“Green” Hotels Association

GREENING NEWSLETTER

PARTNER MEMBER SUCCESS STORIES

This newsletter and each September/October issue in the future, will focus on success stories of GHA’s Partner Members. We want to share your successful and not-so-successful environmental stories with all members. You are all working very hard at being green, and it’ll be easier for all if we share information on what has worked for you as well as what has not. We know you’ll love reading these informative, interesting and very green stories! Here we go . . .

PROTECTING GREECE’S TURTLES

Maria Lougaris, Managing Director, Castelli Hotel, Zakynthos, Greece, castellihotel.com, 2-year GHA member

One of our most successful practices has been embraced by our guests, and involves Archelon, a very important voluntary non-profit organization. Located on the beautiful island of Zakynthos, we have the pleasure of being visited by the protected loggerhead sea turtles, Caretta caretta, which choose our island as the place to lay their eggs every year and hatch babies. The turtles are of great interest here, and the first marine park in Greece has been established on Laganas Bay, one of the longest Mediterranean beaches (9 km), to help protect this species. All motorized water sports have been stopped in the park for the last few years. Many newer regulations are also enforced, i.e., no flights over the park are permitted during some nighttime hours, some fantastic parts of the beach cannot be visited at all or only prior to 10 p.m., all sunbeds must be put away at night and no sun umbrellas are allowed to be pushed into the sand—all so the turtles can use the beach.

So, at our first opportunity, we always inform our guests about the Caretta caretta sea turtles and our marine park. It is vital for our island to preserve its nature and the species that choose Zakynthos to lay their eggs and spend their summers. From the beginning, we have been among the first businesses on the island to communicate facts and figures about Greece’s sea turtle protection by holding a weekly slide show for our guests in cooperation with the local non-profit.

In 2010 we began offering a free weekly presentation to our guests during the busiest weeks of the season. The program is very interesting and informs our guests of the marine park’s regulations along with the reasons why the Caretta caretta choose our island. So guests are informed and learn to respect the turtle as well as nature.

by 10 p.m. As a result, the guests become very interested and want to learn more about the Caretta caretta.

The Archelon volunteers’ presentation is usually in English and German. Hopefully, the Caretta caretta turtles will be “adopted” by the guests. The volunteers answer all the guests’ questions, and the guests have an opportunity to buy souvenirs supporting the Caretta caretta.

Prior to this presentation, or before coming to our hotel, guests may not be informed at all. This environmental educational activity is something different for guests in their week’s schedule, and fits in very nicely with our green program. Guests are content to enjoy this presentation on the hotel veranda poolside. The non-profit undoubtedly has much more accurate information than we would have on our own. A donation box and marine park leaflets are always available in our lobby. The guests can enjoy a new and different experience, which is a huge benefit to us, great for the island’s sustainability and benefits the Caretta caretta along with Archelon.

ENERGY AUDIT PAYS OFF

Robert W. Lenz, Innkeeper, Asa Ransom House, Clarence, NY, asaranrson.com, 8-year GHA member

NYSEG/RG&E recently offered a free energy audit to small businesses including Bob Lenz’s 10-room western NY Asa Ransom House. The audit revealed that the three 4’ and one 8’ ballasted fluorescent tube fixtures in his kitchen are energy wasters. All the other fixtures in the house already were fitted with CFLs. The utility is not only replacing the outdated fixtures and tubes, they will install the new equipment, remove the old and pay 70% of the cost! The property’s share of the cost is only $115, and the conversion is expected to save $310 each and every year going forward.

Be sure to contact your electric, gas and water utilities to ask if they’re offering help or rebates to reduce usage of resources and lower your bills.

WINDERMERE MANOR CATCHES THE BUZZ


When we learned about bee hives on the roof of an urban hotel, we began to investigate. As a result, we installed eight hives at the manor during 2010. The Windermere bees enjoy the advantages of an urban environment: no pesticides, fewer insecticides, a wider variety of plants and slightly warmer temperatures that give them a longer season.

We decided we wanted to share what we were learning, and chose to locate the hives on the ground where visitors can see...
them. The bees are taking an active educational role at the University of Western Ontario’s hospitality services, of which we’re a part. They’re doing a lot of tours, and have had a number of school classes visit.

We’ve built two-meter square raised beds for herbs and vegetables to be cultivated by staff at the hotel, cafe, research park and graphic services. The food will be used in the cafe; any extra will go to the London Food Bank.

About one-third of the food in grocery stores is directly influenced by bees and another third indirectly. Honey production is one part of Windermere Manor’s shift to produce more food on site. I’m a firm believer in the locavore (local food) movement, and we are now using the manor’s produce in our restaurant.

The flavor of honey depends in large part on the plants the bees pollinated. Watching them land with large globs of pollen, one can notice the colors depicting the source: almond from trees, black from plums and orange from dandelions—dandelions are like steak for bees. Visitors can sit on a bench and watch as the bees go in and out. It looks like sheer chaos, but each bee has a role, and you can begin to determine who does what as you observe them.

Each hive is named for a section of the university: Research Park, Great Hall, Windermere Hotel, etc. I am proud the Windermere Cafe hive has been the most productive so far. The university administration hive is the slowest—probably too many meetings!

The first Summer of having the bee hives proved to be a great success—we harvested approximately 400 lbs. of honey. We used the honey in our banquet and restaurant kitchens in place of sugar on certain menus. We sold 1 lb. jars of our honey to hotel guests, and we sold out immediately! We replaced VIP guest pillow chocolates with 1.5 oz. jars of honey. At the start of Summer 2011 we have grown from 8 hives to 22 hives. We’ve also added a special viewing hive, where one wall of the hive is see-through allowing all to see what’s going on in the hive.

We are now working with a local craft brewery to produce a draft honey ale—using our own honey of course! We expect the ale to become popular. We are also experimenting with the bee’s wax produced in our hives to use as furniture polish in the manor.

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GOLDEN ARROW’S GREEN ACHIEVEMENTS

Jennifer Holdener, Owner, Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort, Lake Placid, NY, goldenarrow.com, 5-year GHA member

A MAPLE SWEET PARTNERSHIP: Spring was arriving in Lake Placid, NY, and the 166-room Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort partnered with Adirondack Sugarhouse on a unique maple sugar program in conjunction with Cornell University. The maple sugar program brings maple sugar processing on site to the Golden Arrow and its restaurant, Generations. From maple trees that have been tapped throughout Lake Placid, sap is gathered, brought to the maple processing hut at the Golden Arrow and boiled down to syrup. It is one tasty experience, educational and fun for families and people of all ages.

“The on-premise maple syrup program is very unique. People in the community along with hotel guests can join in the process, and experience making maple syrup. “The learning opportunity by having the sugarhouse so accessible is immense. I was lucky enough to tap my first tree the other day. Most people know that maple syrup comes from maple trees, and they may have seen the buckets on trees, but few have tasted the maple water or have ever experienced the process,” said Jenn Holdener. “Today I got to sample some of the amazing menu items that Executive Chef David Hunt has put together at Generations featuring the Adirondack Sugarhouse maple syrup. This is tree-to-table fresh! Talk about reaping the rewards of your labor. This is a way for the Golden Arrow to bring nature and its products to our guests and the community in a sharing partnership,” Jenn said.

Buckets hold 3 gallons of sap each at more than 40 trees tapped around the Golden Arrow and throughout Lake Placid. Through the boiling process, it takes 40 gallons of maple sap to produce one gallon of maple syrup. Maple syrup is a totally natural product. From the time the sap is poured to the end result takes almost three hours. Once the syrup reaches 217º, the syrup is drawn off, filtered and then bottled. Several grades of syrup are produced from clear to dark amber. The darker the color of the syrup, the more intense the taste. The sap in the maple trees will continue to run through most of April. Following the run of the maple sap this year, the Golden Arrow will then tap Birch trees, making birch syrup.

To further promote the maple sugar and have the public sample maple in different forms, Chef David has designed a special maple menu with maple offerings throughout the day. On site people can taste the maple sap or maple water (tastes like sweetened water). Mike Farrell, Director of Cornell University’s Maple Syrup Research Station, said, “The maple water is delicious. I drink about a gallon of it a day.”

John Fremante, Director of Shipman Youth Center, and his team of volunteers help to gather the sap day and night bringing it to the on-site sugarhouse. Proceeds from the maple sap produced benefits the Shipman Youth Center, which serves 300 children in the Lake Placid region.

LOCAL HARVEST DINING: Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort began a series of Adirondack Harvest Dinners in their Generations Restaurant, which feature only local growers and suppliers, who also attend. Chef David connected in a collaborative effort with local farmers to have them grow extra herbs, spinach and Asian greens such as tot soi to sell exclusively to the restaurant. He also started buying meat from local producers, and half-pound burgers featuring grass-raised beef have been added to the menu.

To make salad dressing, David simply goes to the property’s green roof to clip herbs. Creating a local-foods brunch proved to be an easy endeavor for Hunt. A maple chevre blintz featured goat cheese and blueberries from nearby Peru. Asian greens, farm-fresh eggs and chilled melon soup were all sourced locally. Cherries featured in a dessert were picked only hours before becoming part of the meal.

For the producers, local-food events are a great way to get the word out about what they offer. The diner benefits from eating high-quality food. What a winner!

SOLAR SAVES: The newest addition to the Golden Arrow...
Lakeside Resort’s arsenal of green initiatives is the installation of solar thermal panels. Installed in July, these panels should produce enough heat to warm the indoor pool, conserving 31,600 kWh and saving $1,800 in fuel costs annually. Payback is expected in 8 years. Additional heat produced will be diverted to help heat the water for the north wing of the resort.

Since beginning their green initiative in 2005, The Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort has been a leader with creating environmentally friendly green programs. The Golden Arrow is the only property in the US to have achieved Audubon International’s 5-Green Leaf rating.

**USING WOOD FOR HEAT SAVES**

Charles P. Kinsman, CrystalSpringsMotel.com, 7-year GHA member

In December 2003 we installed a Central Boiler (centralboiler.com) outdoor wood furnace at our Towanda, PA property to be used for heating our entire 10-room motel plus for all of our hot water usage. Wood replaces natural gas as our heating fuel. We have always used only dead or storm-damaged trees on our property that were already down. We do not cut down any good trees. A thermostat on the boiler controls the heat by moving a plate back and forth to release more or less air to the firebox. Wood is added to the firebox about once a day—at most twice a day. Hot water from the outdoor boiler is piped in an underground loop to a boiler inside the property to heat the water that is used every day.

I am happy to report that since 2003 we have used less than 1% of what the average commercial natural gas customer uses measured in ccf’s each month! The boiler cost $8,400, and paid for itself in about 3 years. For eight months of the year, our gas bill averaged about $375/mo, and we now pay only the minimum bill each month. The boiler is used all summer to heat water for the property. Guests are very curious about the boiler, and their comments are always very positive.

We have about 70 acres from which we pull maple, oak, ash, hemlock, and pine downed wood. We’re able to burn the soft woods such as pine and hemlock because the boiler burns so clean. We’re proud and happy that we’ll continue to save about $3,000/yr for many years.

**CHARLESTON COLLECTS BAR SOAP**

Jenn Salegna, Green Team Leader, Harbourview Inn, Charleston, NC, harbouviewcharleston.com, 3-year GHA member

Harbourview Inn, Charleston, NC’s biggest success story is our participation in collecting used bars of soap to donate to the Global Soap Project (globalsoap.org/Hotels.html). After learning about their project at a South Carolina Green Hospitality Alliance meeting, we started collecting but realized that because we are a small property, it would take quite a while to collect enough to make an impact. Our management company encouraged us to spread the idea throughout all of our properties. During the past year almost all of Charleston's Hotels' properties have begun the collection process.

In addition to that success, we also started to work with the College of Charleston’s Hospitality Club. Through them we had a large group of willing students volunteer to collect soap from hotels from the whole Charleston area. Working with them has greatly expanded the reach of this project and the quantity of soap collected. In April, the founder of the Global Soap Project came to speak at the College of Charleston, and he took about 2,000 pounds of soap back to Atlanta! The soap is processed, recycled and reformed into bars and will be shipped to refugee camps in Africa.

The only downside to the project is our lack of space. Most hotels in Charleston are quite small, and don’t have much space for storage. The biggest issue we have is just finding space to store what we collect until there is enough to be picked up.

Harbourview Inn was recently awarded One Palmetto from the South Carolina Green Hospitality Alliance.

**SOLAR INVESTIGATION . . .**

. . . was Raakesh Patel, Owner and General Manager of Super 8 Ukiah’s goal because he was determined to reduce his $1,700 monthly electric bill. However, solar’s high cost and his not-so-appropriate roof space instead brought him to **induction lighting for his entire parking lot**. He learned online that induction self-ballasted 40-watt conversion units could replace his 175- and 250-watt metal halide wall-mounted “wall pack” type fixtures and provide sufficient parking lot lighting along with reducing the electricity bill by 12%. The bulbs have a 20-25 year life. When he learned of his electric utility’s available rebate, it was a done deal. Apperson Energy Management’s labor and materials conversion proposal for $4,564 and the utility company’s (about 60%) $2,500 rebate resulted in his out-of-pocket cost being $2,064 to replace 25 units. Energy savings is $142.50/mo or $1,710/yr, and calculates to a 1.17/yr payback, reducing the electricity bill by 15,500 kWh monthly and saving $1,710 every year after that.

Raakesh says, “I did not want to do the installation myself, but it is very easy. The bulbs can be purchased at innovativa-inductionlighting.com or many other sites for $49-80 each. Companies selling the induction lighting will guide you as to the type and size to purchase and how to install the equipment. To convert from metal halide, you’d simply open the casing, remove the bulb, capacitor, ballast, transformer, etc., screw in the self-ballasted induction bulb and hook up the one wire. It’s very simple.”

His continued solar investigation next brought him to installing an **electric vehicle charging station** along with two designated parking places for hybrid and low-emission vehicles. The AeroVironment (evsolutions.com) station cost about $1,500 while other materials, installation and permit fees cost about $1,200.

There is no charge for using the station as long as the driver is a guest at his Super 8. It can take 4 to 8 hours to completely charge a car, and his cost per full charge is about $2.50. Of course, most cars still have a considerable charge when they arrive.

The best part, Raakesh reports, is the excitement about having the station. From the front desk, he can see other guests’ excitement as they arrive and stop to look at the station, take photos with their phones, take the handle off and feel it, etc. Then there’s lots of conversation when they come inside. The
installation has brought lots of media and franchise attention as well. His is the first in the county, the first Super 8 installation and the first in the entire Wyndham Hotel Group of about 7,200 hotels in the portfolio worldwide bringing a "Wyndham Champion of Green" award. The frosting on this fine cake is a 30% tax credit and full depreciation the first year!

Raakesh is using energystar.gov/benchmark to rate the energy use of his building, which is currently 77% efficient. The 1981 54-room exterior-corridor building’s electricity and natural gas usage is 135 kBu per square foot per year. He had to metal-weather strip all the exterior doors to get to 77%. He’s now hired an engineer to verify his findings, and is working on applying for an Energy Star rating for the building.

One more hint Raakesh has is about timers. The long hours that the coffee brewer, as is in most hotel breakfast areas, is on bothered him, so he bought a $5 timer. Each day the timer turns on the brewer at 6 a.m. and off at 10 a.m. He also put a timer on the spa heater to start at 8:40 a.m., go off at noon, on again at 3:30 p.m. and off at 10 p.m., which very much satisfies the general usage of his guests.

Raakesh is very pleased and proud of his green accomplishments, as he well should be. Call him anytime in Ukiah, CA at 707/468-8181 or visit super8ukiah.com for more information.

BLUE PEARL’S TIMES ARE CHANGING!
Laura Rubio, Owner, Blue Pearl Suites, Playa del Carmen, Quintana Roo, Mexico, thebluepearl.com.mx

Our family has always recycled, we’re vegetarians for many years and we’ve always been involved in greening projects at school and in our community even though it’s not easy in Mexico. I used to carry my recyclables in the car trunk for days to find a place where I knew they would be recycled and not dumped as garbage. We finally found and supported a small women’s cooperative, and we paid them to come weekly to our school where the participating families gathered stuff to be recycled. It was a good win-win solution.

Later we moved to Playa del Carmen and built a small and charming apart hotel, the Blue Pearl Suites. It was completely natural for us to offer recycling facilities to our guests, use biodegradable cleaning products and support communities when buying handicrafts like hammocks, baskets and little henequen dolls, as well as organic produce for our gift baskets. No other hotels were doing it, but we were convinced it was necessary.

Again, it was not easy to find a proper way to dispose of the recyclables. Our place is small and things started to pile up. The employees did not understand why they had to do the extra work of sorting, cleaning and keeping all the recyclables which seemed to them to be garbage. When I tried to explain, I realized that it was not a part of their reality. They did not like biodegradable products either. People here are used to cleaning with Clorox and muriatic acid on a daily basis along with liquids having strong smells and colors. It required a lot of supervision and was frustrating for all. It didn’t help that guests weren’t interested. A few used the recycling bins, especially if coming from countries where it is a normal practice, but most just disposed of things as always, kept the lights and TV on and sometimes even left a faucet open.

Then two great things happened: I found “Green” Hotels Association on the web and started reading all I could on how to green a hotel and began to understand the importance of making it a team project. Instead of trying to push everybody to make changes they did not understand, we had to take time to talk about conservation, about what is happening in our area and how it is going to affect us, and to reconnect with our love for nature and beauty. We invited a biologist who came several times and talked about the precious species that live on our coasts and in our oceans, as well as the changes occurring around so much building and with little respect for the environment. We shared videos and stories, and our manager became the leader of the team. Together we wrote our “environmental policies” and mission statement. We decided on a list of short- and long-term actions, one of which was to choose organic ammenities. We and our guests are very pleased with yuc-herbal.com’s green products. Currently everything is running smoothly.

The other thing that happened is that the local government opened several collection centers that receive all recyclables, even electronics and used batteries! We still have to deliver them once a month, but it’s a start. From what I have learned, the most important step is creating a team, taking the time to listen, share and be inspired.

I was leaving the Blue Pearl the other day, and stopped for a moment because there was a guest standing at the reception area. I was just about to offer help when I realized she was reading our green policies which are posted on the wall. She took the time to read them carefully, and then headed to the beach. Times are changing!

WAIANUHEA EARNs Trip Advisor’s 2011
Randy Goff, Manager, Honokaa, HI, waianuhea.com, 3-year GHA member

Waianuhea Bed & Breakfast has been awarded TripAdvisor. com’s 2011 Certificate of Excellence. This distinction represents a remarkable achievement, and recognizes Waianuhea as a leader in its field for service, quality and value. TripAdvisor.com is the world’s largest travel site that assists customers in gathering travel information, posting reviews and opinions of travel related content and engaging in interactive travel forums. TripAdvisor.com awards this certificate to properties which consistently receive excellent ratings.

Waianuhea provides soothing, peaceful and luxurious accommodations with a sense of remote retreat and modern conveniences. Experience alternative energy in a whole new way. Our power is harnessed from the sun and our water is collected from pristine trade-wind showers. Nestled at 2,500’ elevation on the Hamakua Coast of Hawaii’s Big Island, they offer visitors a different perspective of life in Hawaii.

RELATIONSHIP WITH A GREEN NON-PROFIT
Rob LeVine, General Manager, Antlers at Vail, Vail, CO, antlersvail.com, 4-year GHA member

Most communities are home to at least one organization whose mission is simply to champion the green cause. In Vail, CO, it is the Eagle Valley Alliance for Sustainability (EVAS, eaglevallyalliance.org). EVAS provides resources and education to a network of hotels, as well as doing a myriad of other things. They promote green building processes, sponsor green seminars on a variety of topics, host recycling
In addition to participating in their hotel-specific efforts, we have struck an additional relationship particular to our property. As the “Official Hotel of EVAS” for the last five years, we’ve hosted all of their speakers or other notable guests at no charge on a space-available basis. We also offer our conference space to them at no charge for any of those events for which space is available.

Organizations like EVAS are notoriously underfunded, and for them to know that they almost always have free hotel rooms and free meeting space for any of their purposes makes their work much simpler.

The property, in turn, gets to promote Antlers at Vail Condominiums & Conference Center as the Official Hotel of EVAS, which brings Antlers some recognition. It also helps keep management and staff dedicated to the cause, which is a reward in itself.

THE TROUBLE WITH CHANGE
Greg Ziccardi, Sustainability Coordinator, Antlers at Vail, Vail, CO, antlersvail.com, 4-year GHA member

I was on the driving range the other day practicing new ideas in order to improve my golf game. “This works,” I thought to myself and I vowed to take it on the golf course. My game improved for the first few holes and then subtly I returned to the old habits. By the end of the day I was right back where I’ve always been. What does this golf analogy have to do with green hotel practices?

Old habits are hard to break, and new ideas, regardless of how fundamentally sound, are difficult to instill. I have found that this is especially true among employees who have been doing things the same way for as long as they have been employed here.

Since the early days, Antlers at Vail has been a leader in our community with regard to environmentally-friendly practices. Even before it was ordinary to recycle aluminum cans, we were doing it. We can all recall that even something as simple as that required a change in habit. Employees and guests considered it easier to just throw it in a trash can rather than put it in a separate plastic bag. The bag would get sticky and smelly. The bees would start hovering around, and then we had to travel to find someone that would take the mess off our hands.

Whether we are collecting recyclable material, turning off computers and monitors, shutting off lights or adjusting thermostats, there is and always will be some resistance from those that are expected to participate. I have realized, however, that with a little bit of determination and a lot of patience, new ideas ultimately become accepted practices. A good example is one of our more recent endeavors that has had better results than we anticipated.

Removing two-ounce amenity tubes that have always been placed in our guest condominiums with push-pump refillable containers meant a new responsibility for our housekeeping staff. We’re now buying 5 amenities in 1-gallon containers from ready-care.com, and found that we spent $17,000 in 2009 and will spend only $10,000 this year. Better yet, in 2009 we purchased 9,000 ounces of product and this year will purchase only 3,500 ounces—that’s huge for the environment!

We introduced the new procedure to staff by changing over only a dozen or so units at first. Refilling the containers with shampoo, hand soap, lotion, etc. when necessary ultimately became part of the routine. The new containers are now located in all of our 90 condominiums and common areas.

As a result, bulk purchasing has dramatically reduced the cost of product. Wasting product (as in half empty tubes) is a thing of the past, and 20,000 or so plastic tubes and half-used bars of soap are no longer being discarded or recycled each year.

We had a bit of trepidation in the beginning with regard to our guests’ impression of the new practice. But to our delight, the feedback has been celebrated. Requests to purchase these containers at check-out has caused us to inventory additional containers for resale at the front desk. As far as I know, we are the only property in the Vail Valley that has implemented this environmentally sound business practice. You’re welcome to me anytime to discuss this further at 970/476-2471.

Now, if I could only remember to waggle more on the tee box, keep that elbow in, eyes down, back straight, hands soft . . .

BAMBOO VS. ORGANIC COTTON?
Victoria Schomer, Owner, AshevilleGreenCottage.com, Asheville, NC, 6-year GHA member

We’ve had an interesting dilemma in replacing our linens. The first 100% bamboo sheets we bought 5 years ago were such great sheets. We were able to pull them right out of the dryer, put them on the beds and they’d look great. They lasted years, and were the silkiest ones we’ve ever had. But we could never find them again at an affordable price. Replace-ment bamboo sheets from Bed Bath & Beyond were not good, and I returned them very quickly. We have needed to stay in the $60-70 range for our queen-sized sheets.

Then I found the cotton/bamboo blend at Target, and they have been great. They’re sturdy, perfect right out of the dryer, feel great and are wearing really well. They have, however, gone up a bit in price since we bought them a few years back.

Organic cotton is the trickiest for us as they need extra work out of the dryer—some serious smoothing down when folding as the hems and headers get wrinkled and all out of shape, or ironing, which to me means more time and more electricity use. If you can deal with the extra work from some wrinkling, Coyuchi’s organic cotton sheets are just wonderful . . . soft, wonderful feel. I also discovered that washed organic cotton sheets hold less water, and so dry faster than bamboo sheets, and that’s an energy-saving thing!

We’ve used Coyuchi’s organic cotton towels for our entire 5 years now—still using some of the originals. Without being overly dense, which to me means more time in the dryer, they feel luxurious and wick away moisture off our bodies really well. Coyuchi is a wonderful company . . . longest time in the organic cotton world, and delivering the best organic cotton...
products . . . and great, green committed people.

And, I love our home cleaning brew of 50% water, 50% vinegar and about 10 drops of tee-tree oil or grapefruit seed extract (also an antiseptic). It works well, leaves a fresh scent in the air and is usually well tolerated by our chemically-sensitive guests.

**MADDEN’S GREENS GOLF**

Kathy Reichenbach, Marketing Director, Madden’s on Gull Lake, maddens.com, 4-year GHA member

Madden’s on Gull Lake, Brainerd, MN, is a 287-room golf resort and conference facility with one 9-hole and three 18-hole golf courses located on 1,000 acres and a mile of Gull Lake shoreline. Madden’s has turned back the clock on golf course management in an effort to promote better environmental practices. “Our goal is to mimic the conditions of the sandy Scottish links land where golf began and bent grasses naturally thrived where crops would not. Our turf maintenance is a collection of older ideas, newer techniques and basic scientific principles that produce a playing surface and not a crop,” says Golf & Grounds Superintendent Scott Hoffman.

The Pine Beach East Golf Course now includes more naturalized areas where we let the fescues grow naturally. This includes our grass bunker mounds, some tee banks and some out-of-play rough areas. The total acreage will be approximately 5-7 acres. These areas are not mowed or fertilized and will receive minimal irrigation. We will save approximately 4-5 man-hours/week and about 4-5 gallons of fuel/week as well as cut down our irrigation window. We think it will help add character and definition to the golf course as well. Savings to date (April-August) is approximately $5,000.

74 acres of land was donated to the City of East Gull Lake for the East Gull Lake Airport and easements for miles of bike trails.

Madden’s was awarded the Minnesota Office of Tourism’s Sustainable Tourism Award for their development and implementation of their Green Program. To date Madden’s Green Program has realized a 10% savings resort-wide in gas, electric and garbage fees.

**RD FRESH’S ECOVISIONARY SUCCESS STORY!**

We’re happy to report that The Green Business League awarded their 2011 ECOVISIONARY AWARDS to some industry giants including Home Depot, Hanes and Metlife for their forward thinking green solutions in reducing their impact on the planet. Stepping up to the podium to receive an award along with those giants was the newest and smallest guy on the block, ALLY MEMBER RD FRESH. RD Fresh’s truly unique, green, zeolite-based, food preservation, energy-saving technology reduces food waste and energy usage more affordably than ever before. While the others all make use of some very high tech solutions to the problems they face, RD FRESH has found a completely passive, 100% green, zero technology, zero footprint solution that provides clients an immediate Return On Investment.

Steve Gerson, owner of RD FRESH, a company that is re- seriously working towards reducing food waste and energy usage while providing clients with sustainable solutions.

Once again the United States is experiencing record hot temperatures this summer, which means that electric grids are working harder than ever to provide the energy needed to keep commercial buildings and their employees cool. And, as businesses try to keep costs down, the increased use of air conditioners continues to be a drain on the bottom line.

However, in its LEED Platinum-certified building in Newtown Square, PA, SAP has installed a system that uses “outside the box” thinking to decrease costs, relieve pressure on the local grid and save energy.

That's where making the ice comes in. Hidden away in the utilities area of SAP’s US headquarters sit 16 giant ice cooling tanks. During off-peak electricity hours (usually overnight) SAP purchases energy to make and fill the containers with ice. During the heat of the following day, the melting ice chills piping that feeds the air in the ventilation system, passively cooling down the building.

Not only is SAP America (software) helping its local utility manage its resources more wisely by purchasing energy during off-peak hours, mitigating the risks of a brown-out during peak usage times, SAP also saves 35% in electricity costs through the use of its ice cooling systems. Running the ice melt during the peak periods of the day greatly reduces the mechanical cooling kilowatts used during that time period. It’s a triple-win for SAP, the local utility and the environment.


Footage and high-res photos of the building are available at www.sap-tv.com/stockfootage. You can also watch a short video that showcases the cooling tanks there.

**WELCOME COGENRA SOLAR!**

ALLY MEMBER Cogenra Solar technology provides solar electricity (PV) AND solar hot water in a single solution. Our solar cogeneration technology meets hotels’ hot water needs such as cleaning, showers, laundry, food service and pool heating with renewable energy WHILE lowering utility bills and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. And with numerous solar rebates, incentives and financing options available, going solar has never been easier and safer.

In a calculation we did for a sample $500,000 installation,
Cogenra also offers no-risk Power Purchase Agreements and leases that require no upfront expense, debt or ongoing maintenance costs. To see if your property will benefit from solar, contact Natasha Dolginsky at natasha.dolginsky@cogenra.com, call 850/230-3429 or visit cogenra.com to learn more about solar cogeneration!

HELLO NATIONAL ALLERGY!

ALLY MEMBER National Allergy is a company offering “healthier living” solutions by providing eco-friendly products that are free of harsh chemicals and fragrances. The company was originally conceived in 1988 as an allergy source for severe allergy/asthma sufferers and quickly became the leading referral company for more than 10,000 doctors nationwide.

National Allergy would like to extend their expertise to offer your guests a healthier and more restful experience while staying at your property. With 1 in 4 individuals suffering from moderate to severe allergies, National Allergy can recommend some simple changes you can make to your guest rooms to reduce the allergen triggers for sensitive visitors. From their line of Quality Protective Bedding for dust mite and bed bug protection, to their lines of eco-friendly personal care products, National Allergy has you covered.

All of their protective bedding is manufactured in Georgia, USA to ensure the highest quality possible. Because they do not off-shore any products, National Allergy can offer much quicker delivery times at competitive pricing. As an employee-owned company (ESOP), National Allergy looks forward to helping you with your “healthier living” solutions. To learn more, call David Thomson at 877/627-8775 or visit nationalallergy.com TODAY!

THE MOST EFFICIENT ENERGY STAR

Energy Star is an international standard for energy efficient consumer products originating in the United States of America. It was first created as a United States government program during the early 1990s, but Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan and the European Union have also adopted the program. Devices carrying the Energy Star logo, such as computer products and peripherals, kitchen appliances, buildings and other products, generally use 20% to 30% less energy than required by federal standards. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and US Department of Energy announced for the first time products recognized as the most energy-efficient in their categories among those that have earned the Energy Star label. This pilot program is part of Energy Star’s overall commitment to protect people’s health and the environment by encouraging energy efficiency. The Most Efficient initiative also continues Energy Star’s work to provide consumers with the best efficiency information so they can make investments that will lower their energy bills and environmental impact. The new designation of Most Efficient aims to provide all manufacturers with an incentive for greater product energy efficiency while providing consumers new information about the products that comprise the top tier in the categories.

Products that receive the Most Efficient designation demonstrate exceptional and cutting-edge efficiency performance that environmentally minded consumers and early adopters value. The Most Efficient recognition will represent approximately the top five percent of models on the market in the following categories: clothes washers, heating and cooling equipment, televisions and refrigerator-freezers.

The following Energy Star partners’ products are among the first to be recognized as Most Efficient: Electrolux Major Appliances, Sears’ Kenmore, LG, Samsung, Best Buy’s Insignia Brand, Panasonic, Nordyne and Rheem. Later this year, EPA will initiate a process to consider additional product categories for potential inclusion in 2012.

Consumers will be able to identify Most Efficient products on the Energy Star website and in stores by looking for the Most Efficient designation. In addition to meeting established performance requirements, products must also be Energy Star qualified and certified by an EPA-recognized certification body. Manufacturers are encouraged to submit products that meet the requirements to EPA for recognition.

The new rating system is attempting to distinguish the top performers in terms of energy efficiency as well as various environmental use factors such as water consumption. An example for a clothes washer is as follows.

Product must meet applicable Modified Energy Factor (MEF) and Water Factor (WF) requirements for a washer bigger than 2.5 cubic feet. MEF > or = 3.0  WF > or = 3.3

For further information:  http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/adm-press.nsf/0/26E61B6A9A9D8C2D852578CD0057A2AA

WASTING WATER IS WEIRD

The recently launched public service campaign called Wasting Water is Weird’s goal is water conservation in a way that’s accessible to the mainstream consumer by encouraging them to take steps in their daily lives in a way that will actually sink in. Studies reveal that what consumers say and what they actually do are very different things.

They say it’s important to conserve water, but they don’t want to sacrifice comfort or convenience to do so. We also know that consumers respond more favorably to a “don’t waste” rather than a “save” message. So here’s a positive, humorous campaign delivered by a guy named Rip the Drip, who shows up just when using water becomes wasting water—and that’s when things get weird.
The campaign is already running online and will soon launch on television. You can check out the videos and meet Rip at wastingwaterisweird.com, go to Facebook and “Like” Rip the Drip, and even follow him on Twitter @RipTheDrip. Rip will not only change the conversation about water conservation, but will drive real behavior change among those who may have never considered that wasting water really is weird.

You know that you should take shorter showers, turn off the tap when brushing your teeth, and run full loads in the dishwasher. But, tell the truth . . . are you? Perhaps the next time you’re wasting water Rip the Drip just may show up.

The public service campaign Wasting Water Is Weird sponsored by Bosch, Kohler, Lowes and P&G is hoping to make you feel just a little creepy when you’re letting the water run. At the center of Wasting Water Is Weird are three videos featuring “Rip the Drip.” He shows up just when someone is wasting water. See for yourself just how weird it gets by watching the 3 short videos on Facebook.

Not sure about you, but we’re all going to be extra vigilant and make sure we’re not wasting any water. We don’t want to be alone with Rip! And after you’ve had a good laugh, as Wasting Water Is Weird reminds us . . .

Water is one of our most precious resources. We use it every single day, but we don’t have to waste it. That’s just weird. So check out the rest of the wastingwaterisweird.com site to find all kinds of simple things you can do to help conserve water. Learn even more at epa.gov/WaterSense/index.html.

**THE PEDAL-POWERED HOTEL**

A green hotel in Copenhagen is claiming a world first by using guests on exercise bikes to generate electricity. Bright idea . . . an iPhone attached to the handlebars shows how much power is being fed into the hotel’s system. Forget solar panels and wind turbines, a hotel that bills itself as one of the greenest in the world has found a new source of renewable energy—its guests.

Those staying at the 366-room Crown Plaza Copenhagen Towers will be encouraged to head down to the gym to spend time on its new fleet of electricity-generating exercise bikes.

The bikes have iPhones mounted on the handlebars which monitor how much power is being produced and fed into the main supply of the hotel. Any guest producing 10 watt hours or more will be rewarded with a free meal. The scheme is a pilot project, and if successful, could be rolled out to all 21 Crowne Plaza hotels in the UK.

“The electric bikes offer our guests the chance to get fit and help power the hotel at the same time,” said Allan Agerholm, the hotel’s general manager. “It will be interesting to see how many guests take part and how much electricity we generate.”

Getting the free meal is surprisingly easy. The hotel’s calculations suggest one guest cycling at 30 kmph for an hour will produce around 100 watt hours of electricity, meaning that reaching the threshold for the meal should take only six minutes.

Critics might argue that even those who cycle for a full hour will be making a rather token contribution to the energy use of a huge city hotel—100 watt hours of energy is only enough to light a single 100 watt bulb for one hour. However, the hotel counters that it wanted the target to be achievable so as many people as possible take part.

The hotel, which opened in November 2009, is attempting to become carbon neutral. It has EU Green Building and Green Key certification and uses a groundwater-based cooling and heating system, low energy lighting and hand dryers and is covered in solar panels on its south-facing aspects. So will its latest scheme catch on at other hotels around the world? “Realistically, this isn’t a practical way of generating a useful amount of energy, but I certainly wouldn’t criticize it,” said Alex Randall, a spokesman for the Centre for Alternative Technology. “As a lesson, and a means of public engagement, it’s excellent—if you sit someone on a bike, pedaling hard, and show them they are only generating enough to power one light bulb or TV, is makes them appreciate how difficult energy is to produce, and therefore why we should be careful not to waste it.”

http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2010/apr/14/hotel-with-electricity-generating-exercise-bikes
http://www.egreenrevolution.com/default.aspx

**Final Words . . .**

Thousands have lived without love, none without water.

W. H. Auden