards and fridges similarly to how baking soda is used in the United States).

Bamboo is easy to grow, can be harvested much sooner than lumber can, and can be used in such a large number of industries. Oregon already imports a large quantity of bamboo and bamboo products for use in its construction and businesses.

Imagine what we could do if we started growing bamboo commercially or produced products from bamboo right here in Oregon. Bamboo farms would create jobs and provide a cheaper, locally grown, environmentally friendly source of a widely used resource. It would also give Oregon an export commodity to other states and countries.

Oregon can grow its own future and help reduce its environmental impact with bamboo.

Sustainability Superstar

Congratulations Teri Jones!!!

According to a colleague, "Teri is the most conscious, concerned person I know regarding energy for sustainable issues, not only at work, but in the way she lives her life."

Teri rides or walks to work no matter what and when she does use a vehicle for travel, she frequently carpools. She belongs to a food co-op that provides local organic products and uses reusable packaging whenever possible. She only uses environmentally friendly products in her yard and garden which includes fruit trees and a vegetable garden. She goes the extra mile by using only reusable shopping bags, napkins, handkerchiefs, silverware, plates, cups, etc. She even brings reusable eating utensils to events like the annual holiday party and summer picnic.

At work Teri's entire job is centered around energy management and reduction. She's working on a metering project , that hopes to encourage departments to consume less by being actually aware and responsible for their energy consumption. She is also working on the Dashboard Project (see article below) to help educate faculty, staff, students, and visitors about energy consumption and "green" features of various building.
Teri's consistently working on some exciting & new energy reducing project.

Congratulations and Keep up the good work!!!

BETC:
Business Energy Tax Credit

What is it?

The Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) is a tax credit given by the Oregon Department of Energy to mitigate the costs of projects promoting energy efficiency and clean energy. BETC can provide a credit of up to 50% of the project costs, including equipment, materials and supplies, engineering and design fees, installation, and permits.

How do you get it?

Groups planning a project must apply to receive funds from BETC. Applicable projects include those that incorporate energy conservation, recycling, renewable energy and less-polluting fuels. You must apply for credits before the project begins, so think ahead and find another way to save money while helping the environment! Through 2007, more than 14,000 Oregon energy tax credits have been awarded.
To learn more visit: http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/CONS/BUS/BETC.shtml

Dashboard

If you go to:
http://lillis.oregon.greentouchscreen.com
you'll find the beginnings of the Dashboard Project. Like the dashboard in a car tells you your speed, how much gas you have left, how far you've gone, and warning lights to indicate trouble, the Dashboard Project aims to show how much energy, steam, and water the campus uses. The aim is to install kiosks in buildings - like in the new Arena - that provide users with information on a building's energy usage and energy saving features.

Currently, to find this information you have to go directly through Teri Jones, and she has to look it up and send it back. When the project is finished, anyone who wants to see a building's energy usage - or even the entire campus's energy usage - will be able to get the information directly from the Dashboard, which will have live data.

Dashboard qualifies buildings for a LEED green demonstration/education credit, and will promote energy awareness and transparency, as well as encourage reduced consumption.

Student Residents Making A Difference

In collaboration with the Campus Recycling Program, a group of Resident Assistants (RAs) from University Housing were busy this Spring term with several sustainability and recycling related projects in April. These RAs make up the Sustainability Quality Circle (SQC), which is one of several "circles" organized for student leadership and involvement in University Housing life. Students in the group chose to conduct a trash audit of the residence halls, hold a free swap meet and organize a picnic catered to learning about composting with the help for Campus Recycling's Kelly Zillmann and Robyn Hathcock.

Residence Hall Trash Audit

On April 11th, SQC members conducted a Residence Hall Trash Audit along the well-travelled path north of the Walton Residential Complex. Outfitted in Tyvek suits and protective gloves, these volunteers sorted through a total of 150 gallons of trash into eight categories, including paper, cardboard, mixed bottles and cans and compostable food ware. By separating the "trash" into multiple categories, the audit would show what really makes up residence hall "trash." And by conducting the audit in such a visible area, it caught the attention of students passing by and created an opportunity for them to ask questions about the project.

The post-sort data produced some eye-opening results: by volume , 43% was recyclable, 30% was compostable, 2% was reusable and only 25% of what was thrown away was truly trash. These results demonstrate that the average weekly collection of 5 tons of recycling and 0.5 ton of compost could easily increase at sites used by campus residents. As a way to educate residents on the results, the Sustainability Quality Circle created a display that was stationed around the dining halls during Earth Week 2011.

Swap Meet

On April 16th, the "Swap'N'Drop" swap meet was held for residence hall students in the Earl Classroom. The swap meet was a great opportunity for residents to exchange items and get a head start on cleaning out before the end of the year move-outs. In the weeks leading up to the swap, SQC members stationed tables in the hall lobbies to advertise for the swap. Residents were encouraged to come to the swap, drop off good-condition unwanted reusable items and pick up a few needed items. With around 30-40 residents attending the swap, it was a promising start for an event that was the first of its kind at the residence halls. At the end of the audit, several bags of unclaimed clothing, shoes and household items were donated to the Springfield Public Schools Family Resource Centers, a long-time partner of UO Housing.

Zero Waste Picnic

On April 18th, the SQC sponsored a Compost Picnic at the Living Learning Center to increase the participation rate and raise awareness about composting at the residence halls. The event was a pre-registered event, which was attended by 75 residents. University of Oregon Catering provided dinner, which included: grilled chicken, green bean salad, vegetarian wraps and lemonade. All food was served on compostable ware, such as: paper plates, compostable cups, paper napkins and compostable utensils. Campus Recycling set up an information table with educational tools, compost buckets and decals to promote composting on campus and to answer any student questions. Campus Recycling placed compost bins, recycling bins and trash bins for the event's waste. At the end less than 1% of the waste generated was garbage, with 99% getting recycled or composted. The picnic mimicked what students would be served in their cafeterias, therefore, hopefully bringing this daily practice of composting to the forefront at the residence halls.

Student Volunteers help Campus Recycling sort through garbage during the Trash Audit.

Students exchange and donate unwanted items, keeping them out of landfills and helping those in need.

The compost education table at the Zero Waste Picnic.