

Easy Does It

Businesses Adopting 'Simple' Eco-friendly Options

By Symone Salisbury

History is filled with misconceptions. French fries likely originated in Belgium (not France). Thomas Edison didn't invent the light bulb (he refined an existing model). Paul Revere wasn't alone on his famous midnight ride during the American Revolution. In the environmental world, many Indiana companies are disproving another common notion: that going green is difficult and requires a lot of green (cash, that is).

Some eco-friendly alternatives, such as minimizing paper usage or turning off inactive computer terminals to save energy, are free. Others involve a small investment that is offset by subsequent savings, like switching from incandescent to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), which use 75% less energy and last 10 times longer.

What are Hoosier businesses doing?

Companies in a variety of industries ranging from health care and hospitality to water treatment, recycling and payroll processing are making an impact. In addition, a growing number of local resources are available, including a free online service offering cost-cutting green tips called Green Piece Indy.

One company adopting green policies is Indianapolis-based health benefits provider WellPoint, the nation's largest in terms of commercial membership.

"We're identifying simple things the company can do that have a large impact," declares Mark Boxer, president and CEO of the operations, technology and government services business unit. "We've tackled the complex as well. We've gone to the realm where we're making investments."

Who needs paper anyway?

TruPay Corporation, headquartered in Mishawaka, is a payroll processor and human resources outsourcing group with three offices in the Midwest. Taking part in the paperless payroll initiative it kicked off last fall are manufacturers, financial institutions and other businesses.

In lieu of a traditional paper paycheck, individuals receive wages via direct deposit into their bank accounts. For those without bank accounts or computer access, earnings are applied to the equivalent of a debit card.

In addition, payroll information (pay stubs and W-2 forms) and human resources reports (accrued vacation time and benefits enrollment) are available online.

"Putting the technology in the hands of clients helps them to more effectively communicate with their employees and cuts down on the number of questions (staff members) are coming to them with," states Chris Sharp, vice president of sales and marketing.

The program also enhances TruPay's internal operations.

"It saves not only the cost of paper, but also energy," Sharp maintains. "We've seen a decrease in the time machinery (printers and copiers) has been running. We're spending less time on production, so we've been able to shift to other tasks that have a more positive impact on our bottom line."

"I think the trend is going (toward) fully paperless," he contends. "I think we're looking at a three- to five-year timeframe. and I see (all of) our clients taking advantage of that."

Meeting industry — what's hot, what's not

More and more, professionals in the hospitality field are working

toward conducting a zero-waste event, which maximizes green resources to produce as little waste as possible.

Angie Duncan is vice president of meeting operations at VMS, an Indianapolis agency specializing in event planning for the pharmaceutical and health care industries. Global meetings range from



The average lifespan of a compact fluorescent light bulb is 10,000 hours compared to 750-1,000 hours for incandescent bulbs.

History Paycheck			
Check Details			
Reg Check Paid on 2/2/2007 for period ending 1/31/2007			
Scott M Anderson, Jr. 684 Chestnut Trails Edwardsburg, MI 49112		Check: 10078	
		Net Pay	Net Check
		1,642.03	1,642.03
Earnings			
Code	Description	Hours	Amount
Comm	Commission Pay	0.00	125.00
Vacation	Vacation Pay	12.00	0.00
Holiday	Holiday Pay	8.00	0.00
Sick	Sick Pay	4.00	0.00
Reg	Regular Earnings	0.00	2,000.00
		24.00	2,125.00
Deductions			
Code	Description		Amount
401K	401(k)		21.25
InsPT	Insurance Pre-Tax		55.00
CS1	Child Support 1		125.00
			201.25

Electronic payroll offers TruPay clients a convenient way to go green.



One tip shared by Green Piece Indy: replace plastic water bottles with corn-based bottles (left). Corn-based bottles biodegrade within 80 days in a commercial compost and have a filter (right) that removes chlorine and contaminants from municipal tap water.

small gatherings with a few dozen people to product launches attracting 3,500.

Duncan says that while attaining a zero-waste meeting is extremely difficult to do, it's a worthwhile goal.

"Basically everything we're doing is electronic," she emphasizes. "It has been for several years, but now we can accredit that to our green program."

VMS promotes paperless meetings, for instance, which involve electronic registration and no, or online access to, handouts. The advantages? It decreases shipping/postal expenses for both parties and prevents attendees from having to carry cumbersome meeting materials at the event.

At the onset of planning, the firm helps clients choose environmentally minded vendors. Following the event, it provides a summary of overall savings achieved through green choices.

"There are things that cost more (to implement) and things that don't cost anything," Duncan shares. "Recycled paper costs a lot more than regular paper. If you want handouts on paper with vegetable dye printing, (it would be more expensive than) printing double sided or putting three PowerPoint slides per page."

An increasingly popular approach is substituting bottled waters with bulk water coolers.

"We saved a client over \$2,000 by providing water coolers in each of the breakout rooms," Duncan recalls. "If we translate that into bottles, it would have been about 4,000. That's one easy, easy thing."

Hosting a green event

A centerpiece of the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis campus in downtown Indianapolis, University Place Conference Center & Hotel is committed to providing guests and customers with green options.

Last July, for instance, it replaced the incandescent light bulbs in all 278 hotel guest rooms with high-impact CFLs. According to senior sales manager Heather Fuller, the facility is already realizing savings from the initial investment of \$11,000.

"We're saving 50% on labor calls and a little over 25% on actual purchases," she offers.

In addition, the facility's Common Sense program

promotes laundry reuse by letting hotel guests decide whether to change their sheets and towels daily. Further, some linens are donated to area shelters.

"It saves labor, detergent and water," Fuller observes. "Those are easy cost-saving measures and easy to implement."

University Place also recycles its cooking oil, which is made into biofuel, and it patronizes local farmers.

"There's not as much fuel used and emissions from travel (compared to) shipping things around the country," Fuller reasons. "If you can pursue local, it's a lower environmental impact all the way around."

Fuller notes that overall, Hoosiers' desire to hold green meetings is "still kind of in the infancy stages. We have received four or five inquiries in the past six months to year (stating) that it's a priority. Some are very strict about what they're looking for. I think the interest will definitely grow."

Reaching out

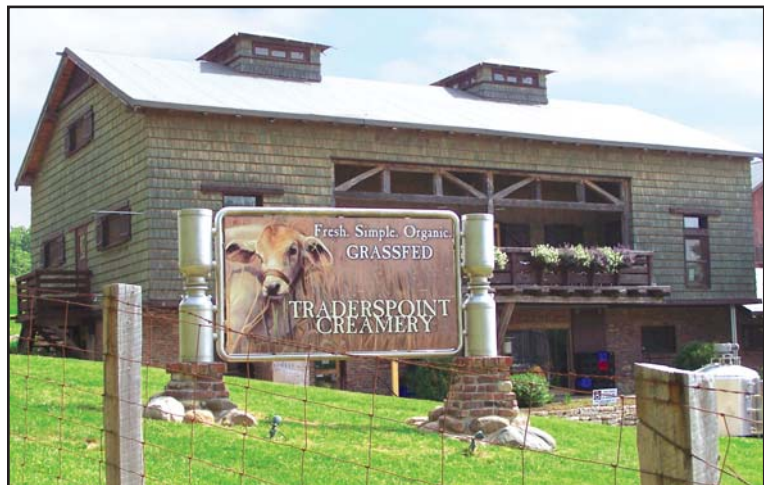
Through biweekly e-mails and on its web site, Green Piece Indy offers suggestions Hoosiers can apply at home, work and play. Examples involve recycling (where to properly dispose of electronic and hazardous wastes), traveling (how to calculate and minimize carbon emissions), reducing electric bills (using a low-flow showerhead), lawn care (how often and when to water your lawn) and where to find local farmers' markets.

"It's all about making it (going green) easier and more understandable for our local community," comments co-founder Renee Sweany. "Every little thing counts. Even if people want to pick one thing to do to be green, that helps because if everyone does that, it would have a big impact."

Another community effort is the Energy Star Change a Light, Change the World program in Fort Wayne. Launched last October, the goal was for 500 residents to replace traditional light bulbs with CFLs, which were provided for free at schools, businesses and community events. More than 1,200 people had pledged to make the switch at the time of this interview.

"In Indiana, every CFL you put in will save about \$11 a year,"

Dairy products used by University Place Conference Center & Hotel are bought locally, including from Traders Point Creamery in Zionsville.



says Wendy Barrott, director of energy and environmental services for the city of Fort Wayne. "If every home in Fort Wayne changed just one light bulb (and we have about 79,000 homes), it would save enough energy to light 27,626 homes for one year and (prevent the emission of) 91 million pounds of carbon dioxide."

Hold the salt

In 2001, FREIJE Treatment Systems introduced alternatives to traditional water softeners. Its versions operate without salt, conserve water and energy, and improve efficiency. Their success is playing a major role in the company's expansion, which involves relocating its headquarters from Greenfield to Mount Comfort Industrial Park earlier this year and plans to hire more than 200 employees by 2010.

"We send electronic frequencies into the water that take away the ability of minerals to stick," explains Bill Freije, president and chief executive officer. "They help to eliminate the harmful effects of hard water without actually softening



FREIJE's water treatment equipment eliminates the need for salt, cuts energy use and is easily installed (the model pictured is approximately 11 inches by 12 inches).

the water."

He points out that salt leads to unnecessary energy usage in other types of systems because as it forms hard deposits, more energy is needed to heat the water.

The residential version of FREIJE's sustainability alternative, EasyWater Systems, can trim an average family's salt purchases by approximately \$200 per year and save 6,240 gallons of water. The commercial counterpart, the Series E Electronic Descaling system, also produces significant savings by extending the life of equipment and eliminating water regeneration (thousands of gallons each year), maintenance and salt.

Protecting privacy ... and the environment

Maintaining client confidentiality is paramount at Chesapeake Recycling, located in Winamac. Its primary focus centers on computer systems, but it also deals with municipal electronics such as VCRs, televisions and stereos.

Services include document shredding (onsite and offsite), electronic data destruction and recycling.

"Our mission for customers is to protect their information and to eliminate any liability from them," remarks president Rob Howe. "By properly disposing computers, you eliminate that liability. We destroy all of our hard drives. We don't wipe the data and then sell them. Once we've rendered it useless, we send it off to

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Among recycling services provided by Chesapeake Recycling are onsite and offsite shredding of confidential documents such as legal papers, job applications and medical records.

an aluminum smelter (where) they melt that aluminum down and recycle it into new aluminum.”

Shredded paper is shipped to paper mills where it is recycled into secondary paper products such as paper towels and paper plates.

Chesapeake Recycling helps companies save money by working with them to develop comprehensive recycling programs.

“It’s one-stop shopping thinking,” Howe asserts. “We can probably recycle (cardboard and non-sensitive paper) for less than what they pay to have it hauled out with their trash or for nothing. And with cardboard, if the volume is high enough, we give a percentage of the proceeds back.”

Getting technical

A commitment to recycling 55% of waste annually and promoting online services are just a few of the practices that garnered WellPoint a spot on *ComputerWorld* magazine’s list of Top Green IT companies this year.

For starters, WellPoint was a founding member of Dell’s “Plant a Forest for Me” initiative.

“For every computer we buy, we require them to buy a tree to plant,” Boxer comments. “We would purchase computer assets anyway, but this way we’re working around the carbon footprint.”

Among other WellPoint policies are using high density ink toner cartridges (to reduce landfill waste), mandating environmentally friendly paper and recycling cardboard batteries. Plus, its “think before you print” campaign encourages paper conservation.

On a larger scale, WellPoint transferred nearly 1,000 computers and servers from California to a data center in Virginia.

“It is much more efficient in terms of cooling and air conditioning,” Boxer relates. “Even the computers the processing runs on are much more efficient in terms of their energy consumption and output.”

“We’re saving at least \$13,000 a month, and it will get much, much higher,” adds Dave McDonald, vice president of infrastructure support services in New Hampshire.

Use of videoconferencing technology will save 25,000 hours of staff time this year, dramatically lowering travel expenses and pollution emissions.

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“We’re very actively upgrading the technology to support more people working at home,” McDonald notes.

Boxer asserts, “We believe customers will want to do business with companies that have environmentally sound practices. It’s gone much beyond infrastructure and technology, and I think it will be a differentiator as we compete in the market.”

INFORMATION LINK

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