

The Year in Review – EcoStar Accomplishments during 2006

Workshops

Hosted six workshops, which drew an average of twelve attendees

Topics covered:

- Energy Conservation
- Cooperative Purchasing
- Water Conservation
- EcoStar Nuts and Bolts
- Ensuring Environmental Compliance
- Sustainability in the Small Office

During the last few months we expanded related marketing efforts to include listing in calendars in the Worcester Business Journal and Ayer Public Spirit, and announcements through MassDevelopment's business breakfasts and newsletter to complement the Chamber's promotion to its members. We will continue the expanded marketing in 2007.

Members

Enrolled five new members in 2006; there are now twenty-one EcoStar members.

During the second half of the year, the Chamber and the EcoStar representatives increased their marketing activities to make more businesses aware of the program. These efforts will be further expanded in 2007.

A meeting of purchasing agents was organized to explore opportunities to gain cost savings through joint-purchasing efforts. There was a productive exchange of information and the group expressed interest in continuing this dialogue and involving additional businesses. We will explore ways to continue to promote this networking opportunity.

Program Benefits

Member benefits were expanded to include:

- "EcoStar Participant" designation to provide recognition benefits to those who are making progress toward "Achiever" status.
- Two hours of dedicated technical assistance per month to assist with members' efforts to decrease their environmental impacts.
- Expanded business networking and mentoring opportunities by designating time during workshops and adding quarterly Roundtable events to promote the exchange of information and facilitate partnerships.
- A bi-monthly electronic newsletter to keep members informed of announcements, information exchanged during workshops, and upcoming activities.
- A resource library that provides support materials related to the EcoStar Standards.
- The EcoStar Exchange, an online tool that members can use to facilitate the exchange of reusable materials. This service will also be connected with non-profits and schools in the Devens area.

Grants

DEC received a technical assistance grant from DEP to evaluate the feasibility of a permanent collection facility for residential household hazardous products and wastes (used oil, electronics) from businesses classified as a very small quantity generator. The facility would be available to

residents and small businesses of Devens and surrounding communities. The evaluation will be done in partnership with the DPW and the North Central Regional Solid Waste Cooperative.

The DEC also received a recycling outreach toolkit through a DEP grant award, valued at \$250.

Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust awarded a \$40,000 grant (over two years) to the DEC to support the development of the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center, which will further expand the benefits provided through the EcoStar program with increased educational and technical support services.

Associations, Partnerships

The range of assistance, expertise, and education that EcoStar can provide to the local businesses was expanded as a result of new partnerships that were established in the second half of the year.

Devens joined ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability's Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. This association will provide tools and outreach materials that can be shared with community leaders and businesses to raise awareness around GHG emission reduction strategies.

The EPA's Assistance in Pollution Prevention division, which manages several voluntary initiatives designed to help businesses improve their environmental performance. Several representatives will be invited to lead workshops and related activities in 2007.

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) works with businesses to facilitate the adoption of lean manufacturing processes that improve their efficiencies.

A DEP Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) now participates in EcoStar and acts as an intermediary that connects the DEC and businesses with DEP programs and support services.

DEP's Commercial Waste group was updated on our activities and will look for grant and program services that can help support our waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

Office of Technical Assistance (OTA), a team under the EOEA, helps businesses eliminate the use of toxic materials. They would also like to provide regular brown bag sessions on compliance issues.

Top Goals For 2007

- Offer ten workshops/roundtables, an increase of four events.
- Launch online services: website, members only dialogue, Exchange.
- Expand waste reduction services and increase participation.
- Increase program activity, expand EcoStar membership by 10, celebrate first Achiever.
- Build framework for the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center.

Devens Eco-Efficiency Center

Mission: To create a resilient and stable business community with companies that are ecologically sensitive and economically viable for Devens.

EcoStar program activities will be expanded to include more educational forums, facility audits, technical assistance, and waste management services.