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AFFORDABLE GREEN LIVING: SUSTAINABILITY THAT PUTS MONEY IN THE BANK

Energy efficiency and increased dependence on renewable energy sources are key to a sustainable community. What local initiatives and resources are available to increase sustainability in homes and businesses? How can homeowners, renters, and small businesses take advantage of weatherization and energy-efficiency resources?

PANELISTS & MODERATOR:

- Frank Fernandez: Executive Director, Green Doors (Moderator)
- Effie Brunson: Development Director, 1House at a time
- Anne Johnson: Multi-Family Program, Austin Energy
- Brewster McCracken: Pecan Street Project
- Luke Metzger: Executive Director, Environment Texas

GREEN TIPS THAT DECREASE CARBON FOOT PRINT AND PUT MONEY IN THE BANK

Adopting green business practices creates a triple bottom line:

1. Decreased operating costs
2. Positive impacts for the environment
3. Increased marketing value to attract and maintain customers

Conserve Energy

- Turn off lights and equipment when not in use. Unplug non-essential equipment.
- Replace appliances and equipment with Energy Star models.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent ones.
- Adjust the thermostat when your business is closed; install a programmable thermostat.

Use Less Paper

- Encourage E-mail communication
- Reduce fax-related paper waste by using a fax-modem and by using a fax cover sheet only when necessary. Fax-modems allow documents to be sent directly from a computer, without requiring a printed hard copy.
- Produce double-sided documents whenever possible.
- Reuse misprints as scratch paper and/or shred for packing materials.
- Save files electronically instead of printing.

Recycle

- Recycle as much as you can and encourage your customers to recycle too. Ask vendors if they have a zero landfill policy.



Visit www.peoplefund.org for additional resources.

- Buy recycled when possible. Toner cartridges, paper goods, plastics and more are available recycled now. Find a supply of paper with maximum available recycled content.
- Before deciding whether you need to purchase new office furniture or equipment, see if it can be refurbished. If you need to purchase furniture or equipment, used/refurbished furniture and equipment may be an option.

Conserve Water

- Do not leave taps dripping; always close them tightly after use.
- Install displacement toilet dams in toilet reservoirs. Placing one or two plastic containers filled with stones [not bricks] in the toilet's reservoir will displace about 4 liters of water per flush -- a huge reduction of water use over the course of a year. Replace old toilets with low flow toilets.

Packaging & Boxes

- Choose suppliers who take back packaging for reuse.
- Reuse packing materials and boxes, or recycle.

Creating a Green Business Environment

- Write a company green policy. Distribute to employees and customers. Post it on your website.
- Commit to an ongoing search for "greener" products and services in the local community. The further your supplies or service providers have to travel, the more energy will be used to get them to you.
- Be aware of consumption and make it a goal to consume less. Set a concrete goal to reduce utility bills by 2% or office supply expenses by 15% for example.
- Drive less. Support carpooling and telecommuting.
- Support vendors who have green policies in place. Identify vendors with green practices and give those companies your business.
- Let your customers know about your Green commitment; integrate this message into your marketing materials.

Resources:

Energy Efficiency Programs for Residential and Commercial from Austin Energy

www.austinenergy.com

Weatherization Guide for Older & Historic Buildings

*includes low-cost, energy efficiency tips for old windows

www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization

City of Austin Home Repair Program

www.ci.austin.tx.us/ahfc/repairs.htm