

Fall 2008

Go! Green Outreach, Fall 2008

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Division of University Advancement

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GO! Green Outreach

SHARING SUSTAINABILITY NEWS, EFFORTS AND IDEAS WITH THE PEOPLE OF CAMPUS

VOL. 2 • ISSUE 1 • FALL 2008

GO-ing back to school...

It's back-to-school time here on the beautiful University of Arkansas campus. That means more people, more cars, more traffic – and less parking! It's a perfect time to start that carpool you've been thinking about!



Ride-sharing, Car-pooling, Gas-splitting: Whatever you call it, it's green!

As northwest Arkansas attracts more people to the area, there are increasing numbers of cars on the road every day. Folks are driving to work, running errands, picking their kids up from school and generally staying on the go. Of course, we all know that the less we drive our cars, the more we are doing for our environment. But, it isn't always easy to figure out a way to drive less. Fortunately, there are a couple of resources that can help.

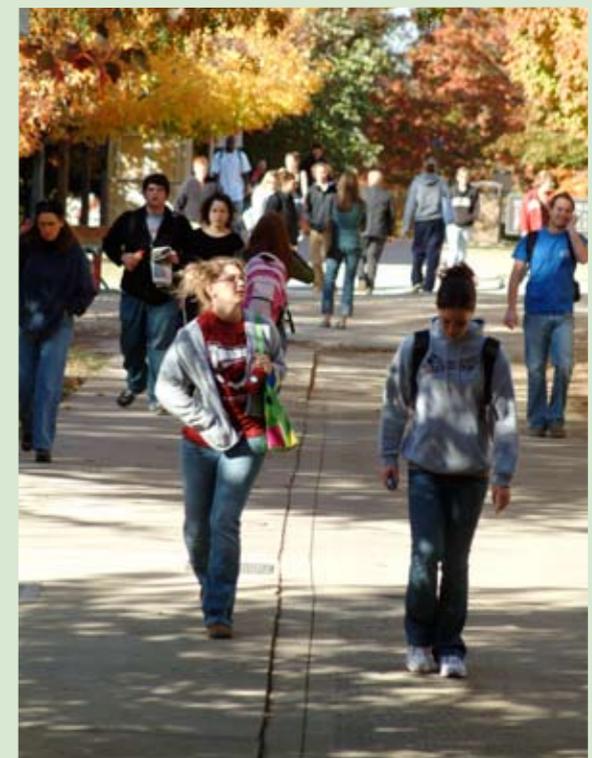
One site, www.nwacommute.com, offers an opportunity for northwest Arkansans to carpool to the office. Users search for groups who fit their needs, such as a group that travel from Bentonville to Fayetteville or from Prairie Grove to the University of Arkansas campus. Travelers can communicate through postings on the site and make arrangements. Those interested

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10 Schools That Get It

Every year, the Sierra Club ranks the top 10 green schools. The most recent ranking:

1. Oberlin College: Oberlin, Ohio
2. Harvard University: Cambridge, Mass.
3. Warren Wilson College: Swannanoa, N.C.
4. University of California system: 10 locations
5. Duke University: Durham, N.C.
6. Middlebury College: Middlebury, Vt.
7. Berea College: Berea, Ky.
8. Pennsylvania State University: 24 locations
9. Tufts University: Medford, Mass.
10. Carnegie Mellon University: Pittsburgh, Pa.

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in carpooling post their schedules and invite others to join in. Some are very specific about the type of person with whom they will share a ride. For example, one user specifies “no smokers, and tardiness with not be tolerated.” These types of preferences are necessary so the ridesharing process is a success for everyone involved.

The site also offers calculators so carpoolers know a fair

Peer Review: #1 Oberlin College

Oberlin College’s commitment to be green spans from high-level, campus-wide initiatives to real grassroots efforts. Here is a list of things going on in Ohio:

- A third of the food served in the college’s dining halls is produced locally.
- The school hosts the first car-sharing program in Ohio.
- Student activity fees subsidize public transportation.
- Half of the college’s electricity comes from green sources.
- A real-time monitoring system tracks 17 dorms and displays how much juice all those laptops, blenders and iPod chargers are burning at any moment.
- In spring 2007, Oberlin held its second eco-friendly commencement, with biodegradable utensils and programs printed on 100 percent recycled paper.
- The Oberlin College office of environmental sustainability created a listserv called greenscene. This listserv is meant to provide a space for environmental groups in Oberlin and Northeast Ohio to share their events, programs, ideas and questions with each other.

amount to charge for gas costs based on mileage. The same feature on this site calculates potential savings over a week, a month or even a year.

The first goal of nwacommuter.com is to get 1,000 cars off the roads of northwest Arkansas by 2009 to decrease our area’s carbon footprint by up to 3.8 million pounds. The Web site www.carpoolworld.com/ offers similar services.

Paper or plastic?

Remember when you had the choice for whether to get paper or plastic bags for your groceries? Well, the sustainable answer these days is a firm, “NEITHER!” Recently, a PowerPoint slide show highlighting the perils of plastic made its way around the Internet. While the presentation definitely had an anti-plastic-bag point of view, there were some interesting facts:

- Less than 1% of plastic bags are recycled
- It costs \$4,000 to process and recycle a ton of plastic, which can then be sold on the commodities market for \$32.
- Plastic bags end up in land and oceanfills, harming wildlife and water.
- Using cloth bags would save approximately 6 bags per week... 24 per month ... 288 per year... and so on.
- Some countries have placed bans or “taxes” on use of plastic bags. San Francisco became the first U.S. city to ban plastic bags.
- Plastic shopping bags are made from polyethylene: a plastic made from oil.

The bottom line: Use reusable cloth bags for shopping – it can make a difference.

To see the slide show, visit this URL or Google “the dangers of plastic bags.”



A Sustainable Union

Departments and divisions across campus are taking steps toward becoming more sustainable. Some are implementing new ideas and continuing best practices already in place.

Take the Arkansas Union in the Division of Student Affairs, for example, as a unit that has put effort into addressing sustainability issues. Even before the proposed energy savings plan implementation, the Arkansas Union had replaced lighting with more efficient lighting, renovated some bathrooms with touchless water faucets and flush valves and began using “green” cleaning materials. They are creating a sustainability plan and have added cardboard recycling. The addition of more paper and bottle recycling bins throughout the building is resulting in a greater recycling output overall.

Consider the improvement thus far. In just the first half of this year (January-May 2008), the Union recycled 83 50-gallon barrels of plastic bottles, up over the previous five-month period (August-December 2007) when 47.5 50-gallon barrels of bottles were collected. Paper recycling went up from 118 to 192 barrels of paper.

The 'Art' of Living a Sustainable Life

Art Hobson, physics professor emeritus, is active in the Fayetteville community and an advocate for sustainability in all facets of modern living. Here, Hobson shares his thoughts about sustainability with Danielle Strickland.

Q: *What are some things you do in your everyday life to be sustainable?*

A: I commute to work at the university six days a week by bicycle. I've made a point of living near my work, so I can bicycle. My main reason: It's fun to bike to work. Second reason: This helps the environment. Third reason: This means [my wife] Marie and I can be a one-car family, which, according to the AAA, saves us at least \$8,000 per year!

I recycle, using Fayetteville's excellent curbside recycling program.

Marie and I use heating and air conditioning as little as possible by using fans, insulation, windows, etc. We set the air conditioning temperature in the summer at 75, and we set the heating temperature in the winter at 65.

Our vehicle, a Mini Cooper, gets better than 30 mpg, although I'd rather have a Prius getting 55 mpg.



We use mass transit whenever possible (i.e. in other cities, especially in Europe). We never rent a car. We always use trains, buses, etc.

We shop as much as possible at the Farmers' Market. It's fun, wholesome and environmen-

tal. And, the food tastes great.

My work is mostly connected to the environment. My physics textbook emphasizes environmental issues. I'm an active member of the national Forum on Physics and Society and the national Physics and Society Education Group. I write a column for the *Northwest Arkansas Times* that discusses many environmental matters. It runs every other Saturday.

My biggest environmental sin is airplane travel. I fly to three or four national meetings every year, and Marie and I love to visit Europe and China. But, when we get there, we stick to mass transit: no airplanes, no cars.

Q: *When did you become committed to living in a more "green" way and what drove that desire?*

A: It was during the 1970s. The Vietnam anti-war movement helped awaken my social consciousness, and I was intrigued by the first Earth Day in 1970. By 1975, I was teaching about global warming as part of my physics and human affairs course.

Q: *What would be your recommendations to university staff, faculty and students for becoming more sustainable?*

A: Get out of your car whenever possible. Walk, ride a bike, live close to work, and work in compact, walkable communities. Transportation is our most important sustainability choice. The university should discourage or prohibit undergrad student automobiles, at least for freshmen and sophomores; many campuses do this. The Union eatery should not use throw-away materials*. University building tempera-

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tures are set too cold in the summer and too hot in the winter. Building temps should not rise above 65 in the winter, and not drop below 75 in the summer. Something is deeply wrong when people feel cold inside in the summer or hot inside in the winter.

Q: What practices do you think northwest Arkansas as a whole should implement to be more sustainable?

A: Get out of our cars, walk more and switch to mass transit. northwest Arkansas needs a light rail system. It needs to study the real transportation needs of our region. A current Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission study will look at only the feasibility of a new four-lane “western beltway.” But a western beltway is the worst of the available options. Any such study should look at all the options, including light rail, connecting buses and express buses. Also, northwest Arkansas needs to plan more compact, walkable cities. Car-oriented development, such as is occurring around I-540, is exactly what we do not need.

Q: What do you see for the future of sustainability – on our campus and in the greater sense?

A: This will be the environmental century. Global warming and other problems (increasingly high oil prices, water shortages, highway congestion, etc.) will cause us to become more sustainable. Fayetteville is already moving in that direction. We will see more bicycling, fewer cars, more recycling, more wind energy, more Farmers’ Markets and many other good trends.

Q: What do you say to people who think one person can’t make a difference? They think recycling one aluminum can won’t really matter.

A: Mahatma Ghandi had one answer: “First they laugh at you. Then they ignore you. Then they fight you. Then you win.” Another answer is that sustainability, like peace, always begins with you. Even more fundamentally, you should act sustainably for your own sake: Happiness requires self-respect, and you will not be able to respect yourself if you help trash the planet.

Art Hobson received a degree in music in 1955 from the University of North Texas, a Ph.D. in physics in 1964 from Kansas State University, and was on the UA physics faculty from 1964 until 1999 when he retired. He continues to work at least six days a week in his beloved “ivory tower” in the physics building, and claims that retirement is wonderful – you don’t have to go to faculty meetings.

**Editor’s note: Chartwells, the Union food service provider, is testing use of biodegradable and compostable serving items in several retail operations and plans to switch from disposable to compostable in the future.*

Let’s GO!

Do you have profile ideas, news and upcoming events for future issues of this publication?

Send them to Danielle Strickland strick@uark.edu.

News Briefs

Campus Bookstore Makes Changes, Supports Scholarships

As students return to campus this fall, the vibrant colors of the Ozarks are not the only things changing. For the past several months the University Bookstore has been working to develop a series of ways the bookstore can contribute to the university's sustainability efforts. Starting this summer the University Bookstore began offering customers a wider variety of recyclable products, paper products that are Forest Stewardship Council certified and Energy Star products for their rooms, offices or homes. The bookstore plans to replace its plastic bags with biodegradable one.

And, putting students first, the bookstore will participate with the Staples Corp. to set up recycling bins for alkaline batteries and ink/toner cartridges in high-traffic areas around campus. All money generated from the recycling proceeds will be donated to the university general scholarship program. When making purchases for the



bookstore, managers will give preference to suppliers who offer a sustainability program. In addition, the bookstore plans to develop a monthly lecture series focused on current environmental issues and sustainability programs.

Any questions about the recycling program can be directed to Nicholas Mueller, <mailto:nmulle@uark.edu>, new accounts coordinator for the University Bookstore.

University of Arkansas Among 'Greenest' Schools

Any prospective student reading the 2009 edition of The Princeton Review's The Best 368 Colleges will find essentially the same information about the University of Arkansas they found in the last two editions, with one significant difference.

The big change is in a new category, the survey's "Green Rating." This first-time rating is based on each school's environmental practices, policies and course offerings. On a scale of 60-99, the University of Arkansas gets a 97 rating.

"We are always pleased to be included among the best academic schools in the nation by the Princeton Review," said

Chancellor G. David Gearhart. "But as the publication points out, campus life and culture are also important to prospective students, and environmental issues are a significant concern for many of them when choosing a college. The University of Arkansas has been working very hard to become an environmentally sustainable institution, and it is satisfying to see that work recognized."

The full survey can be found on The Princeton Review Web site.

Turfgrass Scientists Focus on Drought Tolerance

Some grass varieties can go without water in the summer for up to 60 days with no damage and even retain some green color, says turfgrass scientist Mike Richardson, a horticulture professor with the University of Arkansas System's Division of Agriculture.

Drought tolerance was one of many topics at the Turfgrass Field Day Aug. 6 at the Arkansas Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Fayetteville. Most of

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the 190 visitors were turf industry professionals from throughout Arkansas and adjoining states, said Aaron Patton, assistant professor and extension specialist. Richardson said turf scientists conducting drought tolerance research nationwide hope to provide the basis for a “water star” seal that the public can rely on to signify superior drought tolerance.

“It’s the same idea as the ‘energy star’ for appliances,” Richardson said. “We haven’t worked out all the details, but I think we’ll get there.”

Visit <http://turf.uark.edu> to learn more about “turf tips,” upcoming events, and Division of Agriculture research and extension project reports.

Investing in Energy Savings

The University of Arkansas is working with the St. Louis Branch of Indiana-based company, Energy Systems Group, to design and implement an energy conservation program for its facilities. With



A newly installed fixed-roof rainout shelter allows University of Arkansas Turfgrass Scientists to evaluate drought tolerance differences among turfgrass cultivars.

board of trustees approval, the agreement between the university and ESG will eventually address 103 buildings, which represents approximately 86 percent of the total square footage on campus.

It will include auxiliaries such as athletics, housing and the Arkansas Union.

The campus will save energy and ultimately money after a variety of energy retrofits and the installation of some new equipment. Lighting improvements, building automation (installing sensors that control air and light depending on a building’s occupancy), and water conservation upgrades are just a few of the ways that energy will be conserved through this massive effort.

“We are excited about the opportunity to assist the university in its efforts to reduce carbon emissions and lessen its impact on

the environment.” Sterling Miller, ESG branch manager.

Expect more updates from the Energy Systems Group about how this plan is being implemented in the coming months.

Social Psychologist’s Campus Work Cited by National Media

Jessica Nolan, who this fall will be an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, examined global warming, recycling and improper disposal of used motor oil with three studies involving a total of 289 students. The studies were completed while she was completing her doctorate at the University of Arkansas.

In a *USA Today* article, Nolan was quoted in a story about what it means to think green. She found that students aren’t

inclined to disapprove non-sustainable behaviors in others. The story may be viewed here.



Upcoming Events

The university's Career Development Center will host two events Tuesday, Sept. 23 featuring Charlotte King, president and creative director of Snowden & King Marketing Communications. The topic of both presentations will be sustainability and being green. The first is geared toward college students, and the second focuses on business practices. King was recently appointed to the Georgia Conservancy Board of Directors and is a 2007 member of The Georgia Environmental Leadership Fellowship Program.



King

How Green Business Works

8:30-10:30 a.m., Arkansas World Trade Center

Environmental issues are complex and impact all aspects of modern life. The next generation of savvy business managers in every business sector, public and private, needs to understand the short- and long-term environmental impact of business decisions. Increasingly employers will need staff who can anticipate environ-

mental impacts to operations, human resources, product development and marketing, research, production and the financial bottom-line.

Register online – http://career.uark.edu/students/reg/2008/green_business.asp

Going Green 9-5

4-6 p.m., Arkansas Union Theatre

When you consider employment with an organization, how can you learn more about their commitment to sustainability? How important is it to “go green at work”? The next generation of managers and employees in every business sector needs to understand the short- and long-term environmental impact of business decisions. King's presentation will share employment trends and will direct our attention to growth industries. Students of all academic majors will benefit from this engaging and enlightening presentation.

Contact 575-2805 for more information.

