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# Closing the Circle News

The Federal government, the nation's largest employer, is certainly on-the-go: the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimated that in 2007, an astounding \$14.8 billion was spent on Federal travel. This number was up more than \$700 million from 2006. The Department of Defense spent the most of all agencies and was responsible for \$543 million of the \$745 million spending increase last year. Dissecting a few large pieces of the \$14.8 billion, agencies spent \$3.5 billion on flights, \$2.5 billion on hotel rooms, and \$411 million on car rentals.

These staggering figures are only one piece of the total cost associated with Federal travel. Considering all of the miles traveled in personal vehicles or taxis to and from airports, the miles traveled on planes, car rental miles traveled, and hotel night stays, there is a real environmental and energy cost as a consequence of Federal travel. Using one of the widely available carbon calculators online, two-roundtrip flights from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles, CA, generate almost 5 metric tons of carbon dioxide. According to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) *Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator*, available online at <http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/calculator.html>, it would take 128 tree seedlings grown for 10 years to sequester the carbon emissions from the four legs of two cross-country flights. Take a second to think about how many similar flights your fellow Federal employees take, and the environmental impacts of travel activities will become shockingly clear.

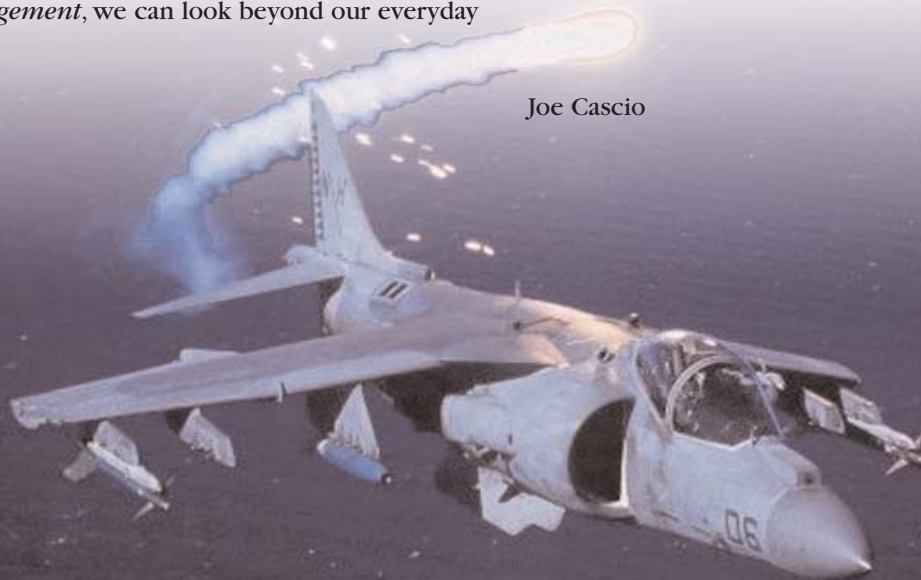
As we look to meet the goals and objectives of E.O. 13423, *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*, we can look beyond our everyday

operations to the environmental and energy impacts we create through official travel. The Federal environmental footprint is huge, and this is true of the travel portion of it, as well. Just as with our daily operations, travel uses energy and water and creates air and water pollution, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions. With a little thought, we can begin to reduce these significant impacts.

Federal leadership in this domain is growing. As described in this edition of *Closing the Circle News*, EPA is partnering with several key industry stakeholders to develop a consensus standard for green hotels and meetings that the Federal government and others will be able to use to select green hotels and event sites. The E-Gov Travel program has processed more than 367,000 travel vouchers, cutting up to 50 percent of Federal travel management costs and eliminating innumerable quantities of unnecessary paper waste. The Maritime Administration's Green Travel Policy, which is featured in this edition, asks employees to make greener travel choices and to track emissions associated with official travel. Proactive measures like these are moving Federal agencies in a more sustainable direction with respect to meetings and travel.

While steps are being taken to make the Federal government the premiere leader in green travel, there is more work to be done. In this edition of our newsletter, we feature what Federal travelers can do today to make their meetings, conferences, and travel more sustainable, what limitations exist, and some great examples of leadership in the Federal, State, and International communities. There is great promise and amazing possibilities ahead. ■

Joe Cascio



# The Environmental Protection Agency is Moving Towards a Green Meetings Standard

By Harry Lewis, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Federal government plays a significant role in promoting environmental protection, but not only through enforcing laws and regulations. By strategically applying its vast purchasing power, Uncle Sam sets a powerful example for other consumers. And in doing so, the Federal government is able to provide a powerful market-based incentive for suppliers to adopt environmentally sustainable business practices.

EPA has established itself in the forefront of implementing the government's move toward environmentally sustainable purchasing. President Bush's 2007 Executive Order 13423 (E.O.), *Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management*, requires agency acquisitions to "use sustainable environmental practices, including acquisition of biobased, environmentally preferable, energy-efficient, water-efficient, and recycled content products..." The E.O. also requires EPA to "...assist Federal agencies to purchase environmentally preferable products and services by developing environmental performance criteria for products and services... providing technical assistance, and reviewing and updating the guidance periodically."

EPA is focusing on several areas, including the purchase of meeting and conference facilities and services. Like the rest of the Federal government, EPA spends a significant amount of money in arranging for meeting venues, food, audio/visual production, transportation, lodging, and other meeting-related activities. Understanding the extent of this investment, EPA has begun developing rules and adopting policy which

apply to the agency's own system of purchasing.

In May of 2007, EPA's Office of Acquisition Management promulgated the first in a series of regulatory procurement initiatives requiring that requests for proposal contain a list of 14 prescribed questions on environmental performance. The questions invite respondents to provide information on such topics as the nature and extent of a meeting facility's recycling program, energy efficiency program, and efforts in water conservation. EPA procurement officials are now directed to consider environmental performance



in making purchasing decisions in this area.

EPA considers this to be an interim rule because environmental performance criteria were not clearly defined. EPA has joined with several key industry partners to develop consensus standards that ultimately will reach a large swath of what has proven to be a sprawling industry sector - from hospitality to large convention center trade shows to transportation and food service, and beyond. The effort, which has taken on the joint sponsorship of ASTM International and the Convention

Industry Council, is focused on developing an international consensus standard by which to define and measure environmental performance. For service providers, the standard's specifications will provide guidance in developing sustainable business practice. For consumers, the standard will provide performance measures by which to inform purchasing decisions.

The interest in developing a green meeting standard began informally in discussions between EPA and representatives of the Green Meeting Industry Council, an organization devoted to promoting sustainable meetings and events. Both sides, in lamenting a fractured industry faced with a growing number of competing guidance and certifications, agreed on the need for a single voice - a standard which could be adopted across an entire industry uniformly, and which hopefully would lend order to a growing uncertainty on the subject of what exactly constitutes "green."

Following these discussions, EPA approached ASTM to gauge the organization's interest in taking on the project of developing a green meeting standard. EPA has, over time, developed a strong working relationship with ASTM in developing standards in a number of areas including sustainable buildings. Moreover, as an agency of the Federal government, EPA is subject to the requirements of the National Technical Transfer and Advancement Act for using standards developed by voluntary consensus standards bodies. ASTM, as a standards development organization accredited under the American National Standards Institute, is able to facilitate such a consensus process in arriving at a >>> 3

# EPA's List of 14 Questions

- 1) Do you have a recycling program? If so, please describe.
- 2) Do you have a linen/towel reuse option that is communicated to guests?
- 3) Do guests have easy access to public transportation or shuttle services at your facility?
- 4) Are lights and air conditioning turned off when rooms are not in use? If so, how do you ensure this?
- 5) Do you provide bulk dispensers or reusable containers for beverages, food and condiments?
- 6) Do you provide reusable serving utensils, napkins and tablecloths when food and beverages are served?
- 7) Do you have an energy efficiency program? Please describe.
- 8) Do you have a water conservation program? Please describe.
- 9) Does your facility provide guests with paperless check-in & check-out?
- 10) Does your facility use recycled or recyclable products? Please describe.
- 11) Do you source food from local growers or take into account the growing practices of farmers that provide the food? Please describe.
- 12) Do you use biobased or biodegradable products, including biobased cafeteriaware? Please describe.
- 13) Do you provide training to your employees on these green initiatives? Please describe.
- 14) What other environmental initiatives have you undertaken, including any environment-related certifications you possess, EPA voluntary partnerships in which you participate, support of a green suppliers network, or other initiatives? Include "Green Meeting" information in your quotation so that we may consider environmental preferability in selection of our meeting venue.

**2 >>>** standard for green meetings and thus, satisfy this requirement for EPA.

The Accepted Practices Exchange project of the Convention Industry Council (CIC) then approached EPA about that organization's own intent to develop a similar industry-wide standard. Understanding the broad and central role occupied by CIC in the meeting and event industry, together with the organization's extensive and influential membership, EPA suggested collaborating and proceeded to facilitate the partnering agreement in place today.

EPA hopes that the green meeting and event standard will successfully address a number of categories central to the industry:

accommodations, conference centers and exhibition halls, site selection, food and beverage service, transportation, and others. Within these categories, the new standards will define environmental performance specifications for specific subject areas, with a system of performance measurement incorporated. Some of these subject areas include energy efficiency, water conservation, solid waste disposal, and the use of biobased and biodegradable products and materials.

When the green meeting standard is complete and accredited, EPA anticipates incorporating it into its own procurement rules. The Agency is also in discussion with the General Services Administration (GSA) in the

hopes that the standard, and EPA's procurement regulations requiring adherence to it, are incorporated into the Federal Acquisition Regulation for broad governmental adoption. The extent of the environmental effect of this standard remains to be seen. However, after discussions with key industry members, it seems clear that the government's emphasis on environmental performance has great potential to create significant change across the industry – and a great benefit, as well, to the environment and the world in which we all live.

For further information, please contact Harry Lewis, the Green Meetings Lead and an EPA Attorney Advisor at [lewis.harry@epa.gov](mailto:lewis.harry@epa.gov), or 202-564-8642. ■

# Green Meeting Tips

**T**here are many ways to green meetings, conferences, and travel. Here are a few basic ideas to get any meeting or conference planner started.

## ***1. Do you need to plan and hold a traditional meeting?***

Traditionally, meeting or conference attendees travel to the event site. Emissions from flights and ground transportation to the event location can add up quickly. While there are benefits to having all attendees in the same location, today's technology makes it possible to hold a meeting without requiring attendees to travel. Think about whether a meeting necessitates having all attendees at the same location or whether technologies like video teleconferencing, which allows on-line face-to-face interactions, can be used to reduce the amount of emissions generated from attendance.

## ***2. Develop contract language to include green meeting clauses, such as the EPA's list of 14 questions.***

The EPA's solicitation provision requires meeting and conference venues to provide EPA with information about environmentally preferable features and practices in use at their facilities through a series of 14 questions. All Federal agencies are encouraged to use EPA's model, [www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings), when soliciting meeting and conference facilities.

## ***3. Help attendees travel greener.***

It is ideal to plan events near a major airport hub that is connected to

public transportation. Major airport hubs offer the opportunity for more non-stop flights than smaller airports, and this produces fewer emissions than multi-stop flights. Airports that are connected to public transportation offer a green and inexpensive way for attendees to travel to the event site. If public transit is not available, planners are encouraged to provide shuttle buses (preferably hybrid electric or alternative fuel vehicles) for attendee transport to the event site.

## ***4. Choose hotels with a linen reuse policy.***

Linen reuse programs can reduce energy and water consumption by reducing the amount of laundry loads a hotel runs each day. In 2007, Marriott reported that its global Linen Reuse Program saved an average of 11 to 17 percent on hot water and sewer costs involved in laundering operations at each hotel. Make sure to ask all hotels under consideration if they have a linen reuse program in place. By choosing a hotel that has a program, planners can decrease the overall footprint of their event.

## ***5. Choose facilities that use energy and water saving devices, such as compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and low-flow plumbing fixtures.***

Hotels and conference centers use enormous amounts of water and energy in their everyday operations. By choosing a facility that utilizes energy and water saving technologies, agencies can make their meetings greener.

The ENERGY STAR for Hospitality Program reports incredible energy savings by their member hotels. When

it joined the ENERGY STAR program, Columbus Hospitality Group, a Bass Hotels and Resorts franchise, immediately began a complete renovation with the goal of making the hotel as energy-efficient as possible. The recent improvements have already increased the hotel's energy performance and gone straight to the bottom line with annual savings of more than \$30,000 in energy bills and reduced maintenance costs. Look for an ENERGY STAR label hotel for your next trip (see accompanying article on page 8).

The W Hotel in Dallas, TX, is a 33-story property with 251 guest rooms and 144 luxury residences. This facility installed low-flow faucets, showerheads, and toilets in all rooms. These efforts, combined with the hotel's linen reuse program, save the hotel 6,410 gallons of water each day. To make an event even greener, look for hotels and conference centers that use energy and water saving devices.

## ***6. Choose hotels and/or conference centers with an established recycling program.***

Hotels and conference centers with an established recycling program will ensure that attendees have accessible recycling options. Find out what items can be recycled at the facilities under consideration for the event. Items to ask for include: paper, and plastic, metal, and glass beverage containers. Find out where the recycling collection bins are located. Having collection bins in the halls adjacent to meeting rooms is ideal to increase the recycling rate. Events can also help by collecting badges from attendees at the end of the conference for reuse at another event. This will save planners of annual meetings and conferences > > 5

4 >>> money, as well. For additional ideas, visit EPA's Recycle on the Go webpage at <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/rrr/rogo/index.htm>.

### **7. Utilize electronic marketing, registration, agenda, handouts, and proceedings.**

Meetings can generate an enormous amount of paper, from registration forms to handouts to publications. Today's technology offers many options for requesting and providing information electronically in a safe and secure manner. Here are some ideas for electronic documents:

- Collect registration forms and payments through the event's website
- Collect presentation abstract submissions online (if necessary)
- Post draft and final agendas on event website
- Email marketing documents instead of sending hardcopies
- Post event proceedings online

### **8. Use double-sided printing on a minimum of 30 percent postconsumer recycled content paper, printed using vegetable-based inks.**

Avoiding all printing is not always an option for some events. When the printing of documents and publications are necessary:

- **Use double-sided printing to decrease paper use.** Applied Specialties, Inc. in Ohio reported to EPA that by using both email and double-sided copies the company saved \$320 and decreased paper waste by 500 pounds.
- **Print on recycled content paper.**

<sup>1</sup> Energy Information Administration, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/saving/recycling/solidwaste/paperandglass.html>

<sup>2</sup> Energy Information Administration, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/energyfacts/saving/recycling/solidwaste/paperandglass.html>

E.O. 13423 requires Federal agencies to use paper containing at least 30 percent postconsumer fiber. The impacts of using recycled content paper are far reaching. According to the Energy Information Administration, a paper mill uses 40 percent less energy to make paper from recycled paper than it does to make paper from fresh lumber.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, a ton of paper made from recycled fibers instead of virgin fibers conserves 7,000 gallons of water, 17-31 trees, 4,000 KWh of electricity, and 60 pounds of air pollutants.<sup>2</sup>

- **Use vegetable-based inks for printing.** According to EPA's Office of Administration and Resources Management, which provides in-house copying and printing services to all EPA employees through its Document Production Center, print jobs that use vegetable oil-based inks in place of petroleum-based inks reduce the amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released into the air during printing. Exposure to VOCs can cause conjunctival irritation, nose and throat discomfort, headache, allergic skin reaction, nausea, fatigue, and dizziness. The use of vegetable oil-based inks also reduces dependence on, and use of, petroleum products.

### **9. Use reusable serving utensils, table linens, and food and beverage containers whenever possible.**

Using reusable serveware eliminates a great amount of unnecessary waste. Polystyrene serveware is made from petroleum, is not easily recycled, and is a common source of marine debris. Some paper cups can be composted, but more often they end up in the waste

stream. By using ceramic food and beverage containers and reusable utensils and table linens, events can reduce the amount of waste they generate.

### **10. Purchase food from a local vendor who uses locally grown food whenever possible. Leftover food should be donated to a local shelter.**

Purchasing locally grown food decreases greenhouse gas emissions because the food is transported over a shorter distance. A study conducted by the Iowa State University that compared the miles food traveled for local versus conventional produce sales to Iowa institutions found the average weighted average source distance (WASD) for locally grown produce to reach institutional markets was 56 miles, while the conventional WASD for the produce to reach those same institutional points of sale was 1,494 miles, nearly 27 times further. Sourcing local food for events also supports the local economy. In order to reduce waste, untouched leftovers should be donated to a local shelter.

### **11. Share green practices with attendees.**

The efforts of meeting and conference planners to green travel and events are great to share with attendees. Not only does sharing this information demonstrate the planning committee's commitment to greening its events, but it also serves to raise awareness in these areas. Attendees share this information with their agencies and become aware of the green choices they have the next time they travel and/or attend an event.

For more information on green meetings, visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Meetings website at <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/>. ■

# Video Teleconferencing: A Viable Meeting Tool

**F**lying cross country to meet with regional counterparts is becoming passé at GSA. Since the mid-1990s, GSA has used video teleconferencing (VTC) equipment as a more efficient means for meeting. VTC allows multiple users worldwide to interact and “meet” over two-way video and audio transmissions concurrently.

VTC uses digital transmission technology, such as internet protocol (IP) or a dial-up connection (ISDN), and either a stand alone piece of equipment that houses all of the required components or a desktop system that is created by adding VTC hardware and software to a personal computer. VTC hardware and software digitally compress audio and video streams in real time allowing users to converse as though all participants were in the same room.

GSA coordinates VTC operations mostly in-house but also connects GSA users to other Federal agencies, when needed. Barbara Sheridan, a GSA Telecommunications Specialist, said using VTC allows the agency to reduce travel costs and make more efficient use

of employee time. Former GSA Administrator Lurita Doan held bi-weekly management meetings using VTC, and Acting Administrator Jim Williams uses the technology to hold weekly meetings.

Each of GSA's 11 regional centers has VTC capability in at least one conference room. GSA's Federal Acquisition Service has a VTC bridge that allows up to 24 different video sites to be connected and can also add in an additional 48 audio conferees. The cost of acquiring and using the equipment was negligible for GSA, and it has saved the agency countless travel dollars.

GSA provides several acquisition vehicles to obtain VTC equipment and services: Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts (GWACs), Technology Contracts, and the Information Technology (IT) Schedule 70.

GWACs are task order or delivery order contracts for IT established by one agency for governmentwide use. Each GWAC is operated by an executive agent designated by OMB. To use GWACs, agencies must obtain a delegation of authority from the GWAC

Program Office. The 8(a) STARS GWAC is an example of a GWAC that offers VTC services.

Technology contracts cover the whole spectrum of information technology solutions, from network services and information assurance to telecommunications and purchase of hardware and software. GSA's NETWORKX technology contract offers VTC capabilities as part of a larger telecommunications package.

The IT Schedule 70 is great for large and small purchases by organizations that are self-sufficient in technical and contracting expertise. This schedule offers more than 5,000 contracts for IT and telecommunications products and services, including VTC.

By using VTC technology, Federal agencies can reduce their carbon footprint, stay within their travel budgets, and increase the efficiency of employee time. For more information on how GSA uses VTC in their everyday operations, contact Barbara Sheridan, Telecommunications Specialist, [barbara.sheridan@gsa.gov](mailto:barbara.sheridan@gsa.gov), 703-306-6549. ■



# Renting a Hybrid Electric Vehicle While on Official Travel: What You Should Know

As the price of fuel and environmental awareness have both risen, Federal travelers are expressing an interest in renting hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) or alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) while on official travel. The interest is two-fold: Federal travelers wish to reduce the Federal carbon footprint of their trips and potentially save their agency money by renting a cleaner, more fuel efficient vehicle.

Since October 2007, the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) has been managing the U.S. Government Rental Car Program, including the rental agreement with the various car rental companies. Because of the agreement, travelers with a travel order or government-sponsored charge card receive superior rates, unlimited mileage, reduced age restriction, and collision damage waiver insurance.

It is important for Federal travelers to know that the current U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement Number 4 does not include the rental of HEVs or AFVs. There are some important items that Federal travelers should know:

In order to rent these vehicles, travelers may be required to pay a higher, non-government rate. Regardless of the rate given, these vehicles will not be covered by the collision damage waiver. This is the case even if the rental company offers the HEV or AFV at the government rate for its vehicle class. Travelers will need to purchase supplemental insurance or find out if their personal insurance plan will cover the rental vehicle.

Review your agency's policy on rental vehicles because authorization may be needed to rent a more expensive vehicle and to ensure the



traveler can be reimbursed for the rental of such vehicles.

Travelers authorized to rent an HEV or AFV should check with the appropriate authority in their agency to find out if the purchase of supplemental insurance is a reimbursable expense.

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive has asked DTMO to include HEVs and AFVs in the next iteration of the U.S. Government Rental Car Program and

has requested that guidance be shared with all Federal travelers. In the meantime, Federal travelers are encouraged to rent a car with the greatest fuel efficiency based on the mission, number of passengers being transported, and the traveler's agency's policy on car rentals.

For more information on the DTMO's U.S. Government Rental Car Program, visit their website at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Sections/Rent.cfm#agreement>. ■

# ENERGY STAR: Recognizing Hospitality Leaders



**A**s energy costs rise, more and more consumers are looking for ways to reduce their energy bills. For many, this means purchasing energy-saving products for use in the home and at work. ENERGY STAR, a voluntary labeling program jointly administered by the EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), seeks to identify and promote energy-efficient products that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while saving money. Many consumers are familiar with the wide variety of ENERGY STAR products that are available through commercial retailers, and in fact, according to EPA's latest studies, more than 70 percent of Americans recognize the ENERGY STAR logo as the mark of superior energy efficiency.

Consumer products are not the only focus of the ENERGY STAR program. The ENERGY STAR label also covers new homes and commercial and industrial buildings, including hospitality properties. A spring 2008 program report, *ENERGY STAR® Snapshot: Measuring Progress in the Commercial and Industrial Sectors, Spring 2008*, notes that through 2007, commercial and industrial leaders have made

unprecedented progress in their efforts to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. ENERGY STAR labeled facilities now represent nearly \$1.5 billion annually in lower energy bills and prevented 25 billion pounds a year of greenhouse gas emissions, relative to typical facilities. Considering that commercial buildings and industrial facilities consume half the energy used in the U.S. each year, at a cost of more than \$200 billion per year, the nation's buildings represent large opportunities for energy savings that can benefit the environment and the owner's bottom line.

Energy efficiency is the single most effective approach a hotel can take in order to reduce its carbon footprint and combat climate change. Buildings that have earned the ENERGY STAR use nearly 40 percent less energy than average buildings and emit 35 percent less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, offering a significantly smaller impact on the environment. By instituting strategic energy management programs, hoteliers can realize energy cost savings that flow directly to the bottom line—all while enhancing the guest experience by improving comfort and reliability, and by demonstrating climate stewardship.

Hotels that join the ENERGY STAR for Hospitality Program use EPA's Portfolio Manager tool to track and benchmark energy use over time. The tool – a user-friendly resource that is available for free on the ENERGY STAR Web site – is used to obtain a 1-to-100 energy performance rating. Participating hoteliers enter information on their building into Portfolio Manager, including information on the hotel's location, number of rooms, gross floor area,

year built, presence or absence of on-site cooking and laundry facility, the average annual occupancy rate, and at least 320 days of energy consumption data for all fuel types.

Based on this information, hotels benchmark energy use relative to the national population of similar buildings. Serving a similar role as the automobile "miles-per-gallon" metric, the ENERGY STAR rating is an easily-understood measurement of whole-building energy performance. The rating compares individual hotels to a national average, taking into account weather and site-specific operational factors.

Benchmarking with Portfolio Managers allows hoteliers to understand current performance, establish energy management goals, and identify opportunities for savings and recognition, consistent with ENERGY STAR's Guidelines for Strategic Energy Management. By tracking performance across an entire portfolio, users can see which properties are performing at a superior level, and which may benefit from operational enhancements and other energy efficiency upgrades. Hotels rating 75 or above are eligible to earn the ENERGY STAR, indicating they are among the top 25 percent of facilities in the country for energy performance.

Now, in addition to renting hybrid vehicles, purchasing carbon offsets, or participating in environmental volunteer opportunities, travelers can identify and book hotels that have earned the ENERGY STAR—indicating that these properties have achieved superior energy performance. ENERGY STAR also maintains a listing of labeled properties on its website, [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov), in the Buildings and Plants section. >>> 9



8 >>> Since the inception of the ENERGY STAR Hospitality program in 2002, leading industry members have recognized the opportunities for energy savings and public recognition that come with program participation. One longstanding hospitality partner, Marriott International, was recently recognized for the fourth consecutive year with an annual ENERGY STAR award from the EPA. As a result of its energy efficiency efforts, Marriott realized an energy savings of nearly \$7.8 million in 2007 which is equivalent to a cost reduction of \$0.13 per occupied room night, or an increase in the company's average daily room rate of \$0.15. In addition, Marriott has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 3 percent per available room since 2004, and has earned the ENERGY STAR for more than 200 hotel properties in more than 20 states. Marriott continues to publicly promote its successful participation in the ENERGY STAR program and has made energy efficiency a cornerstone of its expanding sustainability and climate efforts. Never resting on previous accomplishments, Marriott has set a new goal to increase the number of properties earning the ENERGY STAR by 33 percent in 2008.

On a broader level, there is evidence that the hospitality industry is responding to the increasing number of Americans looking to go "green" when they travel. In a

partnership announced April 15, Orbitz - a leading online travel company - has aligned with ENERGY STAR to give travelers the option of choosing ENERGY STAR labeled hotels when they book with Orbitz.

According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association, travelers in the United States spent more than \$133 billion on lodging in 2006. Through a "micro-site," <http://www.eco.orbitz.com>, Orbitz provides eco-friendly options and guidance to help individuals make informed decisions and reduce their environmental footprint when traveling. By recognizing properties which have

earned the ENERGY STAR, Orbitz is empowering its users to make these purchases in a more environmentally responsible manner.

For more information on ENERGY STAR, including the Guidelines for Strategic Energy Management and the Portfolio Manager tool, visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

For further information about ENERGY STAR for Hospitality, please contact Anna Stark at [stark.anna@epa.gov](mailto:stark.anna@epa.gov) or 202-343-9184. Ms. Stark is the Program Manager for Commercial Property Markets, ENERGY STAR, EPA, and contributed to this article. ■

PORTFOLIO MANAGER - QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

HOTELS

### Rating Your Energy Performance

Use the US EPA's energy performance rating system within Portfolio Manager to rate the energy performance of your hotels on a scale of 1-100. Rate all of your facilities and update the data regularly to take control of your energy costs. See top of page two for eligibility and data needed.

### USE PORTFOLIO MANAGER STEP-BY-STEP

STEP	ACTIVITY	ACTION
1	Access Portfolio Manager	<a href="http://www.energystar.gov/benchmark">http://www.energystar.gov/benchmark</a> Scroll down to the Login section
2	Access your account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Create a new account</li> <li>■ Login to an existing account</li> <li>■ Get a brief system overview</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Click NEW USER</li> <li>■ Enter user name and password and click LOGIN</li> <li>■ Click SYSTEM TOUR or LEARN MORE</li> </ul>
3	Add a new facility	Click ADD FACILITY
4	Enter general building data	Enter data and click SAVE
5	Enter space use data	Go to "Space Use" section and click ADD SPACE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enter a facility name and select the space type</li> <li>Click CONTINUE</li> <li>■ Enter space data. Click SAVE</li> </ul> <i>Repeat for all space types</i>
6	Enter energy use data	Go to "Energy Meters" section and click ADD METER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enter Meter name, type, units. Click SAVE</li> <li>■ Enter number of months and start date. Click CONTINUE</li> <li>■ Enter energy use and cost. Click SAVE</li> </ul> <i>Repeat for all fuel types</i>
7	Review and interpret results	Go to "Facility Performance" section and review your results. Guidance is provided on page two of this guide.
8	Manage account and apply for recognition	Share data, generate a Statement of Energy Performance, apply for ENERGY STAR label, create a building profile, and perform other administrative tasks.

[www.energystar.gov/benchmark](http://www.energystar.gov/benchmark)

# The State of State Green Hotel Programs

By Nick Chamberlain, Former OFEE Intern

In an effort to tap into the burgeoning green hotel industry and reduce their ever-expanding ecological footprint, hotels around the nation are improving their environmental practices. After all, being “green” makes business sense:

- On average, America’s 47,000 hotels spend almost \$2,200 per available room each year on energy. Just a 10 percent energy consumption reduction would have the same financial effect as increasing the average daily room rate (ADR) by \$0.62 in limited-service hotels and by \$1.35 in full-service hotels.
- The hospitality industry spends \$3.7 billion a year on energy. Electricity use accounts for 60 to 70 percent of the utility costs of a typical hotel. Energy efficient practices and products reduce energy consumption and can lower energy costs.
- As much as 80 percent of the waste generated per room daily can be recycled.
- Typical hotels use 218 gallons of water per day per occupied room. Water-efficient fixtures can reduce water and sewer bills by 25 to 30 percent.
- Average-sized hotels purchase more products in one week than 100 families do in a year. With such large purchasing power, hotels play an important role in the procurement of environmentally preferable products.

Sources: [http://www.energystar.gov/ia/business/challenge/learn\\_more/Hotel.pdf](http://www.energystar.gov/ia/business/challenge/learn_more/Hotel.pdf) and <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/EPP/greenlodging/>.

Hotels recognize that environ-

mental stewardship translates to lower operating costs, as well as reduces the amount of waste generated and natural resources used by their facilities.

Thirteen states have taken the lead to develop state-operated green lodging programs to assist and properly acknowledge the efforts of environmentally-friendly facilities. These voluntary state programs, some of which are open to other types of businesses and organizations within the respective state, provide State employees and civilians with certified green travel options.

Each of the 13 state programs includes a self-assessment component for facilities, and most require a facility inspection by a state-certified evaluator to verify the self-assessment and determine the compliance level. Some of the more advanced programs even feature a facility rating system to acknowledge green lodging leaders and encourage further environmental stewardship practices.

We have highlighted four of the more developed programs below.

## California Green Lodging Program

California’s Green Lodging Program (<http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/EPP/greenlodging/>) was created in part to “assist State employees to make environmentally friendly lodging choices when traveling on State business.” Although State employees are not required to stay at the nearly 100 participating facilities, California highly encourages them to do so. The Program was developed and is operated by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB).

Facilities must meet environmental standards in the following seven areas:

- waste minimization
- reuse/recycling
- energy efficiency
- conservation and management
- waste management
- freshwater resource management
- hazardous materials management
- environmentally and socially sensitive purchasing policies

To participate, lodging facilities complete a brief 15-question self-survey which assesses the facility’s basic environmental compliance strategies. Once this survey is received and reviewed by the CIWMB, a state employee or contractor visits the site to complete a field survey, an in-depth study of the facility’s green attributes. After the field survey is completed, the CIWMB evaluates the program and assesses a score.

If a facility qualifies for the program, it is rated at one of two levels: Participation Level or Leadership Level. Hotels achieving a field survey score of 250-300 are classified under the Participation Level, the entry level for the program. The program’s Participation Level is symbolized by a single palm tree. Facilities at this level meet some of the seven program criteria and have a period of three years from their date of enrollment to demonstrate ongoing improvement and elevate their rating to the Leadership Level.

Achieving the highest level of participation, Leadership Level hotels achieved a minimum field survey score of 300. This level is designated by two palm trees. Leadership Level facilities have a written environmental policy in place and meet all seven of the program’s criteria. >>> **11**

**10 >>>** The list of participating hotels is available at <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/EPP/GreenLodging/Directory/>.

## Florida Green Lodging Program

The Florida Green Lodging Program ([www.FloridaGreenLodging.org](http://www.FloridaGreenLodging.org)) was established in 2004 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). A 2007 Executive Order by Governor Charlie Crist mandated that state agencies and departments under the Executive branch contract with Green Lodging hotels and conference facilities for official state meetings and conferences. In May 2008, the Florida Legislature passed an energy bill which affirmed the Executive Order and expanded it to include all State government employees. However, like California, State employees in Florida are not required to stay in the 321 participating facilities while on official state travel. A few state agencies have taken it upon themselves to require their employees to utilize these properties wherever possible, including one of the biggest, the Florida Department of Transportation.

To participate, facilities must

first submit an admission application which ensures that the facility understands the program and provides biographical information to the Florida DEP. Next, the applicant completes a 12-page self-assessment that includes questions about the facility's management of solid and hazardous waste, energy, indoor air quality, and water. Once designation criteria are met, a trained state assessor conducts an on-site designation review. Afterwards, the facility must perform basic improvement projects in the areas of communication, water conservation, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and clean air practices in order to move on to the Two Palm designation, which is a requirement of the program.

Facilities can receive one of three designations under the Florida Green Lodging Program:

- **One Palm** – The entry-level designation. Facilities achieving this level must have completed the core activities representing a minimum set of best management practices in the areas listed above, formed an active “Green Team” to monitor and implement their environmental program, obtain support from top management, and operate in compliance with all applicable environmental laws and regulations.
- **Two Palm** – Facilities must maintain the One Palm status for at least 12 consecutive months prior to applying for this designation. These hotels must conduct an environmental baseline assessment and demonstrate a reduction in energy and water consumption as well as a reduction in waste disposal. Furthermore, they must have developed and implemented performance improvement goals and evaluated their progress.
- **Three Palm** – Hotels must have maintained the facility's Two Palm status and have demonstrated continual improvement for three consecutive years to be eligible for

this designation. To retain Three Palm status, the facility must continue to maintain or improve its high level of commitment to environmental protection.

At this time, an additional 423 properties are in the process of being designated.

The Florida Green Lodging Program will host its first annual conference November 10-12, 2008, in Gainesville, FL. The conference will focus on “being green, saving green, and making green” and will bring together hoteliers and industry and environmental experts from around the country to discuss current issues. Hervé Houdré, General Manager of the Willard InterContinental in Washington, DC, will give the keynote address. More information can be found online at <http://www.treeo.ufl.edu/conferences/GreenLodging/default.aspx?page=487>.

For the list of participating Florida Green Lodging facilities, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging/lodges.htm>.

## Green Lodging Michigan

Michigan's Energy Office and Department of Environmental Quality jointly manage the State's sophisticated Green Lodging Michigan program ([http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-25676\\_25677\\_37026--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-25676_25677_37026--,00.html)). Like California and Florida, there are no requirements for state employees to stay at these facilities on official travel.

Perspective participants in the Green Lodging Michigan program must first complete an initial application providing facility biographical information and submit it to the State Energy Office. Next, the facility must undergo a self-assessment providing information on the facility's level of environmental compliance.

There are three certification levels that can be obtained: Green Lodging Partner, Green Lodging Steward, and Green Lodging Leader. The Partner level is reliant on the self-assessment and achieving a set of >>> **12**





**11 >>>** minimum requirements. The higher-ranked Steward and Leader levels must satisfy the minimum requirements and a specific number of points. Achieving these levels also is contingent on an on-site verification. Certification is valid for three years, after which a facility must resubmit a self-assessment checklist to become recertified.

To view the list of 48 participating Green Lodging Michigan facilities, go to [http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-25676\\_25677\\_37026-159355-,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-25676_25677_37026-159355-,00.html).

## Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia

Georgia's Pollution Prevention Assistance Division (P2AD) founded the Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia ([http://www.p2ad.org/documents/pp\\_home.html](http://www.p2ad.org/documents/pp_home.html)) in 2004 to encourage environmental leadership and recognize superior performance in the state. The Partnership is free and open to any type of business or organization in Georgia, including the hospitality industry.

To enroll in the Partnership, an initial online self-assessment is completed and is later reviewed by P\_AD personnel. Partnership is awarded once criteria are met.

Georgia's Partnership program has two program development tracks: the Environmental Management System (EMS) Track and the Sustainable Office Toolkit Track. The former is designed for large organizations developing and/or implementing a full EMS similar to the International

Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14001 standard, and the latter is designed for smaller organizations wishing to improve sustainability but lack resources to implement a full-scale EMS.

Georgia's program contains four levels of partnership: Champion, Bronze, Silver and Gold.

- **Champion Level** - Any organization may participate as a Champion. These Partners promote and support the goals of the Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia by providing training, consultation, or other services to Partners. Champions include organizations such as community groups, trade associations, citizen advisory panels, environmental organizations, and consultants.
- **Bronze Level** - This level is the entry point for most applicants to the Partnership, and Partners at this level are just beginning to develop proactive environmental policies, procedures, and educational efforts.
- **Silver Level** - The Silver Level is for organizations that are already putting their environmental programs in place. These Partners are proactively involved in pollution prevention and cost-saving strategies and are actively integrating environmental stewardship into their daily business operations.
- **Gold Level** - These organizations have reached the highest achievement level and are model environmental leaders. Gold Partners' environmental programs integrate robust pollution prevention efforts and community outreach. Companies that are already enrolled in the National Environmental Performance Track program may complete an abbreviated Partnership application for the Gold Level. Membership at the Gold Level is unlimited in years, but organizations must demonstrate continual improvement.

All members of the Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia are required to report to P2AD and the public on their environmental program, goals, and progress. Failure to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) by the deadline is cause for removal from Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia.

The list of hotels and other businesses participating in the Partnership are available at <http://chewbacca.dnr.state.ga.us/dev/partners/public>.

## Other Notable State Program Facts:

- In addition to the states described above, Hawaii, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont all use some type of rating and/or point system to aid the certification process and acknowledge environmental leaders.
- Virginia's program currently has 164 member hotels.
- Wisconsin's program allows events and festivals to be certified.

**>>> 13 (sidebar)**



**Greener Georgia.  
Better Bottom Line.**

# The Green Key Eco-Rating Program of Canada: A Model Program

**M**any recently developed rating systems are designed to give consumers an indication of the commitment of a company to environmental consciousness. There are rating systems for new construction, renovations of existing structures, electronic equipment, cleaning products, and lodging in the hospitality industry, just to name a few. Many may be familiar with some of the bigger rating systems, such as: ENERGY STAR, the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, Green Seal, Going Green, Audubon Green Leaf, and Green Key.

A December 2007 survey by the Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) found that more than half of the travelers surveyed said that the environment is a consideration when traveling. However, competing rating

systems can lead to consumer confusion. Comparing two hotels with different environmental rating systems against each other results in a subjective judgment between the two hotels, as opposed to a more quantitative evaluation with a recognized standard.

The lodging industry is a prime candidate to make some small operational changes that have a large impact. Some basic ideas for hotels to decrease their resource consumption and pollution include replacing incandescent light bulbs with CFLs, implementing an optional linen reuse program, installing low-flow toilets and shower heads, and providing guests with readily accessible recycling bins.

The Canadian government and HAC translated this perceived need for information into the Green Key Eco-

Rating program, which found its impetus from the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. In the mid-90s HAC partnered with Environment Canada to address the ways in which hotels could improve their environmental performance. Hoteliers and environmental groups worked together and launched the program in 1997.

In 2005, HAC's program was updated, re-branded, and re-launched in an easy-to-use online format. The Green Key program provides tips, tricks, and resources to help hoteliers make environmentally friendly facilities and to ensure the participation of their staff in environmental initiatives. When facilities register online they gain access to educational tools and best practices case studies; see >>> 14

## Links to State Green Lodging Programs

California	<a href="http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/EPP/greenlodging/">http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/EPP/greenlodging/</a>
Delaware	<a href="http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/p2/Pages/GreenLodging.aspx">http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/p2/Pages/GreenLodging.aspx</a>
Florida	<a href="http://www.dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging/">http://www.dep.state.fl.us/greenlodging/</a>
Georgia	<a href="http://www.p2ad.org/documents/ci_hospitality.html">http://www.p2ad.org/documents/ci_hospitality.html</a>
Hawaii	<a href="http://hawaii.gov/dbedt/info/energy/resource/greenbusiness">http://hawaii.gov/dbedt/info/energy/resource/greenbusiness</a>
Maine	<a href="http://www.maine.gov/dep/innovation/greencert/lodging.htm">http://www.maine.gov/dep/innovation/greencert/lodging.htm</a>
Michigan	<a href="http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-25676_25677_37026--,00.html">http://www.michigan.gov/dleg/0,1607,7-154-25676_25677_37026--,00.html</a>
New Hampshire	<a href="http://www.nhslrp.org/index.htm">http://www.nhslrp.org/index.htm</a>
North Carolina	<a href="http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality/">http://www.p2pays.org/hospitality/</a>
Rhode Island	<a href="http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/assist/grncert/index.htm">http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/assist/grncert/index.htm</a>
Vermont	<a href="http://www.vtgreenhotels.org/index.html">http://www.vtgreenhotels.org/index.html</a>
Virginia	<a href="http://www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/lodging/homepage.html">http://www.deq.virginia.gov/p2/lodging/homepage.html</a>
Wisconsin	<a href="http://www.travelgreenwisconsin.com/index.htm">http://www.travelgreenwisconsin.com/index.htm</a>



## HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA Green Key ECO-Rating Program



Check-in to superior fiscal and environmental performance

**13 >>>** [www.hacgreenhotels.com](http://www.hacgreenhotels.com).

Green Key provides an online audit that is designed to provide the lodging facility with a comprehensive analysis of the environmental practices in various departments of the hotel. The audit is extensive, consisting of 140 multiple choice questions, and is readily available online. There are five assessment areas covered by the audit: Corporate Environmental Management, Housekeeping, Conference and Meeting Facilities, Food and Beverage Services and Engineering. Each section of the audit is related to one of the following nine sustainable hotel practice areas:

- Energy conservation
- Water conservation
- Solid waste management
- Hazardous waste management
- Indoor air quality
- Community outreach
- Building infrastructure
- Land use
- Environmental management

Typically the audit takes between two and five days to complete. Each

question is assigned a numeric value based on how each action in question affects the environment and its social impacts. A score is calculated based on the responses provided, and the hotel is instantly assigned a Green Key Rating. This is a graduated rating system in which hotels can earn between one and five green keys, five being the highest level of environmentally friendly practices on the scale.

**1 Green Key** A hotel that has taken steps to reduce environmental impacts by analyzing its operations and identifying opportunities for improvement. An action plan focusing on resource conservation and waste minimization has been established, and is supported by a firm commitment to continual improvement.

**2 Green Keys** A hotel that has taken considerable strides to identify environmental impacts and implement policies and programs to minimize its ecological footprint. A firm commitment to continual improvement has resulted in programs and actions that have shown effective results.

**3 Green Keys** A hotel that has taken significant steps to protect the

environment. Strong environmental programs, best management practices, training programs, and engineering solutions have been implemented which have benefited the environment and the local community.

**4 Green Keys** A hotel that has shown national industry leadership and commitment to protecting the environment through wide ranging policies and practices. The hotel has mature programs in place that involve management, employees, guests, and the public, and which have shown substantial and measurable results.

**5 Green Keys** A hotel that exemplifies the highest standards of environmental and social responsibility throughout all areas of operations. The hotel employs cutting edge technologies, policies, and programs that set the international standard for sustainable hotel operations.

HAC then compiles a report for the hotel that points out the positive practices in the hotel and also makes recommendations for areas in hotel operations in which environmental practices can be improved. A plaque is also sent to the facility with the Green Key rating, to be displayed to guests.

The Green Key Program has been very successful in Canada largely due to its ties with HAC. Walter Willet, HAC's Director of Business Development, says that "(t)he success behind the expansion of the program in Canada is related... to the partnership within the lodging industry to support Green Key as the national standard and promote this as the primary starting point and resource for hotels to improve their environmental performance." The program has been developed by hoteliers, for hoteliers, which makes it easy for hotels to get behind it. As of today, the Green Key Program has 916 properties registered, 246 of which joined this year. The goal is to try and reach 1,000 properties by the end of this year and 1,500 by the >>> **19**

# Carbon Credits and “Greening” Federal Travel

Anyone who has ever organized a conference or meeting knows the monetary and environmental costs involved in such an undertaking. Purchasing carbon credits is one potential way to reduce pollution associated with the operations of, and travel to, a conference or meeting. There are other actions that planners of Federal meetings and conferences can take to green meetings and conferences, such as choosing a hotel or conference center with a recycling program, using e-registration, and e-documents, and printing on both sides of printed documents.

Can Federal agencies or Federal travelers purchase carbon credits to offset the impacts of government travel? The short answer is no, but there are opportunities to offset carbon impacts and otherwise green Federal travel and meetings. According to the Travel Management Policy Office within GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy, the Federal government does not currently have the authority to create a carbon offset program for Federal travel or to allow the purchase of such credits with Federal funds. Federal travelers must use their own personal funds if they wish to purchase credits to offset carbon created by their official travel.

Carbon credits can be purchased from a growing number of offset companies. These companies use the money from carbon credit purchasers to invest in projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Typical projects include clean energy infrastructure, such as wind power, and landfill gas capturing projects.

Personal travel reservation companies, like Expedia and Orbitz, now offer travelers the opportunity to purchase carbon credits through a variety of providers to offset the carbon created by their travel. As interest grows within the

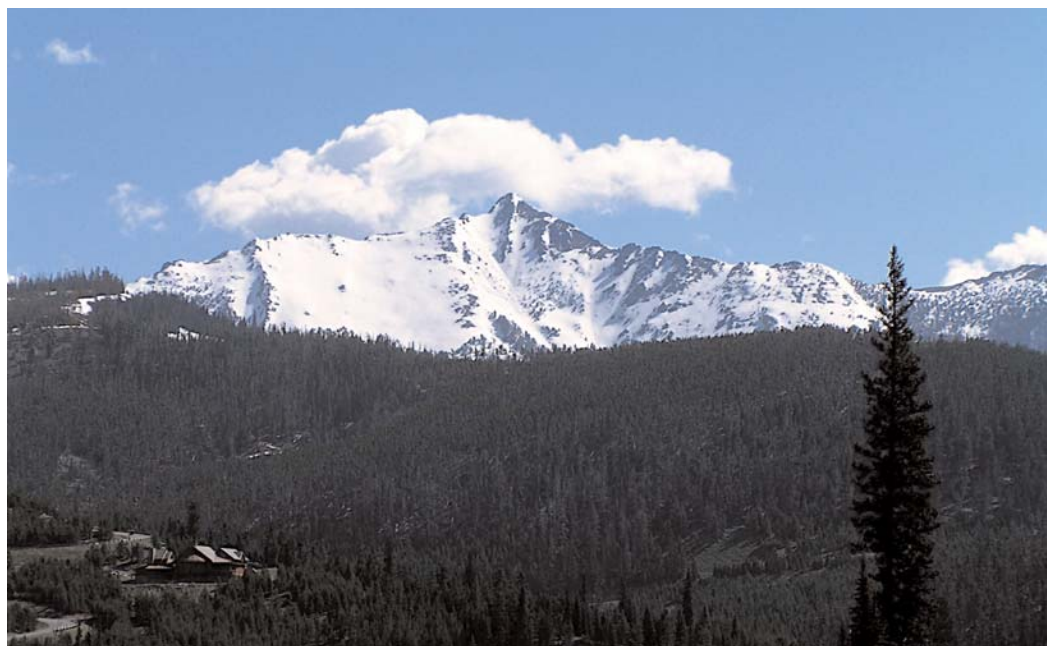
Federal community to reduce its carbon footprint, some Federal events are offering similar programs to purchase carbon emission credits.

The Federal Environmental Symposium West, held last June in Big Sky, MT, blended both green meeting planning and carbon credits into its practices. Attendees of the Federal Environmental Symposium West were able to voluntarily donate their personal money to reduce their carbon impact from traveling to the Symposium. The Symposium planners coordinated with the National Arbor Day Foundation to plant trees in the Gallatin National Forest. The Gallatin National Forest created a partnership with the National Arbor Day Foundation, whereby the Forest receives donations from the National Arbor Day Foundation, and a registry is kept at the Bozeman Ranger District, Bozeman, MT, of all the contributors. The donations are used only for the direct costs of planting trees – either to purchase seedlings from a nursery or to pay for the labor costs of

planting the seedlings. The Gallatin National Forest generally plants about 200,000 trees each year, mostly in areas that burned in recent wildfires.

Symposium planners also provided shuttle bus service to and from the Gallatin Field Airport in Bozeman, MT, and the conference site using biodiesel buses on loan from Yellowstone National Park, ensured recycling services were available at the Big Sky Lodge, provided locally sourced meals and snacks, served meals and snacks on reusable plates, and minimized the printing of paper at the event.

In an effort to incorporate Green Purchasing into more public settings, EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program supported the Oceans Blue Foundation in the development of an online Green Meetings Tool. The tool, available at [www.bluegreenmeetings.org](http://www.bluegreenmeetings.org), shows hosts, planners and suppliers how to incorporate green principles into every aspect of conference and meeting planning. ■



# Sailing Towards Greener Shores with the Maritime Administration

If anyone knows about travel, it is the Maritime Administration. The mission of this U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) entity is to strengthen the U.S. marine industries to support the economic and security needs of the nation. The U.S. water transportation industry serves the needs of both foreign and domestic commerce. It includes companies that carry freight or passengers on the open seas or inland waterways, offer towing services, charter vessels, and operate canals and terminals. According to the Administration's *U.S. Water Transportation Statistical Snapshot* report published in May 2008, 6,867 oceangoing-vessels made 63,804 calls at U.S. ports in 2007. Vessel calls were up 13 percent from 5 years earlier.

As water transportation increases at U.S. ports of call, so do the functions of the Maritime Administration. The Maritime Administration realigned many of its functions in 2007, to revitalize its role as an industry facilitator and to bring greater focus to the areas of environment and safety. This realignment has served to address growing regulatory and compliance challenges facing the maritime community, especially in areas affecting environment, security, and safety.

The Maritime Administration is looking not only at what is happening in the maritime community, but also at the activities of its own employees. "We have reviewed our operations and are taking steps throughout the Maritime Administration to apply green techniques to all of our professional tasks and business processes," said Maritime Administrator Sean T. Connaughton during a recent interview. Administrator Connaughton has been the Maritime Administrator

since 2006 and is a graduate of both the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and the U.S. Naval War College. He went on to explain he believes that "environmental excellence is needed in every segment of the Marine Transportation System to protect the environment and alleviate public concerns about the work we do."

In "walking the walk," Administrator Connaughton signed one of the first green travel policies in the Federal government. Effective July 3, 2008, Maritime Administration employees are required to follow the U.S. Maritime Administration's Green Travel Policy (GTP), which covers all personnel on temporary duty travel and serves as guidance to assist employees in traveling sustainably while on official agency travel. The Administration is currently in the data-gathering phase of the program.

The GTP asks Administration employees to think green in many ways while on travel. By recommending the use of its electronic reservation system, GovTrip, renting from rental car companies that provide electronic billing, and requesting that hotels submit electronic bills, the Maritime Administration seeks to reduce the use of paper in its traveling transactions. It also asks employees to conserve resources while at hotels by staying at green hotels, turning off the lights and lowering the air conditioning or heat when not in the room, conserving water, and even returning hotel key cards for reuse when checking out of hotels.

These may be habits that travelers are starting to acquire on their own, but Administrator Connaughton has asked his employees to go one step further and record the total mileage from each individual flight, train trip,

personal vehicle, and rental car after they return to the office.

"We will be using a software program developed by the Climate Registry, a non-profit group that has created a national database, which allows tracking of carbon data for travel," explains Administrator Connaughton. "By using the registry's online calculators and tools, my agency will gain the ability to develop a comprehensive baseline carbon footprint that measures carbon emissions for travel. We will use this baseline to assist in setting goals and reduction targets to possibly modify or shape future green policy directives." The use of the Climate Registry software is being implemented nationwide in the Maritime Administration.

Implementation of the GTP has been a learning experience for the Maritime Administration. "As one of the first agencies to attempt implementing a green travel policy, we are learning as we go forward. Our wish, of course, is to always have every one of our agency's employees using green lodging services, ride sharing and fuel-efficient vehicles when on official travel. It seems straight forward, but accomplishing this is not as easy as we had hoped or expected it to be," says the Administrator.

The use of green hotels and hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles while on travel is one area that is not straight forward for any Federal traveler. Without a consensus-driven green hotel standard or a car rental agreement that includes HEV or AFV rentals, making decisions on which hotel and car to select can be confusing for Federal travelers. The Maritime Administration recognizes these hurdles exist, but it >>> 17



**16 >>>** also sees the hurdles as an opportunity to get ahead of the curve and start affecting change now.

Administrator Connaughton said, “It is understood that at this moment there are limited opportunities to implement the policy as broadly as we wish. Still, we do expect that more green hotels and reasonably-priced hybrid rental cars will be available to us and the rest of the Federal workforce in the near future.”

“In a way, my agency’s green travelers are helping to pioneer the concept and the practices for the Federal government, and this is a primary reason that we have developed our policy with both common sense and with best management practices.”

It is a hope of the Maritime Administration that DOT, its parent agency, will adopt the GTP. “As we move ahead with many of our programs, we will actively share our successes with the DOT, the maritime industry, and our partner organizations in the Federal government,” commented the Administrator.

The Maritime Administration has a

host of green programs beyond the GTP. The Administration has partnered with the New York Institute of Technology to develop and build the world’s first “Solar Hydrogen House” on the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy grounds in Kings Point, NY. This completely self-sufficient house uses a 10.4 kilowatt solar energy system and hydrogen fuel cells to provide for its total power needs both day and at night.

Originally, the house was built for the 2005 DOE Solar Decathlon Competition held annually in Washington, D.C. True to its mission, the Academy used a modified shipping container to create a portion of the home. After the house, dubbed Green Machine-Blue Space, placed fifth in the competition, the house was moved to the Academy. DOE and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory plan to conduct analysis of its energy systems.

The Academy was also the focal point of a geothermal heating and cooling systems project. The systems were installed in the midshipmen barracks to increase energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.

Accountability is essential for implementing green programs at the Maritime Administration, says Administrator Connaughton. “The success of this green program initiative is a Maritime Administration imperative. To achieve that goal, my agency is setting up an Environmental Coordinating Committee comprised of representatives from all parts of the agency and they will be personally responsible for implementing all of our green programs.”

Future new programs are on the horizon, too. “We are working on several new initiatives that include green procurement, energy efficiency and alternative energy sources for our facilities and operations. In the case of alternative energy, we are already in the process of installing solar panels at our reserve fleet site, in Beaumont, TX.”

For more information on the Maritime Administration’s Green Travel Policy, please contact Shannon Russell, Director, Congressional and Public Affairs at the Maritime Administration, at [shannon.russell@dot.gov](mailto:shannon.russell@dot.gov), or 202-366-5807. ■



*PHOTO: Maritime Administration/  
US Merchant Marine  
Academy*

# Ted Turner Announces First-Ever Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria at World Conservation Congress

Voluntary standards help travel suppliers around the world meet increasing consumer demand for products and services that will have positive effects on communities and the environment

By *United Nations Foundation Staff*

On October 6, 2008, in Barcelona, Spain, United Nations Foundation Founder and Chairman Ted Turner joined the Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to announce the first-ever globally relevant sustainable tourism criteria at the IUCN World Conservation Congress. The new criteria – based on thousands of best practices culled from the existing standards currently in use around the world – were developed to offer a common framework to guide the emerging practice of sustainable tourism and to help businesses, consumers, governments, non-governmental organizations, and education institutions to ensure that tourism helps, rather than harms, local communities and the environment.

“Sustainability is just like the old business adage: ‘you don’t encroach on the principle, you live off the interest’,” said Turner. “Unfortunately, up to this point, the travel industry and tourists haven’t had a common framework to let them know if they’re really living up to that maxim. But the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) will change that. This is a win-

win initiative – good for the environment and good for the world’s tourism industry.”

“Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries and a strong contributor to sustainable development and poverty alleviation,” said Francesco Frangialli, Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organization. “Over 900 million international tourists travelled last year and UNWTO forecasts 1.6 billion tourists by the year 2020. In order to minimize the negative impacts of this growth, sustainability should translate from words to facts, and be an imperative for all tourism stakeholders. The GSTC initiative will undoubtedly constitute a major reference point for the entire tourism sector and an important step in making sustainability an inherent part of tourism development.”

The criteria were developed by the Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC Partnership), a new coalition of 27 organizations that includes tourism leaders from the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors. Over the past 15 months, the partnership consulted with sustainability experts and the tourism industry and reviewed more than 60



# UNEP

existing certification programs and voluntary sets of criteria already being implemented around the globe. In all, more than 4,500 criteria have been analyzed and more than 80,000 people, including conservationists, industry leaders, governmental authorities and UN bodies, have been invited to comment on the resulting criteria.

“Consumers deserve widely accepted standards to distinguish green from greenwashed. These criteria will allow true certification of sustainable practices in hotels and resorts as well as other travel suppliers,” said Jeff Glueck, chief marketing officer of Travelocity, a member of the GSTC Partnership. “They will give travelers confidence that they can make choices to help the sustainability cause. They also will help the forward-thinking suppliers who deserve credit for doing things right.”

The criteria focus on four areas experts recommend as the most critical aspects of sustainable tourism: maximizing tourism’s social and economic benefits to local >>> 19



**18 >>>** communities; reducing negative impacts on cultural heritage; reducing harm to local environments; and planning for sustainability. The GSTC Partnership is developing educational materials and technical tools to guide hotels and tour operators in implementing the criteria.

"The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria initiative is about steering the industry onto a truly sustainable path - one that echoes to the challenge of our time: namely the fostering and federating of a global Green Economy that thrives on the interest rather than the capital of our economically-important nature-based assets," said Achim Steiner, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme.

### About the Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria

The Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC Partnership) is a coalition of 27 organizations working together to foster increased understanding of sustainable tourism practices and the

adoption of universal sustainable tourism principles. The Partnership was initiated by the Rainforest Alliance, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Foundation, and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). These criteria will be the minimum standard that any tourism business should aspire to reach in order to protect and sustain the world's natural and cultural resources while ensuring tourism meets its potential as a tool for poverty alleviation. To learn more, visit [www.SustainableTourismCriteria.org](http://www.SustainableTourismCriteria.org).

Additional members of the GSTC Partnership Steering Committee are the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), Caribbean

Alliance for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), Choice Hotels, Conde Nast Traveler, Conservation International (CI), ECOTRANS, Expedia, Inc., Federation of Tour Operators (FTO), HM Design, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, Instituto do Hospitalidade, International Hotel & Restaurant Association (IH&RA), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Kenyan Ecotourism Society, Sabre/Travelocity, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), Solimar International, Sustainable Travel International (STI), The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), Tourism Concern, and VISIT.

For further information, please contact Amy DiElsi, United Nations Foundation, [adielsi@unfoundation.org](mailto:adielsi@unfoundation.org), or 202-492-3078. ■



# Rainforest Alliance

**14 >>>** end of 2009.

The Canadian government has taken steps to partner with the Green Key Program, as well. The Public Works and Government Services of Canada (PWGSC) has developed the Canadian Federal Government Accommodation Directory, which lists hotels and their Green Key ratings. Hotels are required to submit their Green Key rating to the directory in a bidding process to be listed as an "approved" hotel. Federal employees are highly encouraged to take the environmental practices of hotels into consideration when planning business travel. The Federal government and various departments are also employing a variety of educational tools and programs to encourage environmentally friendly purchasing decisions including the promotion of Green Key hotels to travelers.

Participation in the Green Key Program is certainly worth the membership fee. For \$350 per year, lodging facilities receive guidance on how to become more environmentally friendly, lower their consumption and operating costs substantially, and gain recognition in the Accommodation Directory. In addition, members gain partnerships with organizations such as the Association of Corporate Travel Executives, Meeting Planners International, Natural Resources Canada, and the Green Meeting Guide. The program hopes to implement third party inspections in the near future to verify that lodging facilities in the program described their operations accurately in the audit. In addition, there are goals of developing a green products directory, a carbon credits trading

marketplace, and a greenhouse gas emissions calculator. The program also plans to expand beyond Canadian borders, and already has three member hotels in Boston, MA, Grand Forks, ND, and Lake Placid, NY.

The success of the Green Key Eco-Rating Program serves as a good example which might influence our own development of a standard rating system for lodging facilities. The potential for energy savings, waste reduction, water conservation and low impact land use are tremendous when taking the 47,000 hotels across the U.S. into consideration.

For more information on the Hotel Association of Canada's Green Key Eco-Rating Program, please contact Walter Willett, Director of Business Development, Hotel Association of Canada, at [willett@hotelassociation.ca](mailto:willett@hotelassociation.ca), or 613-237-7149, ext. 13. ■

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