

IT'S EASY BEING GREEN!

Volume 1, Issue 3

October 2011

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE TASK FORCE

www.greenhenrico.com

County Employee Feature By Regina Hugh

Kelly Kinahan, a planner with the Department of Community Revitalization is pictured here on her Buddy scooter, her main form of transportation to and from work. Kelly lived without a car for about a year and a half prior to buying her scooter. Never really being a big fan of driving and affordability were two big factors for her choice.

Her commute from home to the office one way is approximately 20 minutes. Some of the pros to having a scooter are the ease of parking, excellent gas mileage and the feel of the open road, especially when the weather is nice.

Some of the cons are riding during inclement weather, (rain, cold and snow) and making sure it is always securely locked. So, how far can she go on a full tank of gas I wondered? The Buddy scooter takes her 90 miles to wherever. What fun!!!

If you would like to nominate a fellow employee to be featured in an upcoming issue of "It's Easy Being Green", please e-mail John Fowler at fow@co.henrico.va.us.



The ECTF Needs YOU!

The Environmental Compliance Task Force (ECTF) is a multi-departmental committee whose focus is to promote environmental stewardship and to address and prevent environmental violations county-wide. If you see an environmental violation you can report that violation at this address: <http://www.co.henrico.va.us/departments/works/ectf/form/>. *Examples of environmental violations include tire dumps, oil spills, paint dumpings, anything being put into the stormwater system other than rain water. Call John Fowler at 501-7319 if you see any possible violations.*

Curbside Corner cvwma

CVWMA has partnered with our curbside recycling contractor, Tidewater Fibre Corporation (TFC), to offer larger, wheeled carts for residential recycling. TFC has been transitioning to trucks which can handle the larger carts. New 96 gallon, wheeled carts with a steel bar for easy tipping, will be available for a fee this summer by residents who have curbside service.

The smaller 18 and 24 gallon bins can still be used as well as paper bags, cardboard boxes or a container of your choice. We can provide free recycling stickers to put on your containers, just call the recycle hotline at 340-0900 or visit www.cvwma.com to receive stickers.

For your convenience, there will no longer be a 40 gallon size restriction on containers, but all containers over 40 gallons must have a metal bar for easy tipping.

Visit www.juststartrecycling.org for more information on recycling.



Building Green from the Ground Up By John Fowler

What are Green Buildings? Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED as it is commonly known, is the new standard for Green Buildings that is sweeping the construction industry. LEED promotes sustainable buildings and uses a host of rating systems to promote more eco-friendly development practices. One of the core ideas behind LEED is communication throughout the LEED building process, all of the people involved in a development project are communicating – from start to finish. This novel approach allows each contributor to become involved early in the process so that the impact of their decisions and how they affect other areas are considered *before* construction.



Glen Allen High School is LEED certified Gold.

I had the pleasure to sit down with Bryna Dunn of Moseley Architects a few weeks ago and talk about the Green movement that is sweeping the nation. Bryna is recognized as an expert in the LEED community. She was a founding Chairperson for the US Green Building Council in 2000. She has served as President of the James River Green Building Council from 2004-2008, served multiple roles in the US Green Building Council including Chair, Vice Chair and LEED Faculty.



Holman Middle School has received the LEED Silver Award.

Over the years, LEED considerations have transformed the specifications that are required during construction. Since LEED is focused on continual improvement, the goal is that the requirements for LEED certification today will become the industry standard for tomorrow. As technologies become more readily available, they become implemented in construction. When I asked Bryna how LEED is changing the industry, she replied: "The top 5% of buildings drive the code changes and expectations. Today's LEED silver award winner will be the baseline for all buildings in 10 years." What this means is that more and more the building code that is followed is a result of the top performing buildings.

As far as cost goes, although each project is unique, there is usually less than a 1% premium on the total project cost. This cost is recouped after a few years by most building owners.

I asked Bryna what the average homeowner could do to realize some of the savings that are found in green buildings, here are some of her suggestions:

1. "Tighten up the envelope!" – Bryna says that insulation, as well as weatherizing strips on doors and windows is a huge energy saver.
2. "Use foam inserts on your outlets." Applying foam inserts on electrical outlets as a surprise money saver.
3. "Insulate your hot water heater." Water heat is the primary energy cost for a homeowner. The more you insulate your water heater, the more money you save.
4. "If able, replace that conventional water heater with a tankless model." Tankless water heaters don't have to keep the water hot all day long, they only heat water when needed. Hence, they are more energy efficient than the larger water-storing models.
5. "Move from incandescent light bulbs to fluorescent." This is a pretty easy switch to save \$\$.
6. "Keep your air filters clean." Cleaning air filters keeps your heating and air equipment running at top efficiency. Think about it, if you don't clean the filter, the particulates normally caught in the filter end up on your equipment. And that's not good!

Following these suggestions can save you big \$\$ on your energy bill.

Henrico County is highly involved in the LEED process. Our Board of Supervisors has committed to obtaining LEED Silver Certification in every new building over 5000ft². Currently we have 13 buildings that have been registered with LEED, Glen Allen HS and Holman MS received Gold and Silver Awards (pictures to the left).

We're Not Out of the Water Yet! By Kemper Marable

Although fall is upon us, and we may think that the summer water and drought concerns are over, we still need to consider our water conservation practices. Residential irrigation accounts for a large portion of domestic water consumption. Even when not faced with water shortages, water conservation is still a concern. Water conservation practices help conserve groundwater and save our community the cost of treating and pumping water.

Here are six simple steps to help you make better manage water used in your landscape:

1: Utilize rain water. Capture rain using a rain barrel or some other catchment device. Rain barrels hold water that has been collected from roofs. This is water that normally runs out the downspout and eventually into the storm sewer. By saving it in rain barrels the water can be used in place of treated tap water, lowering our water bills and reducing urban runoff. It is a free source of water between rainfalls or times of drought.

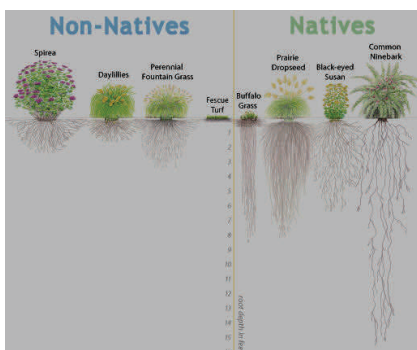


Rain barrels are a great way to save on water use.

2: Use trickle irrigation or soaker hoses to water flower beds and gardens. Unlike sprinklers which provide water to large surface areas, drip irrigation is capable of

delivering water precisely at the plant where nearly all of the water can be used for plant growth.

3: Practice good design principles. Plan or even rearrange your landscape with water in mind. When choosing plants, use native plants. Natives are more acclimated to the local environmental conditions. Unlike many non-native plants, native plants introduced into landscape plantings are hardy and less susceptible to pests and diseases.



Native plants have longer root depth, which leads to greater water absorption from the soil so less watering is needed. The result is healthier plants and lower environmental impact.

4: If you use a sprinkler or sprinkler-type irrigation to water turf, use a rain gauge to measure the water that reaching the ground. It is recommended to water deeply and infrequently to encourage healthy roots. Provide 1 inch of water each time you water. Sprinklers often run too often and not long enough. Water slowly so that water can soak in!

5: Know when to water. Do not water during the hottest part of the day. Approximately 40% of the water sprayed onto lawns during peak hours can be lost to evaporation.

6: Use mulch and good soil. Mulch helps retain moisture, allowing for

less frequent watering. Soil with good soil structure allows water to infiltrate; soil with poor soil structure forces water to run off of the surface instead of infiltrate to plant roots. Build up your soil structure with the addition of organic matter, like compost, to your soil.

7: Consider microclimates. Plant drought-tolerant species in sunny, dry spots. Likewise, plant things that like “wet feet” in areas that tend to stay wetter. Or consider a rain garden. A rain garden is a shallow, constructed garden with deep-rooted native plants & grasses. It is located in your landscape to receive runoff from hard surfaces such as a roof, a sidewalk and a driveway. Rain gardens slow down the rush of water from these hard surfaces, holds the water for a short period of time and allows it to naturally infiltrate into the ground.

A rain garden can be thought of as a personal water quality system because it filters the runoff from your roof and lawn and recharges the groundwater. A rain garden also conserves municipal water resources by reducing the need for irrigation.

These are a few simple steps to help conserve the water needed to maintain your landscape. In working with your landscape, you will certainly find other ways to conserve water.

If you would like more detailed information on any of these practices, please contact VA Cooperative Extension, Henrico County Office 501-5160 or Henricopolis Soil and Water Conservation District 501-5175

Remember, every drop counts!

Reduce your Solid Wastes through Composting By Robin

Wilder

Henrico County and other localities around the metro-Richmond area help to decrease the amount of material that must be interred into our municipal landfills by providing residents with recycling bins. This reduces the amount of landfilled materials significantly. If you are not currently participating in this program, you are encouraged to begin to help us reduce our solid wastes by calling 804-340-0900 to get your very own recycling bin.

If you are already recycling, then here is something you can do in addition to further reduce the wastes that are thrown into our area landfills: **COMPOST**. If you have even a matchstick-sized yard, you can still compost – there is someone out there who will gladly take the rich soil amendments that your table and yard scraps will produce. If you have a larger yard and/or planting beds – your dirt will thank you for composting with an abundance of beautiful foliage as they drink and eat up the rich nutrients you produce.

How It's Done:

- Collect your green grass clippings, brown leaves and/or shredded paper and put them in a pile.
- Collect your table scraps – except for the meats, and add those to your pile.
- Turn your pile with a pitch-fork every once in a while (the more you turn, the faster it works).
- Keep your pile moist – add water in drier weather.
- Bugs and worms are okay. No need going crazy trying to keep them out of your compost.
- Once decomposition is done, add the material to your garden a few weeks before planting.
- Got too much material to compost? Make a second or third pile.

It is simple and easy. If you think a compost pile would be unsightly in your backyard, then get a handy-dandy compost bin that is available commercially. They take some of the work out of it and look rather inconspicuous in your yard. Visit this Virginia Cooperative Extension site for additional information about composting: <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/452/452-231/452-231.html>.

Edited by Olivia Hall, Jason Young, Regina Hugh and Robin Wilder. Editor in Chief John Fowler

www.GreenHenrico.com