



The Dollars and Sense of Green Business:

Chambers of Commerce
as the New Champions
of a Green Economy





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Contents

- 2 Introduction
- 4 North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, SC **Wind Energy Generation**
- 5 St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association, MO **Climate Prosperity Project**
- 6 Greater Waco Chamber, TX **Green Business Network**
- 7 Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, NY **The Clean Tech Center**
- 8 Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, TN **Clean Industries — Cleaner Air**
- 9 Greater Des Moines Partnership, IA **Brownfields/Grayfields Tax Credit Program**
- 10 Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, NC **Green Plus**
- 11 Green Plus, NC **Going National with Triple Bottom Line Sustainability**
- 12 Bridgeport Regional Business Council, CT **B-Green 2020**
- 13 Greater Washington Board of Trade, DC **LED Streetlight Program**
- 14 Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, IN **Green Business Initiative**
- 15 495/MetroWest Partnership, MA **Green Infrastructure Toolkit**
- 16 Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, CA **Climate Policy and the Clean Tech Corridor**
- 17 Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, SC **A Sustainable Growth Ethic**
- 18 Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, MO & KS **Climate Protection Partnership**
- 19 Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana, IN **Regional Sustainability Conference**
- 20 Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, MI **The Greater Grand Rapids Partnership for a Sustainable Community**
- 21 Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce, SC **Green is Good for Business Conference**
- 22 Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, NC **The Asheville Offset Program**
- 23 Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, WA **Energizing the Future**
- 24 Knoxville Chamber, TN **Green Business Recognition Program**
- 24 Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, PA & NJ **Environmental Innovations Conference & Expo**

Introduction

Today's economies are in transition. The realities of social and political climates have always dictated change to 'business as usual,' but never before has the state of our shared physical climate been such a determining factor of future prosperity. Pollution, carbon emissions and climate change are realities threatening communities around the world and local economies unable to adapt to these phenomena are at risk of becoming obsolete, the consequences of which are not slight. Beyond its more evident role in determining local wealth and prosperity, the economic vitality of a region also has profound impacts on social mobility, equity and other quality of life concerns.

In 2009, acutely aware of these connections, Partners for Livable Communities embarked on a major new agenda: The Economics of Sustainability, a program incorporating 'sustainability' into an ever-evolving definition of livability. This initiative explores how community leaders, faced with the challenge of ensuring the future strength of their economies and local quality of life, can employ creative new agendas that not only help reverse the effects of environmental degradation but leverage the occasion for valuable economic and social gain.

The Economics of Sustainability agenda is largely based on Partners' 1985 publication, "The Economics of Amenity," which asserted that quality of life amenities play a critical role in the economic future of our communities. Today, this is not only an accepted idea, but has become the bedrock of many successful community revitalization projects and a critical part of what most people understand as economic development. Partners believes the same opportunity can now be found in the application of green business strategies.

The Dollars and Sense of Green Business Chambers of Commerce as the New Champions of the Green Economy

While national debates rage over which production methods will lead to a stronger, more sustainable environment, and while research and development teams struggle to produce the next revolutionary technology, it is on the local level that incredible progress is being made in advancing sustainability measures beyond rhetoric. City governments and grassroots activists are often the most obvious players, but there is a powerful—and perhaps unexpected—player in the green arena that is leading the charge in cutting emissions and conserving energy while boosting regional economies: the business community.

Chambers of commerce throughout the country are instituting green business recognition programs, working to attract clean industries, creating green jobs, and providing resources to local businesses to implement more sustainable

practices. These activities are not wild expansions of their mission, but are essential to fulfilling it. Businesses that emit little emissions and consume fewer resources are the stronger, leaner and more agile businesses of America's future and as the organizations that work to support economic development and improve local quality of life, many chambers of commerce have dedicated themselves to aiding in the success of green businesses.

To highlight this ingenuity and forward thinking, on October 6th, 2009, Partners hosted Enterprise at Home for Progress at Large: The Economics of Sustainability in collaboration with the American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE). For this event, Partners invited leaders from eight chambers of commerce throughout the country to Washington, D.C. to present innovative green programs that are both protecting the environment and improving bottom lines for local companies. The program showcased the great chorus of opinion that exists within the business community regarding climate and environmental issues and was split into two sessions targeted to reach both House and Senate members.

The programs shared on Capitol Hill and 14 other stories of entrepreneurship and success are captured within the following pages. As leaders that stand in a unique position at the crossroads of the environment and the interests of business, chambers of commerce can play a vital role in ensuring the health and success of both. Over time, we hope all regions will approach the two interests not as mutually exclusive, but as ideal partners for livable communities.

North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce

Wind Energy Generation



NORTH MYRTLE BEACH
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Convention & Visitors Bureau
www.northmyrtlebeachchamber.com

One would be hard-pressed to find a region rich in oil with untapped wells or accessible coal unscathed by a miner. It does not take long, however, to find a powerful natural energy source literally blowing past American cities, unharnessed. Current technology is able to capture nearly 60 percent of wind's energy. This potential power in the wind flowing over the United States in one year is more than the country's total power needs for those same 365 days, yet wind power currently makes up less than one percent of our energy supply. This number is likely to grow in the not so distant future, however, as communities around the world are working to capture this free and renewable resource. One such community is North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Through alliances with a number of local economic and academic institutions, the North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce is taking steps not only toward local energy independence but toward the establishment of a powerful economic cluster.

Equipped with a gusty coastline, South Carolina is home to a number of wind energy projects including nearly \$100 million in federal stimulus money and matching funds awarded to Clemson University for a turbine testing site. In the midst of such buzz, Monroe Baldwin, chair of the Economic Development Council of the North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, saw tremendous opportunity in the spacious roofs of hotels lining the community's beaches. Spearheaded by the Chamber, the North Strand Coastal Wind Team was formed with the goal of turning North Myrtle Beach into a demonstration city for energy independence and success in the green economy. Other

members of the team include the city government, the Savannah River National Laboratory, Coastal Carolina University's Center for Marine and Wetland Studies, the Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development Authority, and the South Carolina Energy Office.

Together, these organizations took the first step in bringing wind energy to North Myrtle Beach through the establishment of a turbine test site on the roof of the Avista Resort.

Concurrent to its installation, the Team is making their case to the City Council for a residential turbine ordinance, allowing the installation of smaller windmills on homes. Though ambitious, these first steps are small milestones in the Team's long-term vision, which identifies North Myrtle Beach as a national demonstration city and home to an economic cluster of wind energy entrepreneurs. "The efforts of the North Strand Coastal Wind Team have already attracted a lot of attention from players in the field, even from those as distant as Arizona,"

said Marc Jordan, President and CEO of the North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce. "We have a tremendous opportunity to create a cottage industry of small, local manufacturers." Steps to reach this goal include vocational training for residents and the establishment of an energy development village for testing sites. The Team is also seeking funding for incubation programs to nurture budding entrepreneurs.

“ We have a tremendous opportunity to create a cottage industry of small, local manufacturers. ”

*Marc Jordan
President and CEO of North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce*

The vision for a sustainable North Myrtle Beach isn't confined to neighborhood boundaries. In the fall of 2009, the Wind Team submitted a grant application to the South Carolina Energy Office for beach access wind energy generation turbines and electric vehicle recharging stations for the City's new beach accesses. Though a challenging task complete with city council meetings and community input, large turbines would bring South Carolina's first carbon neutral city within reach. The successful installation of beach-based energy generation could pave the way for future discussions of full-scale, off-shore wind turbines.

Through the Chamber's visionary leadership, North Myrtle Beach may soon be the target of national attention—not only from clean energy advocates and environmental groups, but from manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and a generation of young, talented leaders choosing to live in the innovative and forward thinking communities of the U.S.



St. Louis Regional Chamber & Growth Association Climate Prosperity Project

The distribution of transportation, housing, human capital, and other similar resources has led most civic leaders to agree that a regional approach to economic development is most effective. After decades of success in advancing the economy of their 16-county region, expanding into both Missouri and Illinois, the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association (RCGA) is determined to realize similar accomplishments in their regional approach to climate change issues. Through their participation as



a pilot region in the Climate Prosperity Project, one of the newest and most ambitious initiatives marrying climate protection and economic development, RCGA is improving not only the economic strength, but the environmental vitality of greater St. Louis.

In the fall of 2007, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund took on the challenge of demonstrating on a large scale that conservation, efficiency, and innovation in the green arena are key to job creation, increased incomes, a healthy environment, and the productivity and competitive edge of a region. St. Louis is currently showcasing this concept along with three other pilot communities: Silicon Valley/San Jose, California; Portland, Oregon; and Denver, Colorado. Within each region, the Climate Prosperity Project is organized around three important pillars: Green Savings, Green Opportunity, and Green Talent.

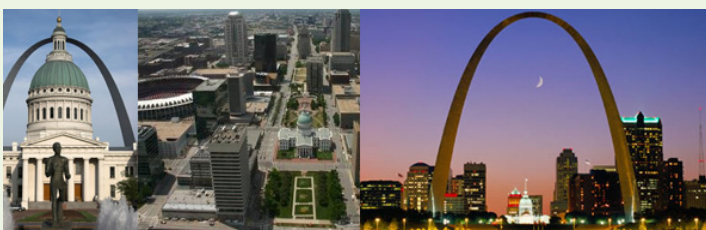
Green Savings, explains Board Chair of Climate Prosperity Project, Inc. and President and CEO of RCGA, Dick Fleming, is a vital piece of the Climate Prosperity trifecta: "Energy efficiency saves money, which keeps our dollars here in the U.S. and can be invested in our businesses to create jobs or spent by citizens at local shops and restaurants." To successfully achieve green savings on a regional scale, RCGA launched the Green Business Challenge in January of 2010. More than 60 area businesses participating in the Challenge have assessed their baseline sustainability levels with a scorecard measuring energy, waste, indoor environment, water usage, transportation and outreach. With this baseline established, businesses will spend eight months implementing sustainability strategies to improve their performance in all areas. RCGA has partnered with the Missouri Botanical Garden's EarthWays Center to provide technical assistance to participating businesses. In the realm of Green Opportunities, the Climate Prosperity Proj-

ect asserts that the process of finding solutions to improved resource efficiency and curbing emissions can lead to innovation, entrepreneurship, expansion of existing businesses, and strong economic growth. In pursuing such opportunities, RCGA has commissioned a Green Economy Profile examining the level of green technology innovation and green venture capital within the region. The report is scheduled to be released in June of 2010 and will provide a baseline of the status and diversity of the area's green economy, laying a framework for strategic forward growth.

The last and equally vital element to climate prosperity, Green Talent, is perhaps one of the most challenging to address. "To achieve building retrofits, renewable energy installations, etc., we need the entrepreneurs, scientists, and construction workers to get the job done. Communities must ensure they have a trained workforce to prosper during this transformation," said Fleming. In pursuit of this final pillar of the Climate Prosperity Project, RCGA has committed to the development of a regional Green Talent Strategy. Partnering with local Workforce Investment Boards, businesses, colleges and universities and union training centers, this strategy will identify growth in specific green job fields, align job training and program educational curricula with employers in green economy industries and establish a long-term action plan to meet talent demands of the regional green economy.

RCGA is improving not only the economic strength, but the environmental vitality of greater St. Louis.

The strategies implemented by RCGA and its civic partners in the 16 county bi-state region as a pilot community for the Climate Prosperity Project are not simply experimental steps forward in environmental protection, but are the basis for joining the goals of an enhanced environment and a move to a competitive regional economy. Through the elements of Green Savings, Green Opportunities, and Green Talent, the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association hopes to be equipped with the tools necessary to lead the region into a century of continued health and prosperity.



Greater Waco Chamber Green Business Network

What was once an overlooked expanse of parking spaces is now the site of the nation's first LEED certified chamber of commerce headquarters in Waco, a Central Texas city of 118,093. Attaining U.S. Green Building Council LEED Gold certification with 46 of a possible 69 points, the new building boasts a 1,400 square-foot living roof, reduces water use by up to 30 percent and consumes 22 percent less energy than a standard building. In addition to leading by example through a state of the art headquarters, the Greater Waco Chamber directs an innovative network that provides area businesses the resources necessary to employ more sustainable practices of their own.



After the Chamber announced it would design and build the first building in Waco to meet LEED certification standards, others followed suit. McLennan Community College, for example, welcomed students this fall with three new buildings totaling more than 200,000 square feet—all designed to be LEED certified. Caterpillar Logistics, Wells Fargo and Baylor University are also seeking LEED status for new buildings in Waco.



Inspiring the local business community through sustainable building design is just the beginning of the Waco Chamber's green initiatives. In chairs made from recycled materials and under skylights admitting

natural light, Chamber employees are working to help member businesses become more environmentally friendly while cutting their costs and reducing waste. The Chamber's Waco Green Business Network educates, identifies, recognizes and promotes the sustainable practices of local businesses.

As the first of the Network's five steps to sustainability, companies can review a green practices checklist complete with 78 activities they can incorporate into their day-to-day activities. The list offers suggestions such as buying recycled toner cartridges, using marketing materials that don't require envelopes, and using recycled material in manufactured products. Step two encourages Greater Waco businesses to complete a green business survey to identify all sustainable activities in which they are engaged. Companies that exhibit action in all categories of the survey move on to step three in which they are highlighted in Chamber publications, both online and in print, have access to the Network's electronic logo, and receive a window sticker to display their designation as a green business.

Green businesses identified by the Chamber are invited to join WacoGreenBusinesses.com as a fourth step toward sustainability. This business networking website gives members a forum to share ideas, methods, and ask questions. As the grand finale to greening their practices, Waco businesses are featured on Gen Green Life, a national online directory to help consumers track down businesses that share their concern for our climate and ecosystems.

“**The city's commitment to sustainable development will help make Waco a magnet for the businesses, jobs, and young professionals of the future.**”

The Greater Waco Chamber promotes green member businesses not only to improve and protect Waco's environment but to help companies cut costs and avoid waste. Chamber leaders believe the city's commitment to sustainable development will help make Waco a magnet for the businesses, jobs, and young professionals of the future—and it all started with the goal to build the nation's first LEED certified Chamber building.



Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce

The Clean Tech Center

When most people think of New York, they're quick to conjure up images of the Empire State Building and Wall Street. But in the era of clean energy, New York's emerging 'Green Apple' is giving the renowned Big Apple a run for its money as the innovation center of the state. With over 30 colleges and universities, the Central



Upstate New York region has one of the highest concentrations of students in the country. Couple that with market leaders such as GE Global Research, GM Research and Carrier Corporation that are developing world class new clean technologies, along with \$2 billion in annually funded R&D at the region's top six research institutions, and you've got a region prime for green technology incubation. The Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce has been leading that green revolution. In July of 2009 with a \$1.5 million grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the Syracuse Chamber proudly unveiled The Clean Tech Center, a clean energy business incubator program—one of the first of its kind in the country.

Throughout the past decade, the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce has led extraordinary efforts to rebuild Central New York's economy around a culture of entrepreneurship. The Chamber is a strong member of New York's Creative Core, a regional alliance of nearly 200 organizations working to advance industry clusters such as energy and environmental systems, biosciences and information technologies. The Chamber worked with federal,



state and local leaders to launch The Syracuse Technology Garden in 2004, a once vacant city-owned 32,000 square-foot building reborn as an incubation center that now houses 30 businesses with a combined payroll of more than \$5 million.

Beyond supporting tech entrepreneurship through The Technology Garden, the Greater Syracuse Chamber has led the way for green innovation as one of the founding members of the Green Team, an arm of the Creative Core supporting clean tech business development in Central Upstate New York. With more than 400 regional firms employing nearly 11,000 in this sector, the Chamber is hardly starting from scratch in efforts to drive the region

into the ranks of Silicon Valley and Route 128. In fact, The Clean Tech Center has already been named one of the top ten clean tech cluster organizations in the world by Sustainable World Capital in a February 2010 Cleantech Group report.

Housed within the Technology Garden, The Clean Tech Center nurtures developing businesses in areas such as: renewable energy, alternative fuels, system integration and smart grid technologies, transportation, and green buildings and construction technologies. Early-stage companies receive intensive mentoring on product development, commercialization, and funding strategies. Through partnerships with academic and financial institutions, industry leaders, investors, utilities, service providers, and government agencies, The Clean Tech Center is able to provide green businesses an effective network of financial and technical services. Companies enrolled in the Center can also seek guidance on prototype development, testing, and navigating the slippery issue of intellectual property rights. To date, over 90 clean tech companies have received technical assistance from the Center. An intensive "path to commercialization" program admits nine to ten emerging businesses each semester who are developing new technologies with demonstrated market potential.

As noted by former Syracuse Mayor, Matthew J. Driscoll, now President and CEO of the New York Environmental

Facilities Corporation, "Syracuse's and Central New York's economic future will depend on the development of green industry. The business incubator program through The Clean Tech Center will accelerate this development." The ground-breaking efforts of the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce are putting the Syracuse region on the map as an economic powerhouse and national leader in green innovation.

“Syracuse's and Central New York's economic future will depend on the development of green industry.”

*Matthew J. Driscoll
Former Syracuse Mayor*



Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce

Clean Industries—Cleaner Air

During an evening news broadcast in 1969, Walter Cronkite announced to a national audience the most polluted city in all 50 states. A report released that January from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) named Chattanooga, Tennessee the most heavily polluted city in the country. As a major industrial center, the city had some of the highest concentrations of particulates ever recorded; material from factory smokestacks and trains often caused smog so thick drivers were forced to flick on their headlights in broad daylight. In the four decades since, Chattanooga has relinquished its grimy throne to become a city known for its high quality of life, healthy environment, and bustling economy—a feat that would not have been possible without the leadership of a strong business community.

Air quality was an urgent matter following the release of the 1969 HEW report and Chattanooga quickly approved the creation of the Chattanooga/Hamilton County Air Pollution Control Bureau. Aside from the vital issue of healthy residents and environments, air pollution also posed a threat to the economic health of Chattanooga. Under the Federal Clean Air Act, the EPA is required to set ambient air quality standards for a number of air pollutants along with deadlines for county and state governments to achieve these standards. Failure to do so will result in a “non-attainment” status. Despite its mild wording, this designation can be detrimental to a region’s economic growth and prosperity. Consequences range from the payment of large fines to the withdrawal of federal highway funds and increased federal regulation. In some cases, new industries are banned from locating in non-attainment zones or must have a detailed plan for offsetting emissions, which can be a big deterrent to new development.

From Mr. Cronkite’s 1969 news segment to the present day, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce has played a vital role in meeting EPA standards. The threats posed by non-attainment spurred the Chamber to join forces with the Chattanooga/Hamilton County Air Pollution Control Bureau back in 1969, a collaboration that is still strong today. Most recently in 2002, the two organizations teamed up to submit an Early Action Compact to the EPA. This voluntary program provided a flexible approach to reducing pollution in which potential non-attain-

ment designations that were to be given in 2004 were deferred, as long as all communities met agreed upon milestones by 2007. Through the Chamber’s work with local businesses to implement voluntary emission reduction measures, Chattanooga easily met all EPA markers by the December 31, 2007 deadline.



CHATTANOOGA
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
The Best Business Connections Around!

With the path cleared for new businesses to settle in the region, the Chattanooga Area Chamber has dedicated a great deal of effort to attracting major clean energy industries. Focused on firms involved in the manufacturing of hydroelectric power, wind energy, LNG (liquefied natural gas), hydrogen fuel cells, geothermal and other related energy sources, the Chamber recognizes that these industries not only provide jobs and a clean source of energy, but

“**The Chamber recognizes that these industries not only provide jobs and a clean source of energy, but most are clean manufacturing operations that will not harm local air quality.**”

most are clean manufacturing operations that will not harm local air quality. Volkswagen AG is in the process of constructing their first US manufacturing facility in Chattanooga, which will produce low emission vehicles specifically for the North American market. Three leading nuclear power corporations have also recently announced major expansions in the Chattanooga area.

The efforts of the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce have allowed the region to thrive economically and shine environmentally. Equipped with a dedicated business community and strong collaborations throughout the region, Chattanooga can breathe easy while continuing its tradition of industrial might.



Greater Des Moines Partnership Brownfields/Grayfields Tax Credit Program



Efficient land use is not only vital to protecting natural resources but to profitable physical development.

High density design allows for more activities within a smaller space and has continuously attracted the young, creative classes in search of dynamic places in which to live. In the effort to create these dense, walkable communities, the process of urban infill—the use of land within an already developed area—is a key to success, but no easy task. Urban land available for infill is often environmentally hazardous, such as deserted manufacturing sites known as brownfields. Other pieces of land may have little or no environmental contamination but are outdated, abandoned, or have plummeted in value; these derelict parking lots or vacant strip malls are known as grayfields. Most communities have them, but very few have effective strategies for turning these properties into valued parts of the community such as those in Des Moines, Iowa. Fulfilling its role as the regional economic development organization, the Greater Des Moines Partnership worked in collaboration with local allies to take major steps in reducing sprawl and carbon emissions through the mending of their urban fabric.

One of the biggest challenges to infill development is the hefty price tag that comes along with clearing and rebuilding a tract of land. Few businesses would opt to invest in the mopping of industrial waste over breaking new ground. To overcome this barrier to sustainable and profitable land use, the Greater Des Moines Partnership joined forces with the City of Des Moines in an effort to create and pass a brownfields and grayfields tax credit program through the Iowa General Assembly. After months of working with local lawmakers and staff to draft legislation, the tax credit program was approved by the Assembly in 2008.

“ The Greater Des Moines Partnership worked in collaboration with local allies to take major steps in reducing urban sprawl and carbon emissions through the mending of their urban fabric. ”

Qualifying investments in grayfield sites are eligible for a 12 percent credit; this number jumps to 15 percent if the redevelopment project meets the requirements of a green development—one that meets or exceeds the sustainable design standards established by the state building code. For investments in brownfield sites, the legislation allows for a 24 percent credit, or 30 percent for a green development. As part of a legislative compromise needed to en-



act the initiative, fiscal year 2010 is the first funded year of the program and is currently serving as a pilot stage with a total cap of \$1,000,000; individual projects are capped at \$100,000 in tax credits.

To help promote this opportunity the Partnership “strongly encouraged [their] developers and building owners to look into and apply for the program to make [their] commercial buildings more sustainable and competitive,” explained Lauren Burt, the Partnership’s director of media and marketing for economic development. To date, the Iowa Department of Economic Development is processing a total of 10 applications statewide, three of which are located in Greater Des Moines.

This initiative is hardly their first foray into the green arena. The Partnership has also aligned their efforts with the Greater Des Moines’ Transportation Management Association (TMA) through the Transit 2030 Task Force. The Task Force’s goals include creating thriving neighborhoods, invigorating the local economy, and reducing peak drive time traffic and reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. In 2010, the Partnership participated in a challenge to log 1,000 trips made by carpooling, bus, walking, or biking for the “Rest Your Car Program” created by the TMA. This year is also the first in which local businesses will have the opportunity to join the Green Plus certification program (see page 11) through the Partnership.

Using the innovative policies of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, regional businesses are not only able to reduce their own costs and environmental impact, but can contribute to the connectivity and vitality of their community, moving the region forward to a livable and prosperous future.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce Green Plus

Despite the great impact more sustainable practices can make to a company's bottom line, many businesses have yet to 'go green.'

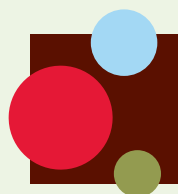
It's not an unwillingness to become more sustainable that stands in the way of more environmentally friendly business methods; rather it's the simple dilemma of 'Where do we start?' Many businesses are stumped on how to implement greener practices, but what company wouldn't jump at the chance to cut costs and reduce waste if they had the assistance of a

Fellow at the Institute of Sustainable Development to create a personalized sustainability plan? Through the Green Plus program, members of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce receive just that.

Surveys deployed to over 20,000 companies in North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania revealed that 97 percent of those polled are interested in being known as a successful business committed to their community and their environment. A mere eight percent of these same businesses know where to find affordable information online about improving their sustainable practices. In 2007, with this dilemma in mind, programs at Duke University and UNC Chapel Hill teamed up with the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, local philanthropies, and other area business entities to help make triple bottom line sustainability accessible to small employers—meaning good business performance, and a commitment to the community and the environment. The partnership resulted in the creation of the Institute for Sustainable Development and the Green Plus program.

As a member of Green Plus, businesses are connected to a forum staffed with Institute Fellows and experienced companies; receive feedback and tips from Duke and UNC graduate students on environmentally friendly business methods; are connected to mentor companies; are issued a Green Plus How-to Guide including term definitions and easy, medium, and challenging practices; and have access to referrals and links to both regional and national resource organizations. The Green Plus program also offers informational

webinars or partnerships with local community colleges for those businesses without internet access.



CHAPEL HILL CARRBORO

Chamber of Commerce

It's smart business.

In order to become a member of the program, applicants must complete a survey addressing the areas of Performance, Planet and People. Under Performance, businesses are asked about their written strategic plan, accounting practices, and other business methods. Plain and simple,

Green Plus explains that to be sustainable, a company must be financially successful. The Planet section explores issues such as energy use, transportation, and water conservation. To assess a company's true level of sustainability, Green Plus also inquires about their commitment to people—an essential element of Green Plus' vision. Businesses must demonstrate compassion for their employees and an awareness of community needs.

Upon completing the survey, if a company falls short of the program's requirements in any or all of the three areas, they aren't left at square one. Institute Fellows in law, business, environmental studies, or public policy will coach the enterprise in how to become more sustainable and improve their score.

“ It's not an unwillingness to become more sustainable that stands in the way of more environmentally friendly business methods; rather it's the simple dilemma of 'Where do we start?' ”

In an effort to spread the program throughout the United States, Green Plus announced a new partnership this past July with the American Chamber of Commerce Executives, an organization of 1,250 chamber of commerce members who represent over 1.2 million businesses across the country. ACCE member chambers can join Green Plus at a discounted rate and offer membership to their own associates. Philanthropies are also able to license out the program to interested organizations. Through this expanding national network, businesses around the country are able to share their experiences of going green.

With the combined resources of local universities, charitable organizations, and the business community, companies throughout the Chapel Hill region are now equipped with the tools necessary to employ greener practices. Branding opportunities gained through association to the program also provide members a valuable edge in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Through the Green Plus program, businesses are able to synchronize their practices with the social and environmental needs of their community—all while watching their profits grow.



Green Plus

Going National with Triple Bottom Line Sustainability

In 2007, the Green Plus program first debuted in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to a small consortium of local businesses eager to improve their sustainability. Good ideas travel fast. In just three short years, companies from Greensboro, North Carolina to Cleveland, Ohio have proudly adorned their windows with the Green Plus decal. Though the program is unique, businesses looking to assess their strategies in the arenas of People, Performance, and the Planet is widespread. The universal applicability of Green Plus' triple bottom line approach to sustainability enables companies across all industries to adopt it; the program's ability to maintain this flexibility while not sacrificing integrity makes companies *want* to adopt it. As stewards of local business, chambers of commerce across the country have enthusiastically joined Chapel Hill in providing the Green Plus program to better serve both their members and their communities.

"The Chamber is firmly committed to assisting our membership in any possible way that will benefit their businesses. We understand the importance of sustainability, and know that being environmentally conscious is good for the business's bottom line as well as its image," explains Sarah Gaskill of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, "we see our role as one of facilitator in that we can support the Green Plus program and offer it to our members as a way to help them become stronger businesses." With 16 participating chambers in 10 different states and counting, it's a safe bet these sentiments are shared by business leaders in many other communities. "Our interest is in helping business owners reach their goals, no matter where they are on the sustainability spectrum," said Ron Clapper, President of the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce. "Green Plus is a great product to help small businesses and nonprofits get on the path to creating a practical plan for sustainability and gain a competitive advantage."

“ Green Plus is a great product to help small businesses and nonprofits get on the path to creating a practical plan for sustainability and gain a competitive advantage. ”

The Greensboro Chamber and 15 of their comrades believe in the value of this program, but how are their members responding? "We have been thrilled with the diversity of business owners who are attracted to the program, from a retailer selling gourmet chocolates to a family-owned manufacturer that has been a staple in our community for generations," said Clapper. Because Green Plus offers a comprehensive approach to running a healthy and sustainable business, local companies have embraced the program as a valuable diagnostic tool for improving their practices in a variety of areas.

Green Plus around the Nation

The Green Plus program can be found in the following states:

Arkansas
Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
Massachusetts
New Jersey
North Carolina
Ohio
Pennsylvania
South Carolina

Though Craig Whittaker of Environmental Solutions Group LLC in Greensboro is in the business of environmental assessments himself, Green Plus certification was no easy feat. "The certification process was surprisingly rigorous. We're within the field and it was a challenge for us. It made us reevaluate how we handle sustainability within our own company," said Whittaker. "The certification addressed issues like childcare and healthcare; things we didn't expect." In Cleveland, Ohio, the Council of Smaller Enterprises has posted a number of video commentaries from their Green Plus members. What first attracted Jeff Baldassari of The Taylor Companies to Green Plus was the legitimacy of the program. As he explains, "There is so much greenwashing in a lot of industries where the hype gets way ahead of the performance... This program will identify if you are truly engaging in sustainable practices toward the planet, toward your performance, and toward your people."

Still in its nascent stages, Green Plus has outgrown the borders of North Carolina with no signs of slowing. The endorsement of the program from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives has strengthened the program's appeal and word is spreading through chamber newsletters, e-mails, websites, and conferences. Both the natural environments and economies of communities throughout the country are now feeling the benefits of triple bottom line sustainability.



Bridgeport Regional Business Council B-Green 2020

Over 20 million dollars: this is a conservative estimate of the total amount of annual savings and increased profits the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut could accrue over the next twenty years if all sustainability goals are reached. In their efforts to achieve such targets, some cities rely on heavy investments in high-tech industries, others turn to federal regulations. The key to success in Bridgeport is collaboration. Through an extensive public-private partnership between local government, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council (BRBC), and a great variety of community stakeholders, Bridgeport is well on its way to lower emissions and higher returns.



In October of 2008, Mayor Bill Finch delivered an executive order that set an initial framework of green goals and action items for the City. The programs identified by the mayor are not only vital to the environmental health of Bridgeport, but will result in colossal savings for local businesses and to municipal budgets. In addition to outlining scores of ambitious objectives, the order acknowledged that to effect real change and progress in social, environmental, and economic arenas, the City would have to work with a diverse coalition. To start, Bridgeport recognized that it needed a strong, influential partner; one with community-wide reach and great impact on local quality of life. The Bridgeport Regional Business Council stepped up to the plate, and the City's Sustainability Initiative, B-Green 2020, was launched as a public-private partnership.

One of the first steps under the directive of the City and the BRBC was the formation of a Community Advisory Committee made up of over 40 individuals representing neighborhoods, businesses, city and state agencies, and other stakeholders to guide the direc-



tion of the Initiative. B-Green 2020's focus on collaboration did not end there, however. The five technical committees formed to address diverse areas of concern such as green buildings, water resources, and sustainable transportation are made up of over 100 individual stakeholders from the private sector, community groups, and municipal staffs. Incorporating a wide variety of participants has not only contributed to greater community support for the initiative, and therefore greater chances for its success; it has also brought additional resources to the table and helped avoid unnecessary and overlapping efforts.



Through the leadership of the BRBC, the City of Bridgeport has already made significant strides toward improving local sustainability. Although it has been less than a year since B-Green 2020 first commenced, a partnership with the EPA is currently underway, a City energy plan is on the drawing board and a draft sustainability plan is being prepared. With help from the EPA, the Water Pollution Control Authority of Bridgeport and a local utility company, B-Green 2020 is working toward energy upgrades and a biomass gasification study at two local sewage treatment facilities, the largest carbon dioxide emitters in the City. Plans for a Green Energy Park are

“ The programs identified by the mayor are not only vital to the environmental health of Bridgeport, but will result in colossal savings for local businesses and municipal budgets. ”

also being prepared. The Park would be located in a closed landfill site and supply energy to the grid through renewable sources. Additionally, an Energy Improvement District is being created to help lower costs and support renewable energy development. Other significant projects include the creation of a green business incubator, a career-ladder green jobs training continuum through the local workforce board, and a green purchasing program.

Smaller programs able to be implemented more quickly have already begun such as the Street Tree Adoption Program, municipal building retrofits including the greening of the historic Burroughs Library, residential and commercial recycling, and rain barrel distribution. Finally, B-Green 2020 created the Mayor's Conservation Corps, a group of 20 – 30 door-to-door canvassers promoting energy conservation, recycling, and storm water management issues. With the combined forces of local government, civic groups, and the business community, B-Green 2020 is quickly advancing Bridgeport's social, environmental, and economic agendas—sustainability's triple bottom line.

Greater Washington Board of Trade LED Streetlight Program



GREATER WASHINGTON Board of Trade

Households that replace just a few old incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs, a product with more than three times the lifespan of their traditional counterparts, can reduce electric bills and put a dent in their carbon footprint. Imagine the impact of replacing 4,424,361 light bulbs. This is the number of streetlights in our nation's ten largest metropolitan statistical areas. According to a study released in March of 2008, switching all streetlights in these major regions to an LED or a "smart streetlights" system could lead to a savings of 1,494,250,000 kilowatts (kWh) or a reduction of 1,161,716 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO²). This report wasn't produced by the EPA or a national LED manufacturer; in fact, this white paper was prepared by Bob Grow, then an American Chamber of Commerce Executives Ford Fellow in Regionalism and Sustainable Development for the Greater Washington Board of Trade.

During his fellowship, Grow explored possible carbon reductions and energy savings for the greater Washington DC area through the use of energy efficient streetlights. As the forward of his report explains, "In the challenge to reduce our world's greenhouse gas emissions the most tangible and perhaps the most easily accomplished opportunity is to become more energy efficient. This is the low hanging fruit." The report estimates that a crossover to LED bulbs in the 62,394 streetlights in the District of Columbia alone would result in an annual savings of 30.4 million kWh, or

a dollar savings of \$1,824,000, and a reduction in Washington's carbon footprint of 23,596 metric tons of CO². Beyond reductions in carbon emissions and savings for the region's taxpayers, Grow explains the added benefit of such a program for greater Washington: "Going green is a competitive advantage. Brownouts aren't good for business and this type of program not only improves our local environment, but Washington's national image; it's good for attracting talent and firms to the area."

Through collaborations between the Washington Board of Trade and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), Grow's report and the valuable recommendations within were not

“ **The report estimates that a crossover to LED bulbs in the 62,394 street lights in the District of Columbia alone would result in an annual savings of 30.4 million kWh or a dollar savings of \$1,824,000 and a reduction in Washington's carbon footprint of 23,596 metric tons of CO².** ”

left to collect dust. Important steps have been taken by these groups toward implementing an LED street light system throughout the region including the formation of a regional working group and the distribution of a survey to collect data on street light system ownership, maintenance and other issues. Local pilot programs are also up and running in the City of Alexandria, Arlington and Fairfax Counties

in Virginia and in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland. At the national level, the white paper has been referenced in numerous articles and websites including Washington Post Writers Group columnist Neal Peirce, CNN, BusinessWeek, the Clinton Climate Initiative, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Texas Instruments, the City of Pittsburgh, the District of Columbia Government, University of Alaska, Amplex Inc., and Echelon Corporation. Thanks to the joint efforts of Grow, the Board of Trade and COG, Greater Washington is on the well-lit road to become a more sustainable and economically vital region.



Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Green Business Initiative



Consumers are increasingly looking for that telltale green sticker stamped “made from recycled materials” and other decals confirming green practices and production methods. These eco-labels have slowly made their way from retail shelves to the community at large. Now, more than 70 Chamber of Commerce businesses within the greater Indianapolis region boast their own bright green sticker right on their front window. These same businesses are featured in monthly publications, on green business websites, and are promoted during trade shows and conferences. Although impressive on their own, these are just a few of the great practices that have been put to work in Indianapolis to both boost bottom lines and protect the environment.

The Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce recognizes the tremendous marketing value of green business and is working hard to promote member companies engaged in environmentally responsible practices. Through the Green Business Initiative, The Chamber has devised an innovative program that not only helps consumers identify which chamber member businesses are engaged in sustainable activities, but encourages local companies not previously involved in green efforts to implement more sustainable practices of their own. By joining the Initiative, businesses have access to a wealth of resources to help their green efforts and are advertised to the community as a company committed to improving local environments and quality of life.

Membership to the Green Business Initiative is based on a point system. Businesses are assessed in six areas: waste prevention, recycling, purchasing, water conservation and quality, energy conservation, and transportation. Awarded points vary based on the complexity of the programs. For example, a business can earn one point for recycling paper but may earn up to five points for composting landscape waste. Companies that implement strategies to improve fuel efficiency such as idling requirements or avoidance of high ozone times can earn five points in transportation; those that provide bike racks and showers for employees can earn three. Applicants must earn between 15 to 20 points to gain membership, depending on the size of the company and number of employees. Before a business is even considered for membership, however, it must meet all local, state and national environmental regulations and be a member of the Central Indiana Clean Air Partnership, a coalition of local government, universities and businesses dedicated to improving regional air quality. Following a company’s admittance to the Initiative, the Greater

Indianapolis Chamber immediately and enthusiastically promotes their accomplishments to the greater community. Accepted businesses are allowed use of the Green Business Initiative logo on all marketing materials, are featured on the program’s website www.IndyGreenBusiness.com, and receive a Green Business window decal.

Members of the Chamber that may require a little more help greening their practices also have access to a great deal of useful resources. The Green Street Institute, a quarterly, half-day educational conference sponsored by the Chamber and a local law firm, is open to all members of the Chamber and is held to educate local businesses on energy and water conservation, natural gas conservation, and emerging green technologies and innovation opportunities. The Chamber’s weekly newsletter, which reaches

“ **Businesses have access to a wealth of resources to help their green efforts and are advertised to the community as a company committed to improving local environments and quality of life.** ”

over 5,000 members, includes green tips and features a business that has embraced the Initiative. The Initiative’s website, open to all visitors, also provides suggestions on how to become

more sustainable—have you thought of using native plants in your landscaping? They use less water.

The Green Business Initiative provides Indianapolis businesses the tools needed to become more sustainable and greatly rewards those companies that choose to use them. Member businesses enjoy the tremendous value of the Initiative’s marketing campaigns and can continuously improve their green practices via the Green Business forums, conferences, and websites. Through the creativity and extraordinary efforts of the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, area businesses are truly profiting from the process of going green.



495/MetroWest Partnership Green Infrastructure Toolkit

The 495/MetroWest region is one of the most economically productive in the state of Massachusetts and is still growing. Between 1980 and 2006, the region experienced a 59 percent increase in employment; during the 1990s alone, the region experienced a 12.1 percent increase in the local population. Though this trend is immensely beneficial to the area's economic health, it also places a great strain on existing infrastructure and water supplies. More than 40 acres of open land per day, or nearly 300 acres every week in Massachusetts are converted into residential, commercial, or industrial land, putting local resources and biodiversity at risk. As a public/private association dedicated to the sustainable economic and physical growth of the region, the 495/MetroWest Partnership provides local businesses and governments with an effective strategy to ease burdens on local resources and ensure their future vitality through the Green Infrastructure Toolkit.



Created in 2003 as a joint effort between businesses, municipalities and other stakeholders, the 495/MetroWest Partnership has come to be recognized as the true voice of a region critical

to the Massachusetts economy. The Partnership was formed for the purpose of creating an environment that prepares for and cultivates sustainable growth; to do so it focuses on economic development, transportation, and water supply issues. Concentrating on the latter, the Partnership collaborated in 2008 with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to produce a Water Reuse Report in which water shortages are projected for 50 communities in 2030 if current patterns of use continue. The report postulates that such a shortage can be avoided by municipalities through just a 20 percent reduction in water usage and protecting areas with significant natural resources from development.

For the Partnership, 'stop growth' is an overly simple answer to such challenges and potentially harmful to the local economy. Instead, their solution focuses on the right type of growth for their region—growth that recycles stormwater, preserves energy and protects habitats. To help guide local municipalities and businesses to this end, the Partnership commissioned the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP) to examine the concept of green infrastructure—facilities that use natural processes or technological innovation to reduce their impact on the surrounding environment. The Green Infrastructure Toolkit, released in February of 2009, was the result of this year-long investigation.

The electronic resource is available online through the 495/MetroWest Partnership's website. By providing definitions, analysis and examples of how green infrastructure can and is being used in

“The Partnership provides local businesses and governments with an effective strategy to ease burdens on local resources and ensure their future vitality through the Green Infrastructure Toolkit.”

the region, the Toolkit helps users understand how such approaches could work in their community. Wetland buffers, bike lanes, green roofs, and solar panels along with nearly 25 other strategies are explored in detail. The analysis of each tool is not limited to a description of benefits but also includes links to outside resources and best practices, outlines the limitations, barriers and incentives to implementation, and reviews the economic benefits of each type of infrastructure. “Clearly laying out the economic benefits to green infrastructure within the toolkit was suggested by the faculty of LARP. It is a powerful and straightforward visual when communicating with the lay public about these issues. It lets people know why they should stand up and support certain measures at city council meetings and it's those discussions that drive development in the state,” explains the Partnership's Deputy Director for Sustainable Development Programs, Adam Ploetz.

The Green Infrastructure Toolkit comes to the 495/MetroWest region as the most recent tool in an impressive list of resources provided by the Partnership. In addition to many other reports, local stakeholders have benefited from the Low Impact Development Toolkit, the Brownfields Resource Guide, and SummerSmart Water Use, a guide to reducing peak demand on water systems. Through the 495/MetroWest Partnership's continued dedication to sustainable growth, the region can look confidently ahead to flourishing resources and profits alike.



Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

Climate Policy and the Clean Tech Corridor

As a part of their mission to advocate governmental policies and programs that help local businesses flourish, the Los Angeles Chamber has taken giant leaps out of the normal activities of a chamber to actively pursue environmental policies that marry economic growth with reducing emissions and conserving vital resources. The Chamber sees this agenda as both critical to the future economic health of the city and as an opportunity to grow new industries.

There are two key ways the Los Angeles Chamber works to achieve green growth goals. The first is by actively educating members about the impacts of new or proposed environmental regulation and then working with businesses and elected officials to develop workable policies with achievable environmental goals. The second is to work with local municipal agencies and universities to develop and grow Los Angeles-based companies to solve environmental challenges with innovative business practices and products. Both of these methods are working to maintain a strong economic base for the city.



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

In its effort to inform environmental regulations, the Chamber has been a constant commentator, submitting a list of recommendations last fall to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) calling for a market-based system to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The recommendations advocated that such a system would create sufficient incentives for facilities to determine and implement cost-effective reduction measures and suggested CARB refrain from imposing costly and restrictive control measures. The Chamber has also contributed substantive recommendations to other entities regarding the California Renewable Energy and Alternative Fuel Act, the City's Green Energy, Green Jobs Initiative, and a host of other legislative issues. The Chamber's voice has had a positive impact on local businesses, helping to harmonize business and sustainability goals.



As a green growth leader in Los Angeles, the Chamber partnered with the City of Los Angeles and three major research universities –UCLA, USC, and CalTech – to develop a network and set of business incentives that will grow local business talent, making Los Angeles the home of

clean tech in the United States. With over 900 clean tech companies already identified, the Los Angeles Chamber recently partnered with the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency

“ **Businesses that successfully complete the program can save over \$1000 a year and have a marketing advantage to the green conscious consumer base in Los Angeles.** ”

and UCLA to tour the Los Angeles Clean Tech Corridor, the epicenter of Los Angeles' clean tech plan. Some of the highlights of the tour included the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Research Center, which will provide office and lab space for projects researching renewable energy technology and the CleanTech Manufacturing Center, a former school bus manufacturing site repurposed for manufacturing related to clean technologies. Finally, the Los Angeles Chamber has also been pushing the City and department leadership relentlessly to use innovative financing models to help Los Angeles meet its climate change and sustainability goals. The Chamber views the opportunity to develop a robust solar portfolio in Los Angeles, one of the sunniest cities in America, as the best way to show its true star power.

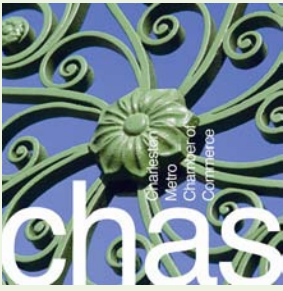
Most recently, the Chamber in partnership with the Los Angeles Community College District is working to launch a voluntary green business certification program to help small and medium businesses become environmentally friendly. Businesses are assessed based on their performance in the areas of recycling, water conservation, energy reduction, and employee training and education efforts. While the program is voluntary, businesses that successfully complete it can save over \$1000 a year and have a marketing advantage to the green conscious consumer base in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles is breaking away from its old stereotypes of sprawl and smog by making huge strides in clean-tech investment. The insistent advocacy of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce for both business-friendly environmental policy and sustainable company practices is leading Los Angeles to a cleaner and more vital industrial future.



Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce

A Sustainable Growth Ethic



With a 63 percent increase in their population between 1970 and 2000, and projections for an additional 55 percent increase by 2030, the Charleston Metro Area is not grappling with the question of whether they will grow, but how they will grow. Sprawling development and the rapid consumption of resources

is something that many communities in the U.S. are facing but not all have an effective action plan to help mitigate environmental damage and ensure future vitality. Guided by their mission to advance the region's economy, improve local quality of life and enhance their members' success, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce has developed "A Sustainable Growth Ethic: Building on Prosperity" to encourage sustainable development in the region.

The Sustainable Growth Ethic is not a binding policy piece, but a straightforward statement of visions and values that rests upon three major principles: Choice, Balance, and Stewardship.

Choice

The Sustainable Growth Ethic states: "Choice provides individuals with a feeling of control of their destiny, which encourages a sense of pride and ownership in the community. The Chamber promotes giving individuals access to a freer market to enhance their ability and variety of options from which to choose." Isolating zoning policies, for example, often limit residents' choice of transportation method, housing, and general lifestyle. The Chamber encourages a reformation of zoning policies to better afford such choices to local residents.

Balance

"Balance involves the harmonious arrangement of parts or elements. The Chamber supports a balance between nature and community in its approach to the growth of our region." Meeting local needs such as affordable housing supplies must be balanced with the basic requirements of protecting natural resources and shared public landscapes. The Chamber encourages an economic costs/benefit analysis that takes into account the balance between nature and community when assessing existing or new regulations.

Stewardship

"Stewardship is the collaborative practice of caring for the whole. The Chamber believes stewardship involves approaching growth with a full assumption of responsibility for our historic, natural, and economic resources." As an example of environmental and economic stewardship, the Sustainable Growth Ethic refers to a sales tax in the Dorchester and Charleston counties that will raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to redesign the public realm, reducing population pressures and the need for sprawling infrastructure with high-density solutions.

The Chamber is now in the process of soliciting support for the Sustainable Growth Ethic from other organizations in the community such as the regional planning council. To date, the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League and the Charleston Trident Association of Realtors have adopted the Ethic. Through inspiring an improvement of the built environment and conservation of the natural environment, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce is striving to become an exemplary model for other regions of the State.



Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Climate Protection Partnership



THE CHAMBER

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

It is common to hear about the dire effects certain production methods will have on ecosystems throughout the world, but what about the impacts a deteriorating environment will have on our businesses? What effects will poor air quality and changing climates have on our economies? Commitment number one of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce's Climate Protection Partnership (CPP) reads: "We will assess the potential impacts of climate change on the long-term economic value and vitality of our organization, and we will use that assessment to inform strategic decisions to minimize the business risk associated with greenhouse gas emissions and maximize the economic opportunities afforded by reducing emissions." Rather than becoming more sustainable solely as a matter of civic good, members of the Greater Kansas City Chamber are implementing green strategies as necessary and common sense steps to ensure the continued success of their company.

The preamble of the Climate Protection Partnership Agreement is straightforward in its conviction that membership in the CPP is simply good business sense. Companies are encouraged to sign on to join other businesses that have a shared interest in "making economic investments that can potentially improve the environment." As a member of the Climate Protection Partnership, businesses also commit to reducing their own greenhouse gas emissions, collaborating with other CPP companies to help the community support sound policies and legislation related to emissions and energy use, and to help grow and strengthen the Partnership.

Not all businesses have the same resources to employ sustainable practices, and thus those who choose to join the Partnership

have the option of signing on with differing levels of commitment. Those that qualify as "Environmental Stewards," the basic partnership level, have implemented a company-wide recycling program and an emissions reduction employee education and training course. These Partners commit to sharing their successes and challenges with the CPP. "Environmental Leaders" have implemented additional

company-wide programs to qualify and also commit to reporting their emission levels to the partnership. To be accepted in the highest level of membership, "Environmental Change Agents", businesses must have executed more challenging initiatives such as emission reduction plans and taking steps to curb company transportation usage. "Change Agents" also report emission levels to the Climate Protection Partnership and continue to exhibit regional environmental leadership.

To help businesses maintain and expand upon existing programs, the Partnership offers a variety of useful resources. Companies are able to access a carbon footprint calculator from the CPP website for a rough estimation of their emission levels, making it easier to set reduction goals. Partnership members may also receive technical assistance to help reduce their climate impacts in ways that could lower costs and open doors to new marketing opportunities.

The Climate Protection Partnership is modeled after a similar program in the Seattle region and was a major focus during the Chamber's 2007 Leadership Exchange to Seattle. Since its launch in Greater Kansas City, the program has been extremely successful, boasting over 170 member companies committed to reducing their impact on local environments and improving the sustainability of their own business.



“Membership in the CPP is simply good business sense.”



Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana Regional Sustainability Conference

With a steadfast commitment to bringing cutting-edge economic and development issues to their members, the Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana hosted the Regional Sustainability Conference on October 28th, 2009 in collaboration with the Wesselman Nature Society. Participants of the conference gathered



in downtown Evansville to engage in interactive panel discussions featuring representatives of regional firms participating in sustainable business practices, attend breakout sessions that explored issues from waste stream reduction to marketplace trends, and hear from a number of keynote speakers focusing on “big picture” issues.

Keynote speakers at the conference composed an impressive lineup of national thought leaders including Doug Henton, Chairman and CEO of Collaborative Economics and Co-founder of the Climate Prosperity Project, and Sherry Harriman, Regional Vice President of Logistics for Walmart, the corporate sponsor of the conference. During her time at the podium, Harriman shared with conference attendees many of Walmart’s ambitious initiatives including their goal to be 100 percent supplied by renewable energy and their adoption of a new indexing program to determine the environmental impact of products sold in their stores.



The Chamber also used the conference as a platform to announce the creation of the Regional Sustainability Alliance. Through the Alliance, members will have

access to resources such as quarterly educational meetings in which regional experts address the latest sustainability practices; regional peer groups for business leaders to discuss challenges and solutions to pressing environmental and business issues; best practice investigations in which members can tour local businesses engaged in sustainability best practices; and a Green Topics speaker series via webcast.

The Regional Sustainability Conference was not a forum to address environmental issues or a gathering to discuss the moral obligation of businesses to participate in green programs. Instead, the conference was a straight-forward presentation of sustainability as a key to businesses’ bottom lines and ability to remain a legitimate competitor in the 21st century economy.

“ More and more business people now understand that implementing sustainable business practices is about much more than simply doing the right thing. It is about responding to political realities and changing consumer tastes and expectations. Further, it is about executing a business model that can add dollars to a company’s bottom line. ”

*Matthew Meadors
President and CEO
Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana*



Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Grand Rapids Partnership for a Sustainable Community



After witnessing the myriad of green business programs spreading across the country, it did not take long for the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce to establish itself as a leader in the movement. Though the Chamber has been a participant and supporter of local sustainability campaigns for some time, it now boasts a strong program of its own for the benefit of its members and that of the region. Officially launched on January 6th, 2010, the Greater Grand Rapids Partnership for a Sustainable Community provides participating businesses the tools to become more energy efficient, reduce operating costs and boost their bottom lines.

The initiative is modeled after innovative programs in other U.S. cities, namely those of chambers in Seattle and Greater Kansas City. Similar to these efforts, local businesses in Grand Rapids have access to an online carbon calculator to assess their level of carbon output. With this baseline established, businesses then take steps to reduce their carbon footprint through resources provided by the Partnership such as an electronic resource guide listing chamber member organizations that can assist with reaching sustainability goals, e.g. environmental consulting and energy auditing firms. The Chamber's website also provides links to efficiency guides, best practices and other local environmental programs.

A 30-day community challenge kicked off the release of the program, during which businesses that signed on received 10 percent off orders of recycled paper from Office Depot, a window decal to advertise their participation, and access to a community webinar walking through the use of the carbon calculator. The Greater Grand Rapids Partnership for a Sustainable Community stresses to member businesses the reality that making small, relatively inexpensive changes to their business infrastructure and practices can lead to big costs savings along with environmental impacts that benefit all local residents. To date, over 40 businesses in West Michigan have joined the program in reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions while spurring economic growth.

“ The Greater Grand Rapids Partnership for a Sustainable Community stresses to member businesses the reality that making small, relatively inexpensive changes to their business infrastructure and practices can lead to big costs savings along with environmental impacts that benefit all local residents. ”



Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce

Green is Good for Business Conference



The impressive efforts put forth by the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce to improve local air and water quality are not simply matters of environmental stewardship, but are essential to maintaining the competitive edge of the Greater Columbia region. Cities nationwide are contending for the attention of an increasingly mobile creative class looking to settle in areas with a high quality of life—a vital element of which is a clean climate. The Greater Columbia Chamber recognizes that reducing emissions and conserving energy not only keeps the environment healthy, but also contributes to a healthy business community. Through informative conferences, strong partnerships, and a dedicated task force, environmental programs have become the stalwart of the region's progressive business edge, putting Greater Columbia on the map for the next generation of skilled and creative workers.

In partnership with the City of Columbia's Climate Protection Action Campaign, the Greater Columbia Chamber proudly sponsors the Green is Good for Business Conference. The latest of these annual gatherings, held in September of 2009, introduced more than 400 statewide business leaders to innovative green programs, products and methods. The South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control was also an event partner. Under the banner of "Environmental Values at Work: Saving Money, Saving Time, and Increasing Business," conference participants attended sessions focused on sustainable landscaping, measuring carbon footprints, and green purchasing among others. Attendees left the conference armed with the knowledge necessary to scale back their own emissions and employ more resource efficient strategies.

Throughout the remaining 364 days of the year, the Greater Columbia Chamber focuses much of its attention on improving local air quality through the work of its Environment and Quality of Life Task Force, an essential component of the Chamber's five-



year community development and prosperity initiative entitled "Navigating from Good to Great." Not only a health factor, air quality can also have big effects on the economy of a region. If EPA standards are not met due to local air pollution, regions can incur a "non-attainment" status, a designation with more than muffling effects on local economies. Non-attainment areas are often faced with limitations to production capabilities of existing industries, withdrawal of federal highway funding, and can be subject to more stringent federal controls.

Due to changes in EPA standards for local air quality, the Columbia area is at risk for a non-attainment designation. In collaboration with the Central Midlands Council of Governments and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, the Chamber's Task Force quickly responded with the Midlands Air Quality Forum, a gathering in the Chamber's headquarters to inform member businesses about current EPA regulations and what impacts "non-attainment" could have on their profits and procedures. The forum provides an opportunity for the local business community to examine new emission standards and exchange information and ideas regarding their contribution to better air quality. The chamber is working with multiple partners to develop a clean air strategy for the region.

“Environmental programs have become the stalwart of the region's progressive business edge, putting Greater Columbia on the map for the next generation of skilled and creative workers.”

Beyond the many accomplishments already made by the Chamber's Environment and Quality of Life Task Force, plans are in the works for the creation of a Chamber Green Business Council. This entity will further advance the tenets of the Chamber's recently adopted environmental policy statement, namely that "environmentally conscious practices and business success are not mutually exclusive." Advocating legislative change regarding air and water quality, providing a forum to introduce new green technologies and programs, and recognizing business leaders employing sustainable practices are just a few of the charges identified for the Green Business Council.

Through the programs and educational resources provided by the Chamber, Columbia businesses are maintaining their efficiency and agility in the ever-evolving world of business. The steadfast dedication of the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce to both environmental and business values is transforming the region into a hub for creative thinkers and a rapidly developing center for green business.

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

The Asheville Offset Program

Though countless businesses around the country are implementing new practices to reduce their environmental impact, the carbon-emitting necessity of travel is often beyond their control. Even the greenest of employees find themselves towing briefcases filled with recycled paper onto an airplane that burns nearly a gallon of fuel every second. Those individuals traveling to Asheville, North Carolina, however, can fly through clean skies with a clean conscience. Thanks to the innovative Asheville Offset program of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce's Convention and Visitors Bureau, visitors have the opportunity to counteract carbon emissions produced from their travel. Through this program, Asheville can continue to protect the great natural amenities that have supported a tourist economy for decades.



Centrally located among many of the east coast's major cities, Asheville offers a cozy and energetic setting for national conferences and casual visits alike. Tourism's contribution to the area's economy is not insignificant and protecting the local environment is not only an ecological 'should,' but an economic 'must.' As explained by the Convention and Visitors Bureau, "reducing the environmental impact of guests on the beautiful mountains of Western North Carolina is a fundamental objective of the entire Asheville hospitality community. It is part of the region's heritage and is embraced as part of the brand that makes Asheville one of the truly special places in the world to visit." It was with this mindset that the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce first partnered with the Warren Wilson College's INSULATE! program to help neutralize the carbon emissions of visitor travel.

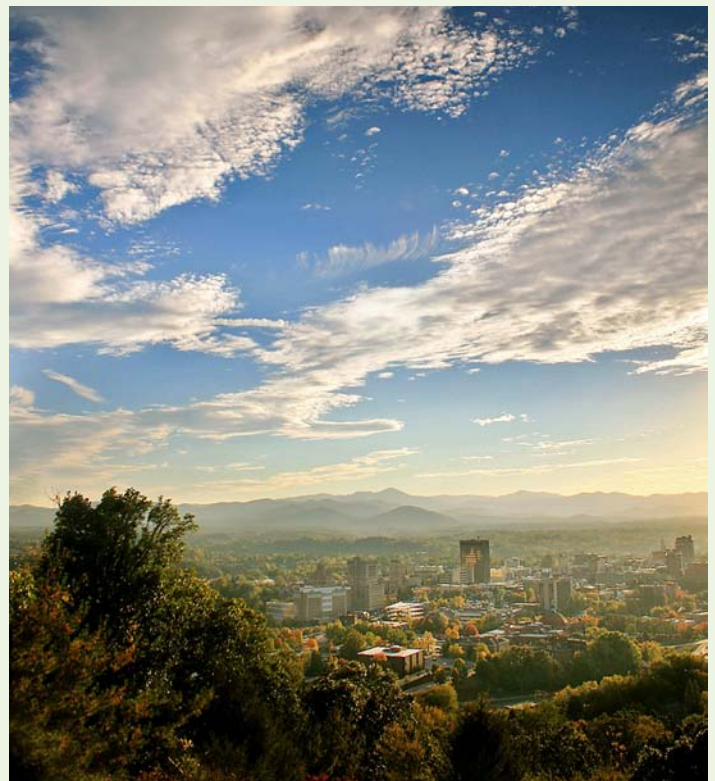
Through the Asheville Offset program, groups working with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to plan their trip are offered the chance to make a donation based on the type and length of their travel to INSULATE!, a student-run program within the College's Environmental Leadership Center. The partnership was born in 2009 during the Bureau's sponsorship of the Mountain Green Sustainability Conference at Warren Wilson. Through the work of student volunteers and the pro-bono assistance of local experts, low-income, elderly residents of Asheville receive energy audits and retrofits free of charge.

According to a 2008 study by the North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association, North Carolina households with incomes below 50 percent of the national poverty level spend 59.3 percent of their annual income on energy and that homes older than 10 years consume up to 60 percent more energy than newer homes. INSULATE! works to reduce these numbers by creating the tightest envelope possible through wrapping water heaters, caulking floorboards and ceilings, weatherizing windows, and filling in drafty areas with much-needed insulation. Because the program

“ Tourism's contribution to the area's economy is not insignificant and protecting the local environment is not only an ecological 'should' but an economic 'must.' ”

is volunteer-based, the entirety of guests' donations is used to purchase insulation supplies, ensuring all contributions have the most effective impact. These relatively inexpensive modifications can greatly lower emissions, energy use and, consequently, help to stem energy bills from devouring an already limited income.

After traveling to Asheville in low-carbon style, visitors can continue their green streak by frequenting one of the many eco-friendly accommodations, venues and restaurants featured on the Convention and Visitors Bureau's website. The newly opened Hilton Biltmore Park Hotel, for example, is among the first hotels in the country to install a solar hot water system. This method of heating water eliminates 60 tons of carbon dioxide every year—equivalent to planting 18,000 trees. Sustainable snacks can be found at the West End Bakery and Café, which purchases produce directly from 14 regional farmers, grows herbs in their on-site garden, and donates scraps to local livestock. Through the Asheville Offset program and the promotion of other green tourism options, the Asheville Chamber's Convention and Visitors Bureau is not only giving a boost to current local businesses, but is ensuring the economic vitality and beauty of the region for generations to come.



Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce

Energizing the Future



Washington State is well known to the rest of the country for its progress in green activities and support of clean technologies. Thanks in large part to the advocacy of business organizations such as the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Washington is home to roughly 400 clean tech companies that provide over 5,000 well-paying jobs. This concentration of green employment is 64 percent higher than the national average and is expected to grow to 25,000 jobs by 2020.

The Business Sustainability Committee of the Greater Seattle Chamber is one of the most active of the Chamber's committees and strives to educate member businesses about the benefits of operating in more socially and environmentally responsible ways. The committee is "working to demonstrate the connection between sustainable business practices, long-term economic success, and [the] region's future as a world leader in economic vitality and quality of life." In an unwavering effort to further advance the region's green economy, the Greater Seattle Chamber dedicated their October 2009 leadership conference to addressing green jobs and industry.

Entitled Energizing the Future: How our Region Can Expand our Clean Energy Sector to Fuel a Job Growing Economy, the Cham-

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ber's 2009 Regional Leadership Conference focused on how to harness the area's strengths to become a world leader in renewable energy, alternative energy, energy efficiency, and smart grid technology. Sessions addressed public and private sector opportunities; saving money through higher energy efficiency; how the Seattle region is uniquely positioned to receive significant federal investments; and vital leadership and collaborations needed for success. The efforts of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce are not simply a leap toward healthy environments, but—in the words of the Chamber—are designed for “jumpstarting an economic engine that can drive our prosperity and ensure our quality of life during this economic cycle and for decades to come.”

**Regional
Leadership
Conference
2009**





Recycling one aluminum can is equivalent to saving six ounces of gas. This figure was introduced to the Knoxville Chamber during a presentation by a Tennessee materials management company, and after hearing the case for the importance of recycling to this local business and to the nation at large, the Knoxville Chamber was eager to jump on board.

In its effort to employ greener operations, the Chamber concentrated on the three tenets of sustainability—reduce, reuse, recycle—and has made significant strides to date. In the second quarter of 2009, from March 6th through June 6th, the Knoxville Chamber saved 42 pounds of aluminum, the equivalent of 19.8 barrels of oil; 560 pounds of plastic, or 11.8 cubic yards of land-fill space; and 4,200 pounds of paper, saving approximately 36 trees. With their own organization on track to a more sustainable future, the Chamber turned its energies to encouraging member businesses to do the same.

In July 2009, the Knoxville Chamber launched the Green Business Recognition Program to bring due praise to local companies engaged in green strategies. Membership to the program is based on performance in the areas of recycling, waste reduction, purchasing, water and energy conservation, involving stakeholders, and transportation. To help Knoxville companies get started, the Chamber's recognition program provides a "tip sheet" and works with GoGreenET.com, an online resource created to provide eastern Tennessee companies basic information about products and services that are more sustainable.

Once admitted to the program, companies are featured in a monthly newsletter published in the Greater Knoxville Business Journal that is distributed to over 13,500 readers. Members are also highlighted on the Chamber's website and receive a window cling for their business. The powerful marketing and branding opportunities provided by the Chamber's Green Business Recognition Program are making going green the clear choice for companies in Knoxville, Tennessee.



The Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce is working hard to advance more sustainable business methods throughout the region. The Chamber's Energy and Environmental Task Force was recently created to develop "long term business-sensitive strategies for sustainable energy efficiency initiatives, environmental protection and infrastructure development that will improve the business climate and quality of life for business owners, employees and their families." In order to advance this challenging mission, the Task Force concentrates its resources on educating and engaging the business community and collaborating with local, state and federal organizations to promote sensible energy policies.

The Energy and Environmental Task Force has made sure that useful information for the local business community is easy to find. Many helpful resources are publicized on their website such as the Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program run by Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection. This program provides matching funds up to \$25,000 for small businesses in Eastern Pennsylvania to employ strategies that improve energy efficiency and prevent pollution. In addition to highlighting programs available through other local organizations, the Lehigh Valley Chamber provides a valuable annual resource of their own through a regional convening.

In September 2009, the Chamber hosted the third annual Lehigh Valley Environmental Innovations Conference & Expo. Roughly 200 regional business leaders attend the conference every year to learn about cutting edge strategies and technologies to improve energy efficiency and green performance. According to coverage of the program, this conference "focuses on cost cutting, money saving, energy reducing business practices that can improve any businesses' bottom line and have a more positive effect on the environment." Attendees are invited to explore the annual Environmental Tradeshow featuring exhibits of local green product and service providers. Through the hard work and dedication of the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, area businesses are saving money and shedding pounds of waste and inefficiencies while improving local quality of life for employees and residents.

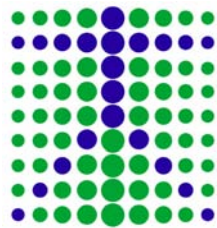
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