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Dallas becomes the first major city in the nation to launch a comprehensive Web site dedicated to environmental issues

www.GreenDallas.net reflects the City's commitment to "green" initiatives

Dallas, TX - Dallas officials today officially launched www.GreenDallas.net, a new Web site dedicated exclusively to green initiatives. With the launch, Dallas becomes the first major city in the nation with a comprehensive stand-alone Web site devoted to this important topic.

Visitors to the site will find tips on how to save energy and water; recycle; clean the air; and have a green home and lawn. Information about air quality, water, energy, land use, green buildings, and the City's environmental accomplishments and awards, are also prominently featured.

City officials are encouraging Dallas residents to make a commitment to "go green" and play an active role in building a greener City. "People understand how important it is to address the environmental issues, and they also understand that that's the way to continue to build Dallas as a great place to live and a great place to do business," said Mayor Tom Leppert. "The City of Dallas is proud to be building a greener city."

Dallas has taken a leadership role in developing green initiatives, according to Director of Environmental Quality Laura Fiffick. "The City has to be an environmental leader because we need to show our residents that we are committed to conserving water, to recycling and to reducing emissions if we expect residents to do these things," she said.

"The Web site not only shows what the City has done, it also highlights all the environmental initiatives that we have going on. It's really a one-stop shopping center for residents who want to become environmental leaders in their own community," Fiffick said.

Long before there was a "green movement," the City of Dallas was taking steps to protect the environment. The City purchased its first alternative fueled vehicle more than 15 years ago, in 1992. Ten years later, Dallas was the first City in Texas to use biodiesel.

Since then, the City's green fleet has continued to grow.

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Today, Dallas is proud to have nearly 2,000 cars and trucks (41 percent of its fleet) running on alternative fuels or a hybrid mix - the largest fleet in Texas and one of the largest in the U.S. Dallas was ranked fifth out of the 50 largest cities in the nation for its Alternative Fueled City Fleets by SustainLane, an online media company empowering people, businesses, and government to go green.

The City has emerged as an environmental leader in many areas including its decision to purchase 40 percent of its power in 2008 from renewable energy sources, primarily wind.

And Dallas has made strides in improving air quality.

Dallas is the only city in the nation to partner with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Sustainable Skylines, a pilot program focusing on improving air quality by reducing emissions. If this initiative is successful, it will likely become a model for other cities across the nation.

Dallas was also the first municipal government in the region to install ozone monitors; doing so before the Clean Air Act mandated such action. In October 2005, the EPA deemed the Dallas "one of the best places to commute," and praised the City for its efforts to reduce ground-level ozone.

"Dallas has been a leader among cities and stands ready to be a model for the rest of the nation," said EPA Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene. "We hope more cities across the nation will take up the challenge of making cleaner air and healthier communities a reality."

The City has embraced the Environmental Management System (EMS), enabling the setting of environmental goals; tracking regulatory compliance and creating initiatives to improve overall environmental performance. Many of the new initiatives are the result of the system's broad-based approach to environmental issues. The EMS empowers every City employee to identify problems and take personal responsibility for smart solutions.

"An EMS is not a static device, but rather a living and dynamic tool designed to allow for gradual changes to be made over long periods of time in order to achieve realistic and measurable goals," said City Manager, Mary K Suhm.

Besides focusing on air quality, Dallas has also built an impressive list of accomplishments supporting the environment, while also setting standards for the future:

Water Conservation

Through its Five-Year Strategic Plan on Water Conservation the City has significantly reduced per capita water consumption. Dallas' conservation program includes leak detection, main repair, audits of irrigation systems at City facilities, educational initiatives, and a Xeriscape program. In April 2005, DWU completed a pipeline system that sends treated wastewater from one of its treatment plants directly to the links at Cedar Crest Golf Course. In 2005 alone, this new system irrigated Cedar Crest with 81.7 million gallons of treated wastewater, leaving 81.7 million gallons of drinking water now available for use by local residents.

Energy Efficiency

Dallas was recognized by the State Energy Conservation Office and the Texas Energy Partnership for outstanding achievements in energy efficiency. The recognition is the result of the City's efforts to find creative ways to save energy, as shown by these examples:

- The City has reduced its overall energy use by 5 percent for each of the last five years by using lighting upgrades, solar panels, high efficient heating and air conditioning systems and automated building controls. Nearly half of the street lights in Dallas are now lit by renewable "green power."
- Regular incandescent traffic signals cost Dallas about \$2.1 million annually in electricity costs. By converting to energy-efficient LED traffic lights at approximately 11,000 City intersections, energy consumption has been cut by 14.5 million kilowatt hours per year, equaling 1.56 million in savings. The new lights save taxpayers' money, the LED signals are easier to see, and both make driving safer.
- Between 3 and 4 million cubic feet of methane gas is captured every day at the McCommas Bluff Landfill. The gas is then purified and sold to Atmos Energy for use as "green fuel" - heating homes and businesses in place of more costly, deep well-drilled natural gas. Last year, 994.7 million cubic feet of renewable energy was captured from the Landfill – enough to heat every home in University Park, Highland Park and Duncanville for an entire year. Over the next three to five years, the City plans to increase its capture of methane by as much as 300 percent. If this much methane is either transformed into or swapped for electricity, managers believe it can save the City between 30 and 50 percent of its current electricity purchases.

Recycling and Waste Reduction

The City of Dallas recycling program received an Environmental Vision Award from the North Texas Corporate Recycling Association. The Environmental Vision Awards recognize area businesses, government entities, schools, civic groups and individuals for outstanding environmental contributions and positive environmental impacts.

The "Too Good to Throw Away" recycling program will enter its first full year in FY 2007-08. Residents have doubled their curbside recycling pounds from 9,680 tons in FY 2005-06 to 20,149 tons in FY 2006-07 generating \$948,156 in revenues. The City's goal is to increase that figure to 35,000 tons in FY 2007-08 and 45,000 tons by 2011, with a residential participation rate of at least 50 percent of households.

Green Buildings, Infrastructure and Land Management

All City municipal golf courses have received Certificates of Achievement from the Audubon Society for meeting standards of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. The certificates recognize the City's golf links for their conservation and preservation programs, including wildlife and habitat management and integrated pest management practices.

Green buildings are designed to use at least 30 percent less energy and water than conventional buildings, making them cheaper to operate. The City recognized these advantages and has embraced the green building practice.

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In 2003, Dallas started its Green Building Program, with construction of the Jack Evans Police Headquarters. The program requires all municipal buildings over 10,000 square feet to meet the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Criteria. These facilities are built specifically to save energy, water and other resources.

“Designing a building that uses less energy and less water lowers operating costs and also allows us to receive the environmental benefits of having a green building,” said Assistant City Manager Jill A. Jordan.

All new city buildings over 10,000-square feet are being constructed according to standards set by the LEED program. And the buildings are also constructed to a silver standard or higher.

The City has completed or will complete more than 25 green facilities through 2010, including 10 libraries, seven police and fire stations, a cultural center, three recreation centers, three service centers, an animal services center and shelter, and a homeless assistance center.

A cousin to the Green Building Program is Dallas’ Green Renovation Program. The idea is to replace regular roofs with new “cool” roofs that promote energy savings. Buildings also are being retrofitted with high-efficiency heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, and lighting systems.

With Energy Performance Contracting, the City improves existing buildings without draining local tax revenues. It’s all done by using a mix of energy conservation measures and more efficient heating systems. These savings in turn pay for building upgrades. At Dallas City Hall, a comprehensive energy project has resulted in annual savings of about \$1.49 million.

In late 2005, the mayor created the Urban Forest Advisory Committee and has since received a grant to establish a City forester position. At golf courses and other parks, the City has planted more than 1,500 trees, which will create shade and lower ambient temperatures, thus lowering ozone levels.

With these accomplishments, the City will leverage its commitment to green construction in an effort to encourage the private sector to follow suit in commercial and residential construction.

Green Purchasing Policy

Through the City’s Green Purchasing Policy, 20 percent of office supplies purchased are made from recycled materials. Here are a few of the City’s recycling achievements:

- Over the past six years, the Dallas Zoo’s composting strategy has saved more than \$35,000- another example of teamwork and employee creativity paying off environmentally and financially. In 2005, the Dallas Zoo grounds manager developed a simple system for recycling “green” waste such as grass and tree limbs. Instead of paying to dispose of these materials, zoo personnel run them through a chipper and turn the output into rich compost, which eventually goes back onto zoo grounds. Each year, this program saved taxpayers about \$3,700 in dump fees and another \$2,080 that wasn’t spent buying compost.

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- The Dallas Zoo recycled 69,408 pounds of materials equivalent to: 560 trees, 13,187 gallons of oil 144,270 kilowatt hours of electricity and 242,900 gallons of water - a saving of 115 cubic yards of landfill space saved.
- At the police gun range, the staff not only recycles shell casings and shotgun shells in 55-gallon drums, but they also save their targets - those sinister silhouettes of gun-toting "bad guys" and recycles thousands of the bullet-riddled cardboard posters.

"As you can see, City employees are making Dallas greener every day," said Suhm. "Without their efforts, leadership and innovative ideas, none of these accomplishments would be possible. These dedicated employees are thinking outside the box and our planet is reaping the rewards."

Corporate Support

The support of the corporate community in the Green Dallas initiative is vital to its success, and Dallas has been fortunate to have various organizations share the City's environmental philosophy. A donation from Green Mountain Energy Company is making it easier for residents to get involved in the green movement with the donation of 5,000 CFL bulbs.

"Green Mountain Energy Company is pleased to participate in the Dallas Sustainable Skylines Initiative and help improve Dallas' air quality," said Green Mountain Energy Company CEO Paul Thomas. "As members of the Dallas community, we recognize our responsibility to be good environmental stewards, and we look forward to working with the entire community to build a sustainable Dallas."

Dallas Fire-Rescue will distribute the CFL bulbs as part of the smoke detector replacement program. When residents call 3-1-1 to replace their smoke detectors they can also receive a free CFL bulb.

Another company making an in-kind contribution to the Green Dallas initiative is Clear Channel Inc. The company has donated billboards to spread the message about how Dallas residents can help build a greener City.

"Clear Channel Outdoor is standing behind the City of Dallas and its efforts to go green," said Clear Channel Dallas/Fort Worth Division President Jake Smith. "The effort the City has put forth so far, from air quality to recycling are nothing short of remarkable, and Clear Channel wants to help get this information out to all the citizens of Dallas."

For more information on City of Dallas green initiatives and programs visit www.GreenDallas.net.

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