



EARTHWISE

WHITE TEETH, GREEN DENTISTS

Beth Casper Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Dentists are first and foremost concerned with their patients' oral health.

But three dental practices in Salem are proving that you can provide superb dental care while also caring for the environment.

Drs. David Swiderski, Holly Chamberlain, Sean Cooper and Amanda Day operate from energy-efficient and eco-friendly facilities, pay special attention to waste reduction and prevention and save space and paper by using electronic files.

Not only have their efforts conserved precious resources, but it has saved them money and time.

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An aerial view of Spinaker Pediatric Dentistry's roof shows off their 118 solar panels. SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL
ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

Dentists

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Their efforts also have paid off in recognition. All three offices are EarthWISE certified. The EarthWISE program is a free business environmental assistance program of Marion County. EarthWISE staff helps businesses recycle, save energy, reduce waste and much more. To earn certification, a business meets criteria in six areas. There are more than 170 EarthWISE businesses and organizations in Marion County.

For Dr. Swiderski, a fire provided an opportunity to go green.

In May 2016, a fire burned down the Mid-Valley Oral, Maxillofacial and Implant Surgery building on Liberty Street SE. Swiderski and his wife, Stacy Swiderski, decided to build an eco-friendly practice from the ground up. The new building is highly insulated, equipped with an energy-efficient HVAC system and installed with tinted windows to let in light but not too much heat in the summer.

The biggest environmental impact for the office, though, is seen from the outside. More than 100 solar panels cover the roof and generate all of the energy for the entire office.

"We haven't had to pay an electricity bill since we moved in May 2017," said Stacy Swiderski of the Mid-Valley Oral, Maxillofacial and Implant Surgery office.

Spinnaker Pediatric Dentistry on 12th Street SE also sports solar panels. Advanced Energy Systems installed 118 panels two years ago. The company estimates that over the lifetime of the system, Dr. Cooper and the dental practice would save \$344,000 and offset 500 tons of carbon dioxide.

Last year, the practice replaced all of the outside parking lot lighting with energy-efficient lights on timers.

"When we switched those lights, our electricity bill went down by about \$200 a month," said Jane Sept, Spinnaker's office manager.

When Dr. Chamberlain moved State



Spinnaker Pediatric Dentistry pays extra to ship Keurig pods out for recycling.
SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

Street Dental to their new offices at 1800 State Street, she also made sure that the renovations were eco-friendly.

"We used reclaimed materials from the building itself," Chamberlain said. "We took out a stairway because it took up an awful lot of floor space but there was a lot of wood leftover so we made wood walls. Anything we could reuse from the old building, we did."

The brick chimney stack was dismantled and the bricks were reused in the front reception area.

Chamberlain plans to have solar panels installed on the roof in the future to offset the State Street Dental's energy use.

But sustainability for Chamberlain also means providing a comfortable space for her staff. The old offices on Commercial Street were so small that staff held meetings and ate lunches in the waiting room. The new State Street space has a separate lunch room, meeting or conference room for both staff and patients and a separate staff bathroom.

Inside each of these dental offices,

staff is attuned to EarthWISE practices.

Chamberlain's office uses a sterilizer that uses steam, pressure and heat to clean the reusable dental instruments. Chamberlain bartered with a patient to sew fleece headrest covers — eliminating the disposable version. Her waste reduction efforts have almost eliminated the seven bags of garbage that they used to throw out each day — they are now down to five bags per week.

At Mid-Valley Oral, Maxillofacial and Implant Surgery, Swiderski installed a water-flushing system that uses half the amount of water as usual. And the office made the switch to electronic files, which saved an entire room full of paperwork on patients. That room is now a staff room, complete with reusable dishware and utensils.

At Spinnaker, the efforts to reduce waste have paid off in a reduction in garbage service. In the past, the office had multiple garbage cans to get rid of weekly waste.

"We only need one can now," Sept said. "It saves about \$30 a month on garbage hauling."

Part of the waste reduction effort included finding a way to recycle the coffee pods used by Keurig coffee makers. Sept orders prepaid shipping containers from TerraCycle, a company that specializes in processing hard-to-recycle materials, and sends them back when they are full.

"The company recycles them so no waste is going to the landfill," said Sept. "We pay for it, but we feel it is worth it and we are doing everything we can to reduce waste."

More information about Spinnaker Pediatric Dentistry can be found at www.spinpedo.com; Mid-Valley Oral, Maxillofacial and Implant Surgery at www.midvalleyoms.com; and State Street Dental at www.hollychamberlaindentist.com.

To learn more about the EarthWISE program, go to www.mcEarthWISE.net or call 503-365-3188.