

Lecture Hall

Session Abstracts

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)
72nd Annual Educational Conference & Exhibition

Sustainability

Sunday, June 22

1:00 – 1:50pm

Developing a Sustainable Community: First Steps

Nancy Nevil, Director of Sustainability and Environmental Services, City of Plano, TX

In order to advance the work of sustainability throughout the City, the Sustainability Director works with a leadership team and four committees representing city departments critical to the success of this program. The four city committees (Green Building, Resource Conservation, Education & Community Outreach, and Finance & Capital Appropriations) ensure the city moves along parallel paths in expediting the identification and implementation of projects having the greatest potential for positive environmental impact.

A professional market research firm was hired to develop, conduct, and analyze surveys aimed at assessing what consumers currently know about energy generation, energy-efficient practices and their connection to greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, recycling, water conservation, stormwater pollution, composting and global warming.

The results were incorporated into final design of messages and materials for each intended audience—residential, commercial and municipal departments.

Live Green in Plano (LGIP) was chosen as the overarching identifier for all environmental programming and the following public awareness campaign objectives were identified:

- define what it means to be “green”,
- explain why living green is important,
- build awareness of the brand Live Green in Plano (LGIP),
- promote attendance at the LGIP Expo, and
- increase Web visits and participation in city programs and classes.

The first year public awareness campaign, which was kicked off by Mayor Evans in January 2007, was “The Year of Living Green.” The Mayor issued a bold challenge to make Plano a community leader for green practices throughout the State. In subsequent weeks and months, the following programs, policies, and activities were developed and implemented:

- www.livegreeninplano.com,
- Live Green in Plano (LGIP) Expo,
- LEED Certification Policy for all city facilities,
- Mobile Source Pollution Reduction Policy,
- Environmental Purchasing Policy,
- LGIP Volunteer Program,
- Green Team Employee Program,
- Regional Collaborative Green Building Roundtable,
- LGIP Environmental Calendar, and

- “Get on the Bus” tours.

In the first nine months, the city’s internal recycling diversion rate went from 23% to 35%, saving the City approximately \$900 every month. The first Expo was attended by 7,500 people and the second Expo was attended by 12,000. Six city facilities are being constructed as LEED Certified buildings and the city is pursuing its first LEED Existing Building Certification.

2:00 – 2:50pm

How “Green” Is That Product?

Jane M. Wilson, MPH, Director of Standards, NSF International, MI

Manufacturers of products used in offices, schools, hospitals, hotels, and other commercial and institutional environments are responding to emerging drivers for “green” products that include:

- federal, state, and local environmentally preferable purchasing and procurement practices;
- Growing influence of the U.S. Green Building Council and its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building standards;
- Demand and interest for sustainable products from the architecture, interior design, and retail communities; and
- Consumer awareness of environmental issues and willingness to pay for products that are identified as sustainable.

As an accredited third-party testing and certification organization, NSF International (NSF) has established several programs to provide public and private organizations and consumers with the assurance that environmental attributes have been independently verified. NSF is a licensed certifying body for US EPA’s WaterSenseSM program, a public-private partnership aimed at promoting the market for water-efficient products and services. In the area of green chemistry, NSF is a partner in the U.S. EPA Design for the Environment (DfE) formulator program, providing third-party reviews of cleaning product formulations against DfE defined criteria for aquatic toxicity and biodegradability. NSF also provides service to the GreenBlue Institute CleanGredientsTM program, which evaluates ingredients in institutional and industrial cleaning products against the U.S EPA DfE program requirements.

As an ANSI-accredited standards development organization, NSF International is also working with stakeholders in the textile, carpet and rug, office furniture, and resilient flooring sectors on sustainability standards. By working with multiple industries that affect the built environment, NSF promotes the sharing of best sustainability practices across its standards committees, so that the standards are developed in a consistent and cohesive manner. Having attributes that define and identify sustainable products in the form of consensus American National Standards will assist both manufacturers and end users in communicating and understanding environmental and sustainability related product benefits.

3:00 – 3:50pm

Environmental Issues for Hospitals—Get Compliant as You “Go Green!”

Geoff Glanders, President, August Mack Environmental, Inc., IN

Recently, there has been a tidal wave of interest from hospitals in joining the “Going Green” initiative spearheaded initially by various environmental groups. The effort to “Go Green” is beginning to have an impact in the healthcare industry nationwide as facilities strive to achieve LEED certification. Numerous facilities are modeling their innovative LEED approach after Oregon’s Providence Newberg Medical Center, which was the first hospital to receive a Gold certification. Additionally, the “Going Green” initiative can help hospitals lower their energy bills,

reduce wastes, improve indoor air quality, and provide a healthier healing environment for patients.

Meanwhile, the EPA is focusing on healthcare facilities as one of its major compliance enforcement initiatives. Over the last five years, compliance inspections and enforcement have increased at all types of health care facilities. In New England alone, the EPA has uncovered more than 1,100 violations amounting to \$9M in penalties. However, the EPA has been willing to waive a number of these fines if a hospital conducts a voluntary audit or enters into an agreement to conduct one in the near future. The benefit of conducting a voluntary environmental audit allows the hospital to not only identify and address the areas of deficiency at their facilities, but it also can educate the hospital staff on common hospital violations so they can be proactive in addressing these areas of concern.

Ultimately, a hospital's effort to "Go Green" can bring a tremendous amount of goodwill to facility since it is willing to invest the time and resources in the process. However, hospitals should be careful to not put this goodwill at risk by neglecting the ongoing environmental compliance responsibilities of the hospital's day-to-day operations.

4:00 – 4:50pm

NEHA's Excellence in Sustainability Program

Thomas R. Gonzales, MPH, REHS, Resource Protection Programs Manager, Clark County Public Health, WA

NEHA believes that protecting our natural environment is critical to the health and prosperity of our communities and country. The mission of NEHA's sustainability program is to promote partnerships to reduce green house gas emissions, and the use of reusable products through interdisciplinary environmental sustainability in the context of educational services to the wider NEHA community. NEHA will meet this commitment through fostering community involvement and leadership in education, research and sustainable management practices. Attendees will learn about the following program accomplishments over the past year:

- Sustainability Library Resources Web page;
- Selection of the 2008 NEHA Excellence in Sustainability Award;
- NEHA's Operational and Personnel "Green" Practices (recycling, *JEH*, communication, banking, and "greening" of the AEC); and
- NEHA's position paper on global climate change.