



Environmental Standard

Working towards a sustainable future

Welcome to the latest issue of the City of Houston's environmental e-Newsletter. We thank you for your continued interest in the activities and initiatives of the City of Houston in regards to our environment. This issue features the following: A look at The

City's Green Building Advisory Committee, energy efficient vending machines, Mayor White's recent environmental award, and the EPAs recognition of the City. The special feature in this issue is an article about a statewide CFL campaign. Also, be sure to check out the Environmental Spotlight, and the previous issue report.

Way to Go Houston

The City of Houston's Environmental News

Green Building Advisory Committee

Mayor Bill White announced the creation of an advisory panel to assist him in educating Houstonians about the benefits of high performance buildings. Panelists will share their experience with the design, construction and operation of their green buildings.

The City of Houston and the advisory panel will work together to teach citizens of Houston the importance of green building, which promote sustainable development that ultimately reduces the cost of living and improves the quality of life for Houstonians. For more information, the City encourages citizens to visit the green building page on www.houstonpowertopeople.com. The City is currently working on a separate

educational website solely dedicated to educating Houstonians about green building.

The City is leading by example with the construction of 21 city buildings that will be green, LEED certified buildings.

Projects currently pursuing LEED certification

Looscan Neighborhood Library – Completed June 2007, Fire Station 8 – substantial completion December 2007, South Post Oak Multi-Service Center / Vinson Library – substantial completion Spring 2008, Clayton House Library Complex – substantial completion late spring 2008, Library at the Gregory School – substantial completion Fall 2008, Parks Department Headquarters – substantial completion 2008, HPD Service Animal Facility – substantial

completion early December 2008, HPD Property Room – substantial completion early March 2009, Bracewell Branch Library – design commencing, Kendall Branch Library – design commencing, South Right-of-Way Fleet Maintenance Facility - programming commencing, African-American Fire Station 37 – design commencing, Fire Station 90 - design commencing, Oak Forest Branch Library Renovation – design commencing, Kingwood Neighborhood Library - Scheduled to be established

Projects currently pursuing LEED compliance

Westside Command Station – Completed September 2006, Northeast Multi-Service Center – Completed November 2007, Frank Branch Library – substantial completion estimated mid April 2008, Southwest Environmental Center (Household Waste Depository) – substantial completion Summer 2008, Kashmere Multiservice Center Renovation – substantial completion Summer 2008, Magnolia Health and MSC, in permitting, construction completion June 2009.

Take a tour of one today.

Energy Efficient Vending Machines

The City of Houston will save over \$34,000 a year in electricity costs and reduce annual CO₂ emissions by 277 tons with the purchase of energy efficient devices for all existing beverage vending machines in city facilities. In addition to retrofitting the existing machines, 50 new ENERGY STAR rated vending machines were also added.

The City of Houston purchased 285 energy efficient devices for beverage vending machines in City-owned and operated facilities and parks. The devices, which reduce energy consumption by powering down the machine when the surrounding area is vacant, are now installed on the machines. Together these energy saving devices will reduce the City's vending machine electricity consumption by forty to fifty percent. This represents an annual savings of \$34,712 or \$98 per machine.

Mayor White Receives Award

Mayor White was presented with the Synergy Government Award at the Citizens Environmental Coalition's tenth annual Synergy Award Luncheon. Mayor White has grabbed the attention of the community with his practical approach to making Houston “greener.” He has demonstrated that he knows what it takes to make Houston an environmental city. He's been putting his know-how of sustainability to work, and in the process, he's putting Houston on the map for becoming the energy efficiency capital of the world, and a model environmental city.

EPA Recognized the City of Houston as a National Leader Among Organizations Using Green Power

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that for the first time, the City of Houston appears on their national top 25 list, of the largest green power purchasers.

“Lighten Up Texas” – a statewide CFL campaign

Mayor Bill White proclaimed the Month of December, Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) month, in conjunction with, “Lighten Up Texas,” a statewide CFL campaign. Citizens are encouraged to begin the New Year with the resolve to become more energy efficient.

Mayor White joined four other Texas Mayors on Nov. 30 to call on Texans to switch to CFLs to reduce energy use in the State. These Texas Mayors officially introduced the CFL as the “state bulb” of Texas, from the front steps of San Antonio’s City Hall.

Lighten Up Texas is a statewide campaign encouraging Texas citizens to replace their incandescent light bulbs with energy-saving CFLs.

The purpose of these events was to raise the awareness of the benefits of CFLs. Forget most of what you think you know about CFLs. Today’s CFLs are not your parents CFLs from say, even five years ago.

The light from today’s CFLs are warmer, the bulbs are cheaper and more compact, they don’t flicker or hum, and today there’s a CFL for nearly every use,

including recessed lighting, three-way lamps, track lighting, and porch lights. There are now even dimmable CFLs available for lights using dimmer switches. And, perhaps most important to many CFL buyers who are put off by the spiral design, you can now get CFLs that look like a traditional light bulb.

CFLs last longer than regular light bulbs, save consumers money on their electric bills, boost the state’s energy efficiency efforts and help the environment.

Consider this: At today’s electric rates, swapping out just one 60-watt incandescent bulb for an equally bright CFL saves more than \$35 over the life of the bulb. Replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb with a CFL and save more than \$50.

And this: If every Texas household replaced just one 60-watt incandescent light bulb with a CFL, the global warming pollution reduced would be the same as removing 55,000 cars from the road — a string of cars that, end-to-end, would stretch roughly from Austin to Houston.



Mayor Bill White on the steps of San Antonio’s City Hall with three other Texas Mayors, screwing in a CFL bulb on a map of Texas.

Efficient: CFLs are four times more efficient and last up to 10 times longer than incandescents. A 22-watt CFL has about the same light output as a 100-watt incandescent, and CFLs use 50 - 80% less energy than incandescents.

Less Expensive: Although initially more expensive, you save money in the long run because CFLs use 1/3 the electricity and last up to 10 times as long as incandescents. A single 18-watt CFL used in place of a 75 watt incandescent will save about 570 kWh over its lifetime. At 8 cents per kWh, that equates to a \$45 savings.

Reduces Air and Water Pollution: Replacing a single incandescent bulb with a CFL will keep a half-ton of CO₂ out of the atmosphere over the life of the bulb. If everyone in the U.S. used energy-efficient lighting, we could retire 90 average size power plants. Saving electricity reduces CO₂ emissions, sulfur oxide and high-level nuclear waste.

High-Quality Light: Newer CFLs give a warm, inviting light instead of the "cool white" light of older fluorescents. They use rare earth phosphors for excellent color and warmth. New electronically

ballasted CFLs don't flicker or hum, as previously mentioned.

Versatile: CFLs can be applied nearly anywhere that incandescent lights are used. Energy-efficient CFLs can be used in recessed fixtures, table lamps, track lighting, ceiling fixtures and porch lights. 3-way CFLs are also now available for lamps with 3-way settings. Dimmable CFLs are also available for lights using a dimmer switch.

Compared with CFLs of five or 10 years ago, today's CFLs are much more affordable and offer dramatically better performance. Despite these improvements and their widespread availability, CFLs account for only 6 percent of all light bulb sales. Each of us can do more to cut the amount of electricity we use. One easy step is to change the lights in our homes.

Houstonians can log onto to www.houstonpowertopeople.com to learn more about the "Lighten Up Texas" campaign, and learn of other ways that they can save money by being energy efficient.

Environmental Spotlight

Since our last issue of the *Environmental Standard*, the City featured H-E-B and Abitibi-Consolidated's. Abitibi-Consolidated, one of the largest recyclers of newspapers and magazines in North America, in an effort to increase recycling in Houston has begun a new

public/private recycling partnership with the City of Houston and Texas-based grocer H-E-B to place 84 recycling containers at store properties located throughout the Greater Houston region.

The City is currently featuring Kirksey. Kirksey has issued a worthy challenge that they are undertaking as a company

and are encouraging their employees to take on; that is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing their carbon footprint.

The *Kirksey Carbon Copy*, developed by the Kirksey Center for Sustainable Architecture, is a guidebook detailing challenges and offering simple measures that they hope will not only change their practices, but challenge other companies and individuals to reduce their carbon footprint as well.

The program offers five easy challenges to employers and five easy challenges to their employees that, if taken, will reduce the output of carbon-based greenhouse gasses.

To see current and past environmental spotlight awardees, please visit, <http://www.houstontx.gov/environment/spotlight.html>

View Previous Issues of the *Environmental Standard*

 Our previous issue featured, an article by Sarah Mason regarding the mercury content in compact fluorescent lights, (CFL).

To view past issues of the *Environmental Standard*, log onto our website

www.houstontx.gov/environment/index.html and select e-Newsletters from the left-hand column, from there you can select which issue you would like to view.

Do you have an environmental question or comment for us?
If so please email us at envcomments@cityofhouston.net