

HB MAGAZINE

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Going Green in Surf City

LOCAL EFFORTS TO CREATE A MORE ECO-FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE IN HUNTINGTON BEACH

by Jody Robinson

Going green is a red-hot issue. As the theory of global warming has become more widely accepted with every passing day and as fuel prices soar, Americans are finally waking up to the reality of our unsustainable living habits. Residents of Huntington Beach are no exception. As a community, we are as engaged in the conversation as any California city.

Many local businesses are making a concerted effort at conservation. The city is taking a number of measures to create more environmentally friendly programs and procedures. Southern California Edison has implemented several energy efficiency programs and financial incentives to educate both residential and business consumers on the ways in which to reduce energy use and save money. But is Surf City truly moving down a path towards "greener" living?

Let's find out. Perhaps we'll forward the cause in the next few pages.

Managing waste

For most of us, when we think "earth friendly," we think "recycling." While recycling is only one part of the multi-faceted issue of resource conservation, it is one that has become popular as a fairly simple thing that each of us can do to make a positive impact on our environment.

For years now, Rainbow Disposal has handled the waste produced by most of our city's residents. The folks at Rainbow are stewards of the environment, and have long been ambassadors of recycling.

Do you ever wonder what happens to all those recyclables you throw into the trash every week? They are sorted then either baled or contained, then sold straight to various companies wanting to use recyclable material (i.e. plastic or glass) to make post-consumer recycled products (the best kind – meaning that the material has actually been used and recycled).

Rainbow Disposal is also doing what it can to reduce the size of the environmental "footprint" its trucks make as they roam the streets of Surf City day after day. Its fleet of trucks were recently replaced with vehicles which operate on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), a clean burning fuel produced domestically. Further, Rainbow has constructed a compressed natural gas filling station which will be opening for public use later this year. It is estimated that for each truck, the equivalent of about 4,500 cars are taken off the roads every day.

"CNG produces significantly fewer smog-producing emissions than reformulated gasoline or diesel fuel when used in natural gas vehicles," says Sue Gordon, vice president of environmental and public affairs for Rainbow Disposal. "Heavy-duty natural gas trucks have demonstrated more than 90 percent reduction in carbon monoxide – the principle 'greenhouse gas' - and more than 50 percent in nitrogen oxides compared with commercial diesel engines."

Perhaps one of the most important efforts that Rainbow is making for the future of HB is their commitment to educating children about the value of reducing, reusing and recycling. Representatives from the company regularly teach children how

and why to reduce, reuse and recycle.

The company's "Recycling Magic - It's as Easy as 123" children's magic show are touring the local schools this spring. Children will be entertained by a magician while learning important information about recycling and how to use the three waste carts that will be delivered to residences in Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley.

"We believe that the best way to get parents to change their behavior is to educate their children on these principles," says Gordon. "In turn, the children will take it home to their parents and families and teach them how to live greener."

Gordon adds that Rainbow Disposal also prides itself on the complimentary educational school tour lessons of the newly remodeled Material Recovery Facility and Waste Transfer Station. The lessons cover several California content standards for science, and are a memorable and informative experience for pupils, teachers and parents.

As much progress as we may be making on the recycling front, we may be using more energy in our homes than we'd like to think. The average Southern California Edison customer uses about \$94 worth of energy and the average SCE household uses about 7,180 kilowatt hours per year.

Does it mean we're not doing enough to conserve? Or have too many of us employed central air? Maybe neither. The amount of energy used is going up; but then, so is our population. And most new homes are fairly energy inefficient. But several local companies are making inroads on that front.

Green home building

Huntington Beach is among the California municipalities currently implementing green building initiatives.

Green building is an integrated design process to create buildings and supporting infrastructure that minimize the use of resources, minimize the harmful effects on the environment and provide healthier environments for people.

"Green building translates to reduced operating costs across the board," says Chandra Krout, AICP, LEED AP for the Irvine-based CTG Energetics Inc. who recently spoke on this topic at the HB Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Conference. "It can account for a 30 to 55 percent in energy savings, 35 to 65 percent in carbon savings and 30 to 50 percent in water savings."

One local builder, HB-based Living Green Homes Construction and Development, Inc. recently broke ground for its first "green point rated" single-family residence in Orange County. Located in downtown HB at 319 21st Street, this unique residence will demonstrate how home owners can conserve energy and dollars by adopting and utilizing green building products and services.

According to Company Vice President and COO Jason Scheurer, "greenpoint rated is a California grown and community-based program that rates homes performing above standard practices in the state." Developed by public agencies, building professionals, and nonprofit stakeholders to further state priorities and best practices, it is managed by Build It Green, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting green building in California.

"Living Green Homes provides a unique way of constructing

DID YOU KNOW?

- A compact florescent light bulb (CFL) uses 25% of its incandescent counterpart.
- If every Californian household replaced five incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, that would be like removing 400,000 cars off of California roads.
- Some of the worst household energy hogs are refrigerators 10 years old or older, leaky or damaging air conditioning units and plasma screen televisions.
- Southern California Edison will pay you \$35 if you let them come pick up your old refrigerator and haul it away (\$50 for a freezer!).
- You can take an online survey at www.SCE.com to find out how energy efficient your household is.
- Our energy use has not yet peaked; we're still moving up and up and up.
- You can get great rebates when you buy energy efficient appliances.

- Go to www.SCE.com for more information

a new home, which offers the potential homebuyer with an alternative lifestyle buying option that is earth friendly, low maintenance, with high-tech, energy efficient equipment that helps the environment in many ways," he says. "We also provide existing homeowners interested in remodeling with an alternative solution to establish an energy efficiency home with our special testing equipment that will determine many factors to consider in their home, such as comfort, indoor air quality, energy efficiency, health and safety."

Along the same vein, some local earth-friendly companies are helping to bring a fresh approach to the Huntington Beach housing landscape by offering products with an eye towards energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

For instance, the Interior Door and Closet Co., features a hollow core door, 90 percent of which is constructed from recycled wood. Any of the company's stained grade doors - maple, mahogany, cherry - are all harvested from renewable forests, according to owner Stephen King.

"We use water-based paint in our products and we donate raised panel and wood doors to Habitat for Humanity," he says. "When we opened the OC market two years ago, we made the decision to purchase doors from certain vendors who were more green - the feedback we've received from our customers is that they are happy that we're conscious of environmental efforts and being more earth-friendly."

Additionally, being more energy efficient translates to lower energy costs, a concept Joel Peck, owner of California Replacement Windows Inc. says an increasing number of manufacturers are recognizing by making dramatic improvements in their merchandise offerings.

“The new vinyl window frame is one of the more popular options because it is extremely easy to maintain, durable and energy efficient,” he says. “The principle energy efficiency is in the use of dual-pane glass. There are coatings that can be bonded to the surface to one of the panes to control the radiant and UV light, which is what fades your carpet, flooring and drapes. Additionally, dual-pane windows help keep your house cooler in the summer, warmer in the winter and helps to control sound.”

HB businesses making a local impact

Gene Rodrigues, director of energy efficiency for Southern California Edison, is proud of the HB business community.

“SCE business customers in Huntington Beach have done a really good job of becoming more energy efficient,” he says. “An increasing number of local businesses have proactively replaced outdated, energy guzzling equipment with new, efficient equipment and a growing number of businesses have invited SCE out to do an energy audit on their operations to find out what the experts say they can do to improve their energy efficiency.”

Rodrigues adds that Southern Cal. Edison residential and business customers throughout the company’s service territory have saved more energy utilizing SCE’s energy efficiency programs than “any other utility’s customers in the country each year over the last six years.”

“We attribute that trend to our customers,” he says. “We are blessed to have customers who are savvy about energy and knowledgeable about how to participate broadly and deeply in programs and incentives to help their businesses reduce energy and the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on our environment.”

One of the ways in with SCE is partnering with local small and medium-sized-businesses is through its energy audit program.

“Understanding your facility’s energy use can help you save energy, money and the environment,” says Rodrigues. “This mail-in audit program is designed to provide SCE business customers with assistance to assess their energy usage and energy cost, and available cash incentives. It’s easy to do – this paper-based questionnaire can be printed out, completed by the business owner, and mailed back to SCE. We will then review the answers, and provide your company with a customized audit report, mailed to you within two weeks.”

After the energy audit, your business will receive a written energy assessment report that includes tips on lowering your energy use by increasing your energy efficiency, improving the comfort of your customers and employees and improving the maintenance, safety and security of your operation.

WHAT IS E-WASTE?

E-waste includes the following items and should not be disposed of with your regular trash!:

- Televisions
- Computers
- VCRs
- Electronic games
- Microwaves
- Printers
- Fax machines
- Cell phones



A compact florescent light bulb (top) uses 25% of its incandescent counterpart. Co-presidents Jerry Moffatt, left, and Bruce Shuman in front of one of Rainbow Disposals new trucks utilizing compressed natural gas.

Some local companies, like the Hilton Waterfront Beach Resort, are making a concerted effort to focus their corporate philosophy with the principles of environmental “friendliness” in mind.

“While our industry is clamoring for different certifications for marketing reasons, we here at the Waterfront Hilton are taking a different approach,” says General Manager J.D. Shafer. “Our focus is on paying attention to the environment and doing the right thing - this is a cultural shift in the way we operate the hotel. Every associate at every level is getting involved. We are actively asking ourselves whether we partnering with the right vendors, learning how we can eliminate waste, procure products that make sense, save on water and energy, etc. Sure, there is low-hanging fruit that can immediately be corrected, but it takes a well-thought-out strategic plan and a shift in our mindset to truly make a difference. Ultimately, the culture change will be rewarding to the associates and felt by our guests. Certifications are important, but at the end of the day the question to ask is whether or not an organization can completely embrace the eco-friendly movement with more than just lip service? We here at the Hilton Waterfront believe the answer is yes.”

Making a difference

Each of us, individually, can implement seemingly insignificant changes in our daily lives - around the house and at the office – that can have a profound impact on energy consumption and

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Why Are So Many Americans "Going Green?"

Because our future depends on it.

Did you know if every homeowner in the United States replaced one conventional light bulb with a Compact Florescent Bulb (CFB) we would save enough energy to light 2.5 million homes for a year? According to Energy Star (the government watchdog overseeing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions), that same light bulb would eliminate greenhouse gases equivalent to the pollution produced by nearly one million cars.

Global warming is no longer a scientific theory, it's a fact. Comprehensive data clearly indicates fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions are a major contributor to global warming. In the United States alone buildings account for approx. 36 percent of total energy use – 65 percent of electrical consumption – 30 percent greenhouse gas emissions – and 30 percent use of raw materials, annually.

America is going green and it is clearly beyond the stages of trend. The growing demand for environmentally safe products, organically grown foods, recyclable products and alternative fuel automobiles, are just a few examples. Many community leaders and private organizations such as Build It Green, whose mission is to promote healthy, energy and resource-efficient buildings in California, have launched progressive campaigns in this country to reinvent how we as human beings live upon this Earth. And the results from these initiatives may surprise you.

Most of the nation's consumer manufacturers that offer environmentally friendly products have reported record high sales in recent years. Consumer reports indicate the demand for organic food products jumped nearly 16 percent in 2007. Hybrid and alternative fuel automobile sales are up 68 percent. According to the National Association of Home Builders, in 2006 eighty thousand "green built" homes were constructed and sold in the U.S., which accounts for approximately eight percent of the overall market.

At the local level

The impact is enormous, and is leading more and more businesses to a new paradigm for the 21st century. In California, one such company is the Huntington Beach-based Living Green Homes Construction and Development, Inc. who announced earlier this year they plan to build one of the first "green-built" single-family residences in Orange County, CA.

"I'm passionate about this project as it represents the future,"

says Living Green Homes Vice President Jason Scheurer. "Today's homebuyers do care about the environment. They care about the future and a safe environment for their children. Homes of this kind play a role in that."

Located at 319 21st Street in downtown HB, this 3,213-square-foot home will be one of the first of its kind in Southern California, designed to meet the standards set by "Built It Green," an organization recognized for its "GreenPoint Rated Home" system. The home will feature the latest state-of-the-art digital operating systems, renewable energy components, composite building materials, energy efficient water system, recycled wall insulation, non-toxic paint and floor finishes, solar energy and advanced heating and cooling systems.

Scheduled for completion in late 2008, it will be open to the general public for tours throughout the year. Tours will include product demonstrations by sponsors, manufacturers and suppliers participating in the project. It will also allow the curious consumer the opportunity to learn more about environmental friendly building products, appliances, hardware and services. Over 10,000 people are expected to tour the home during its debut. Prizes will be raffled off with portions of proceeds going to local non-profit organizations that supports children's and youth initiatives.

As the price of going green continues to become increasingly affordable, the demand for these types of homes will continue to rise. The home of the 21st century will prove that innovative design and advanced technology can offer consumers far more than just energy savings. Beyond the monthly savings from energy costs (an average of \$700 per month), the rewards for going green have additional benefits such as environmental impact, energy conservation, better health, and safety issues. There are government lending programs for green built homes - local, state and federal tax credits, rebate programs and recycling credits.

As the effect of greater awareness and understanding the long-term benefits of going green reach new heights, so will the future of our planet. **HB**

William Woolery is a former Editor-in-Chief of Orange County Magazine and past writing professor at the University of California, Irvine. For more information on the Living Green on 319 project, visit www.Living-GreenHomes.com