

# Businesses Find Green Practices Save Green Dollars

By Beth Casper

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More than 150 businesses in Marion County have officially dispelled the myth that green practices cost extra.

Their bulk purchasing, increased recycling, energy upgrades and water conservation efforts have proven that operating in a more environmentally friendly way saves money.

While their environmental practices, size, number of employees, and products and services are vastly different, these businesses and organizations all have one thing in common: they've earned their EarthWISE certification.

The EarthWISE program is a free business environmental assistance program of Marion County. EarthWISE stands for Workplace Initiative for Sustainable Enterprise. EarthWISE staff evaluates businesses practices and helps improve recycling practices, energy efficiency, waste reduction and water conservation.

EarthWISE program staff are available for full-service environmental assessment site visits as well as quick phone calls to answer simple recycling questions. The services are customized to meet each business's specific needs. EarthWISE staff also supply free recycling containers, stickers, educational materials, and environmentally preferable purchasing information.

Here's how a few EarthWISE businesses have saved by going green:

At Hillyer's Mid-City Ford in Woodburn, buying in bulk saved the company thousands of dollars a year. For brake cleaner alone, the switch to 55-gallon drums instead of individual 16-ounce aerosol cans saved Hillyer's \$7,866 a year. For anti-freeze coolant, switching to bulk meant a \$1,594 annual savings.

At the Grand Hotel in downtown Salem, more efficient lighting for each of its 193 sleeping rooms, the lobby, and the hallways saves close to \$800 a month on the electric bill. Just turning off the light in the front panel of each of the eight vending machines, saves the Grand Hotel \$400 a year.

At Cascade Baking Company, Debra and Stephen Edwards turned to used or refurbished tools for the

expensive bakery equipment—a less expensive and more environmentally friendly option. When the Edwards needed to replace their 1936 Hobart mixer—a \$40,000 expense if purchased new, they found a 1980s-model mixer for \$10,000. Since the old Hobart mixer lasted more than 70 years, the Edwards have reason to believe their new-to-them mixer has another 50 years of use!

In spring 2012, Willamette Valley Fruit Company replaced the cooling system in the freezer, which saved the company 60 percent on energy costs. They then replaced the garage doors with high-speed roll-up doors that operate with a motion sensor. With an Energy Trust of Oregon incentive, Willamette Valley Fruit Company will see payback from their investment after just more than a year—with energy savings of more than \$12,000 a year.

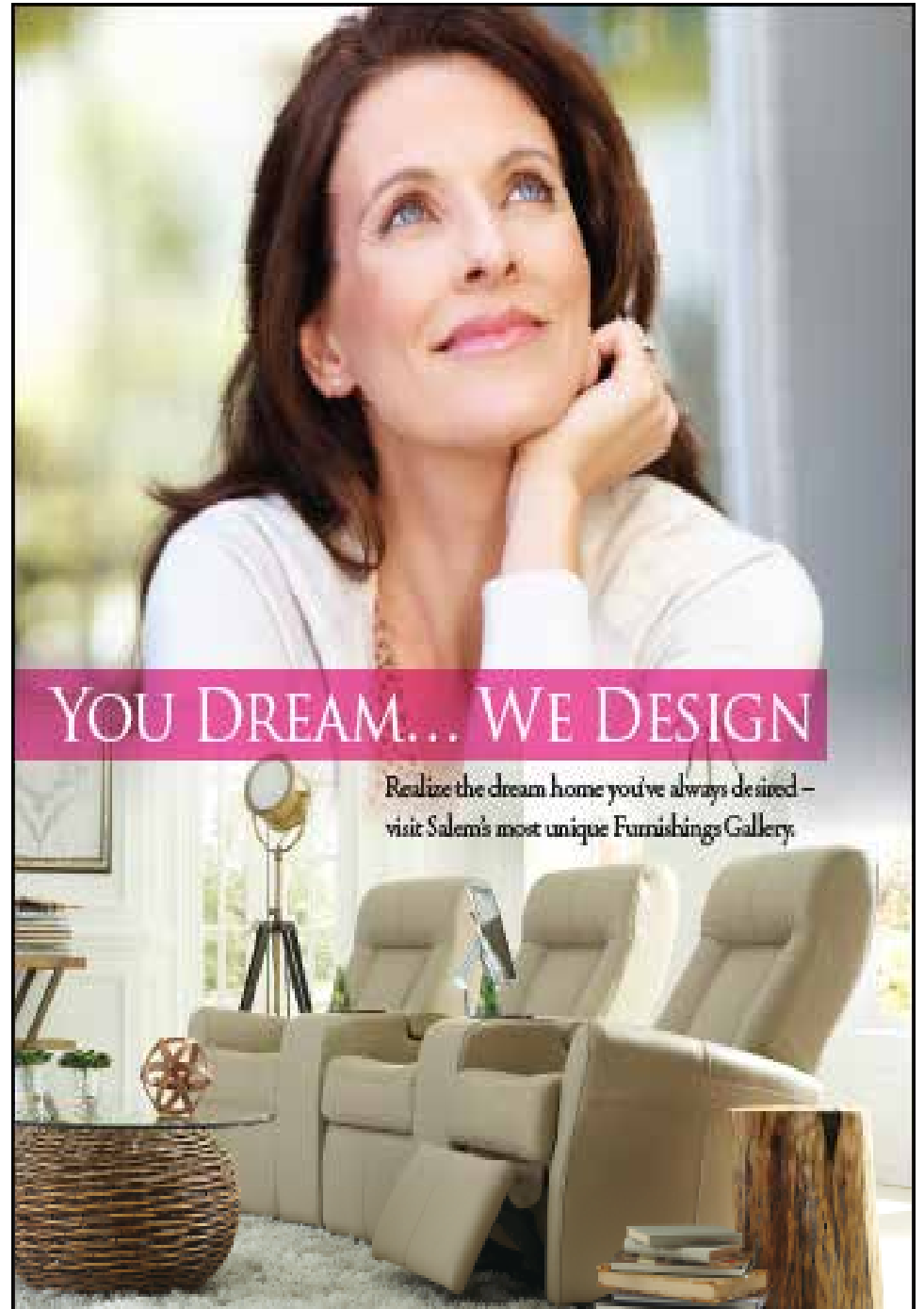
"So much of what you can do to reduce your carbon footprint turns out to work out financially," said Derek Imig of Willamette Valley Fruit Company. "You are probably going to save a lot of money to become EarthWISE certified."

EarthWISE program staff can walk any business leader or organization employee through the steps to earn certification. A business with any level of green practices is welcome to apply. EarthWISE staff will focus on recycling, waste reduction and prevention, environmentally preferable purchasing, energy efficiency and conservation, water pollution prevention, and outreach and education.

For more information about the EarthWISE program, go to [www.mcEarthWISE.net](http://www.mcEarthWISE.net) or call 503-365-3188.



AJ's auto repair added the EarthWISE logo to their shuttle car to remind others to reduce, reuse, and recycle.



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