

“Greening” the Private Sector and Broader Community

Going “green” is no longer just a trend

With growing concerns surrounding climate change and rising energy costs, the need for businesses and individuals to evaluate their carbon output and adopt practices that better protect our environment and its resources has never been more important.

To that end, The Chamber is doing our part by making a commitment to connect businesses to resources to help companies implement green thinking in their purchasing, day-to-day operations and employees’ lifestyles at work and in the community. Through our various initiatives and partnerships, The Chamber provides opportunities for our members to become “green” certified from nationally-recognized organizations, to learn from one another and to share ideas. The Chamber is also embarking on a year-long process to become more environmentally sound as an organization ourselves and we’ll share what we learn along our journey.

Here’s what The Chamber is doing for you in 2009:

Green Certification Programs.

In collaboration with nationally-recognized Green Seal and North Carolina’s Institute for Sustainable Development, The Chamber is in the process of developing green certification programs for our members. The programs are scheduled to get underway in April.

Sustainability Survey.

To ensure that Lancaster County remains economically vibrant, environmentally sound and community-focused, it requires members of the private sector to take action. The Chamber encouraged our members to fill out a quick member survey regarding sustainability. The survey calculated what motivated them to take steps toward sustainability and assess how valuable they think incorporating sustainability into their brand is. To view the survey results, visit www.lancasterchamber.com then “Go Green.”

Sustainable Business Practices Group.

Our bi-monthly Sustainable Business Practices Group is an opportunity for business professionals to share, discuss and learn ways to help their business and the community take steps to be more prosperous and sustainable. Each session will be topic driven and feature on-site tours of companies that have incorporated sustainable practices.

Public Policy.

Reducing our carbon footprint is not, however, limited to workplace practices. The Chamber will support public policy that will provide financial incentives for companies that pursue ways to utilize alternative energy and conserve energy in their operations.

Professional Development Programs.

Throughout the year, The Chamber will be offering a variety of professional development programs and training sessions focused on sustainability and environmental business practices.

Membership Directory and Lancaster County Life.

The Chamber's *Membership Directory* and *Lancaster County Life* publications are going "green." Through a partnership with Nxtbook Media, LLC, The Chamber will be distributing our *Membership Directory* and quality of life pieces electronically. These innovative publications will have hyperlinks to members' Web sites and interactive ads. A limited supply of print directories and magazines will be available for a nominal fee.

The Lancaster Chamber News.

The Chamber is offering our members the option of viewing our monthly newsletter in electronic format rather than receiving a printed version. Those who opt-out of receiving the traditional hard-copy version will be notified monthly via email that the newsletter is available for viewing in our digital handbook located on The Chamber's Web site. For those members who use our Action Line inserts to register for events, you're encouraged to use our Web site, www.lancasterchamber.com then "Calendar of Events" to register.

Go Green.

The Go Green feature located on The Chamber's Web site www.lancasterchamber.com serves as a venue for members to share their "green" practices and provides links to resources that can help you reduce your company's carbon footprint.

The Chamber will continue to do our part to ensure our members have access to eco-friendly programs and online resources – getting us one step closer toward building Lancaster County into a model of prosperity for 21st Century America. *Watch The Lancaster Chamber News and weekly newsletter for updates.*