

# The Sustainable Business Bulletin

Marion County Public Works– Environmental Services EarthWISE Business Program

## Marion County Leads the State in Recycling

Recently, the DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) released their annual report on Oregon's recovery numbers. Thanks to the dedication of many businesses, Marion County is leading the state in recycling and composting! Marion County achieved a 57.5 percent recovery rate in 2006 (up from 56.2 percent in 2005). While this is certainly great news, we still have a far way to go, especially in the area of waste reduction. Oregonians are generating waste at record high levels– 3,122 pounds of waste per Oregonian per year. From 2005 to 2006, total waste generation in Oregon increased 4.1%. In Marion County, per-capita waste disposal has increased 24% since 2001 and 44% since 1996! Likewise, in Marion County, our per capita waste generation rate is higher than the state average, at 3,311 pounds per person per year (state average is 3,122 pounds per person per year.) Because businesses generate half of the waste in Marion County, each business has a tremendous responsibility to reduce

waste wherever possible. What these waste generation numbers remind us of is how incredibly important it is to reduce waste first. As a business, you make choices every day that effect waste generation. By choosing to identify waste reduction opportunities in the materials you produce at your business, you have the opportunity to make a large dent in the waste stream. Businesses have a rare and unique opportunity to change the face of consumerism because the products you produce are the products that the consumers will purchase. By making an effort to reduce the waste that results of from the goods and services you provide, you are giving consumers the opportunity to speak through their purchasing dollar. It is a proven fact that more and more consumers are spending their dollars to support environmentally safe products and businesses that are making efforts to manufacture these products, reduce waste and lower their environmental impact. On top

of it all, making these changes has the opportunity to save your business



**Businesses generate half of the waste in Marion County.**

money, whether your business is eliminating an inefficient byproduct or using less materials to package and ship a product, using less stuff costs less money.

You know your business better than anyone else, which means that you know where your business might have the potential to reduce waste. If you'd like help eliminating waste, or finding alternatives to throwing away waste materials, call Marion County's EarthWISE program.

For questions about recycling a specific material, you can call the Recycling Hotline at 503-390-4000 or visit our recycling database at: <http://apps.co.marion.or.us/Recycle/>.

### Important Dates

December 4th: Hanukkah Begins

December 22nd: Winter Begins

December 25th: Christmas Day

December 31st: New Year's Eve

### **Inside this issue:**

Environmental Impact of Business Travel	<b>2</b>
FAQ of the Month	<b>2</b>
A Monthly Tidbit for Your Next Newsletter	<b>3</b>
Spotlight on DeSantis Landscapes Inc.	<b>3</b>
Contact Us	<b>4</b>
EarthWISE Program Information	<b>4</b>
EarthWISE Member Directory	<b>4</b>



Business travel has a significant impact on the environment

*"A jet emits approximately one pound of carbon dioxide per passenger mile."*

## The Environmental Impact of Business Travel

2008 is quickly approaching and for many businesses that means another year of conferences and out-of-town meetings. The traveling that your employees do, whether by vehicle or airplane, has a significant impact on the environment. A jet emits approximately one pound of carbon dioxide per passenger mile. That means that 3.2 million acres of trees would have to be planted every year to offset the miles racked up by business travelers annually.

Whether you are attending an international conference, registering for an out-of-state training, or simply attempting to offset the emissions from your business vehicles that are on the

road each day, carbon calculators can help you determine the environmental impact of your travel. One of our favorite calculators can be found here:

[www.carboncalculator.org](http://www.carboncalculator.org). Purchasing Green Tags can offset the negative impact of your travel. To purchase green tags, or to learn more, visit this website: [www.greentagsusa.org](http://www.greentagsusa.org).

### What your business can do

When you do travel, try to choose conferences that are local or regional. For out-of-town meetings, consider telecommuting or teleconferencing. If staying overnight, look to stay in hotels that have earned a Green Seal certification

([http://www.greenseal.org/programs/lodging\\_properties.cfm](http://www.greenseal.org/programs/lodging_properties.cfm))

If you are planning a conference of your own, consider this: according to IMEX, the World Exhibition for Incentive Travel, Meetings and Events, 67 percent of meeting and incentive planners have taken environmental considerations into account when planning a conference or incentive program. Furthermore, 61 percent of buyers believe that they, or their colleagues, would likely avoid a destination or venues known to have a poor environmental record.

*(Thanks to the City of Portland Blue Bulletin for some of the information included in this article)*

## FAQ of the Month

### **Q: Is equipment at my business using energy even when turned off?**

A: Yes! This wasted energy is called "phantom energy." One of the biggest energy gobblers are the transformers that continuously recharge your cell phone and power your computer peripherals. The average home pays between \$50 and \$70 every year to keep those little red lights burning, the clocks ticking and the electronics humming while the appliances go unused. Eliminating this standby or "leaking"

electricity could save households between 6 and 26 percent on their average monthly electricity bill, imagine the savings at businesses! Computer printers are one of the big energy wasters, some of them drawing 11.5 watts when idling.

Ask your employees to leave their personal coffee makers and space heaters at home. Eliminate personal deskside printers and share one or two centralized printers instead. An easy and effective way to eliminate phantom energy use is to distribute surge pro-

tectors to each workspace. At the end of the work day, ask your employees to turn off their computers and monitors and then flip the switch on the surge protector.

Remember, even when the toaster, coffee maker, and electric stapler are turned off they are still sucking energy. One study found over 70% of the energy small appliances use throughout their lifetime was used when the product was *turned off*. Always unplug equipment when not in use and watch your energy bill whittle away.



Plugging equipment into a surge protector helps to eliminate phantom energy use.

## Pass It On: A Monthly Tidbit for Your Businesses' Next Newsletter

### This month's topic: Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Purchasing products made with recycled content materials (such as printer paper, trash can liners and toilet paper) is incredibly important. Materials that are collected for recycling are manufactured into new products. When your business purchases recycled-content products, you are closing the loop by bringing materials full circle from old product to new product. Purchasing materials made with recycled

content also increases the demand for recycled materials and the higher the demand, the stronger local recycling programs will become. Look on product labels for the highest post-consumer content (rather than pre-consumer content) available. Post-consumer waste is waste from products that were previously used and then collected from the consumer.

By buying recycled-content products you help to preserve natural resources, reduce energy use and pollution,

create markets for recyclables and minimize the impact of your business' activities on the environment. Businesses have enormous purchasing power which means that making one small change, such as purchasing recycled content paper instead of virgin paper, has the potential to make a huge difference.

If you would like to receive a copy of a sample sustainable purchasing policy you can use at your business give us a call at 503-588-5169 ext. 5920.



Finding this symbol on a product means that it was made with recycled content materials.

## Spotlight on EarthWISE certified business DeSantis Landscapes Inc.

DeSantis Landscapes Inc. is a family owned, nationally recognized landscape design, construction, and maintenance company located in Salem. EarthWISE certified in October of 2007, DeSantis Landscapes' commitment to environmentally friendly practices ensures long term health benefits and sustainable beauty. The service fleet that DeSantis Landscapes uses is powered by biofuels and their sales vehicles use hybrid technology. Their small engine equipment uses 4-cycle technology that reduces emissions up to 80%!

As an environmentally conscious business, DeSantis Landscapes developed their own program called DeSantisEarthSense. The DeSantisEarthSense approach program allows customers to

choose to treat their grounds and gardens with naturally derived nutrients and active soil micro-biology. Customers that use the DeSantisEarthSense program use less water, have improved soil structure and biology and their property is gradually cleansed of residues from synthetic fertilizers and chemical herbicides, ensuring a healthy and safe environment for people and pets.

Aside from offering their customers environmentally friendly landscaping options, DeSantis Landscapes Inc. also walks the talk with their own business practices. The company recycles all paper, cardboard, aluminum and plastics and composts all green material. Their quarterly newsletter is sent by email to reduce paper usage

and their office printers are set to default double-side print. Their office is cleaned with biodegradable cleaning products. Energy efficient lighting is installed in their office and shop and the company purchases green power. Employees are offered full benefits, including health and dental insurance, vacation and sick time, and competitive wages and medical coverage includes alternative and natural healthcare. DeSantis Landscapes Inc. also uses local vendors and supplies whenever possible to support the local economy and reduce shipping waste.

The company's holistic approach to sustainability truly makes DeSantis Landscapes Inc. an environmental leader in Marion County.

*"DeSantisEarthSense customer property is gradually cleansed of residues from synthetic fertilizers and chemical herbicides, ensuring a safe environmental for people and pets."*



DeSantis Landscapes Inc. receives their EarthWISE certification plaque



**Marion County**  
OREGON

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Environmental Services EarthWISE  
Business Program

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***Workplace Initiative for  
Sustainable Enterprise***

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.CO.MARION.OR.  
US/PW/ES/EARTHWISE

### **EarthWISE Business Assistance Program**

Marion County's Business Assistance program helps businesses save natural resources and money by reducing waste, recycling more, and conserving energy and water. The program provides businesses with free resources like recycling boxes, recycling stickers, recycling posters, employee training, environmentally preferable purchasing catalogs, and suggestions and recommendations to reduce energy use, water use, and waste. All services are customized to meet your business' specific needs.

### **EarthWISE Certification**

High performing businesses that immediately or over time meet pre-established criteria in the EarthWISE focus areas will earn the EarthWISE Certification. These businesses will receive public recognition for their green practices. Participating in the business assistance program helps many businesses reach EarthWISE certification.

### **For more information**

Ready to get your business involved? Call 503-588-5169 ext. 5920 or visit our website at: [www.co.marion.or.us/pw/es/earthwise](http://www.co.marion.or.us/pw/es/earthwise)

## **EarthWISE Member Directory**

**Advantage Precast Inc.**– Keizer  
[www.advantagebusinessgroup.com](http://www.advantagebusinessgroup.com)  
*Service, Concrete Products and Accessories*

**Agri-Plas, Inc.**– Brooks  
[www.agriplasinc.com](http://www.agriplasinc.com)  
*Agricultural and other plastic waste recyclers*

**AJ's Auto Repair**– Salem  
[www.ajsautorepair.com](http://www.ajsautorepair.com)  
*A full service automotive repair and maintenance facility*

**DeSantis Landscapes Inc.**– Salem [www.desantislandscapes.com](http://www.desantislandscapes.com)  
*A family owned, nationally recognized landscape design, construction, and maintenance company*

**Marion County Public Works– Environmental Services**  
[www.co.marion.or.us/pw/es](http://www.co.marion.or.us/pw/es)  
*Provides Marion County residents and visitors with innovative solid waste, parks, and water quality programs*

**Sabroso Company**– Woodburn  
[www.sabroso.com](http://www.sabroso.com)  
*Fruit product specialists in foodservice and food manufacturing*

**Willamette Ear, Nose, Throat and Facial Plastic Surgery, LLP**– Salem  
[www.entsalem.com](http://www.entsalem.com)  
*Providing comprehensive ENT (ear, nose and throat), facial plastic surgery, and hearing audiology services*

