

iReuse: Reduce Waste and Save Money



iReuse is a full service sustainability consulting firm, which has experience helping large property owners such as Autodesk, Birkenstock, Brandywine Realty Trust, Berg Holdings,

and Kaiser Permanente, to reduce their waste-to-landfill and improve environmental performance.

Ken Kurtzig, founder of iReuse, recently talked with *The Bottom Line* about the importance of recycling and composting, how to get a waste reduction program started, and how companies like iReuse can help businesses reduce waste and save money. Following are highlights from our interview with Ken.

Energy & Water vs. Waste Reduction Programs

When evaluating any opportunity for improvement, it is always helpful to fully evaluate the financial, environmental, and social impact of the specific project. By implementing a more thoughtful approach to operational efficiency you will be able to clearly identify what energy conservation projects represent the greatest opportunity for improvement as well as what waste reduction efforts will produce the greatest financial and environmental benefits.

It can be as easy as changing your lighting with an eight-month payback on your initial investment, or spending time working with tenants and employees to reduce your waste-to-landfill and saving thousands of dollars a year.

Waste reduction efforts often require substantial program development and oversight to maximize your results, but your investment always pays off: it is a win-win-win for the environment, employees, and the bottom line.

Starting a Waste Reduction Program

Starting a waste reduction program in your company can seem very daunting at first, but here are a few tips from Ken on how iReuse approaches a new site.

- **Work Backwards.** Identify the current waste disposal situation starting with your waste hauler. Determine what types of materials they will accept. Next identify what programs your building has to offer (e.g. composting). Afterwards, work with your janitorial staff to ensure that they are separating everything properly. Finally, talk with your employees to determine how effectively they are recycling.
- **Engage employees.** Think of your waste stream as a waterfall with the final destination being a massive landfill. If you don't do anything, everything in your waste stream will flow right to the landfill. Employees are the first step because they are the first to actually handle waste. Educating employees on the importance of recycling and composting—and what is recyclable—is key to insuring the success of a waste reduction program. Make it easier for employees to do the right thing.
- **Reduce Consumption.** Reducing consumption means less waste for disposal. Evaluate what printed documents are unnecessary or can be sent electronically can greatly reduce paper waste. Order only

what is necessary when purchasing. Reducing unnecessary use of paper can save your business a great deal.

- **Track your progress.** Keeping a record of your business' waste bill and recycling efforts each month will help track progress and monetary savings. Establish goals for your organization and make an action plan to achieve those goals.

Help Implementing a Program

Implementing a waste reduction program for medium-to-large companies and buildings can be challenging. However, companies like iReuse can help businesses implement these programs, which not only includes waste stream management and reduction, but also tenant and employee education, janitorial support, collaboration with local waste haulers, and monthly tracking and reporting to show measured improvements over time.

Waste consultants like iReuse can help to save its clients an estimated 70% on their waste bill and increase waste diversion by an average of 65%.

“Waste reduction may not be as glamorous as solar panels, but the financial and environmental impacts are substantial. In an economic period where savings and ROI is king, waste reduction just got a whole lot sexier,” according to Ken Kurtzig.

For more information on iReuse:

www.ireuse.com
email carter@ireuse.com
phone (415) 924-9977

For more information on Recycling Programs:

www.recyclenow.org

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In the BEA Spotlight: M.A. Silva Corks USA



M.A. Silva Corks USA has incorporated sound environmental practices in their facility and business operations to reduce operating costs. Their efforts have helped them to get recognized as a certified Sonoma Green Business and reach out to environmentally conscious winemakers.

M.A. Silva Corks USA's facility near the Charles Shulz Airport incorporates a number of energy and water efficiency technologies, which have helped reduce water and energy costs. The new technologies incorporated in the building include efficient water and air purification systems, caulked floor and wall joints, energy efficient lighting, natural skylights, and occupancy sensor lighting just to name a few. Additionally, the floor in the entryway of the office is made of recycled cork. Outside the facility, the company has planted drought-tolerant flora and installed rain shut-off valves on its irrigation system to greatly reduce irrigation water usage. M.A. Silva Corks use of water and energy-efficient technologies at its facility has helped them to keep operating costs low while protecting the environment.

M.A. Silva Corks has implemented a variety of different waste reduction efforts, which have increased recycling, while reducing waste disposal costs. One of the biggest switches the company made was changing from wood to plastic pallets. Plastic pallets are sturdier, easier to repair, and help

prevent cork contamination from contact with damp wood. After going through a waste assessment, the company identified the plastic bags which the corks arrived in as the biggest source of waste. Working with North Bay Corporation, it was able to start recycling the plastic bags, drastically reducing its waste. Additionally, everything thrown out is weighed and recorded to track the success of waste reduction efforts. The effects of the waste reduction program have been noticeable. "We've reduced our solid waste by 60% with the help of the program's recycling coordinator," said Quality Assurance Supervisor Adolfo Hernandez. "From a business viewpoint, we've been able to reduce the size of our garbage bin and the number of scheduled pickups, and cut our bill by a third." The company's waste reduction and recycling efforts have greatly reduced waste disposal costs.

M.A. Silva Corks environmental efforts go beyond waste reduction measures and "green" building practices. The company has made it a goal to purchase environmentally friendly products and services whenever possi-

ble. Its environmentally preferable purchasing practices include purchasing boxes made of 60% recycled material, biodegradable bubble wrap and peanuts, and soy-based ink for printing on boxes. The company uses a certified green cleaning company, which eliminates any toxic chemicals used and improves indoor air quality. M.A. Silva Corks commitment to environmentally sound purchasing policies has reduced its environmental impact.

M.A. Silva Corks recently achieved Green Business certification as part of the Sonoma Green Business Program. To be certified under this free program, a business must implement a certain number of environmentally friendly practices from a checklist and undergo free energy, waste, and water assessments to become a certified green business. In addition to receiving the certification, M.A. Silva Corks is also taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint by participating in PG&E's ClimateSmart™, which allows customers to take action on climate change by balancing out the greenhouse gas emissions from its energy use. M.A. Silva Corks environmental practices have helped improve bottom line performance by reducing operating costs while reaching out to more environmentally conscious winemakers.

For more information:

www.masilva.com

www.sonomagreenbusiness.org



Equinox Landscapes: Building a Sustainable Landscape



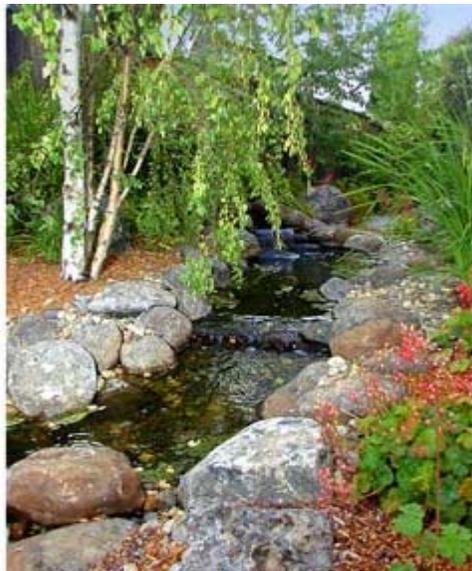
After ensuring the health of the soil, the second most important aspect of designing a sustainable landscape is to select the proper plants for the site. In Sonoma County, where water is sometimes scarce in the summer, that means selecting local, drought-resistant plants which have adapted to local conditions or other Mediterranean-climate plants that don't need large amounts of water.

Another way is to reduce the amount of turf on a property. Turf requires more water and fertilizer usage than drought-resistant plants. Additionally, fractional turf areas can be difficult to water and result in water waste.

One final factor to consider is a site's irrigation system. Smart Controllers, which automatically adjust run times in response to environmental changes, can reduce overwatering and improve plant health. Additionally, retrofitting a system to drip irrigation or low-flow sprinkler heads can also help to greatly reduce irrigation water usage. Utilizing a whole ecological system approach and the latest technologies (e.g. smart controllers), clients can save anywhere between 30-40% on their water bills.

Equinox's Sustainable Practices

Equinox Landscapes has implemented a number of environmentally friendly practices in its business operations. Equinox runs all of its company vehi-



With businesses facing mandatory water setbacks and a prohibition against watering turf this summer, several landscape businesses are promoting the creation of organic, sustainable landscapes.

One such business is Equinox Landscapes of Petaluma. Equinox Landscapes incorporates sustainable practices into the design of new landscapes and also in their business practices. Their organic, sustainable landscapes are designed to help clients reduce water usage and create wildlife corridors, while also improving the aesthetics of clients' properties.

Sustainable Landscapes

Incorporating sustainable landscape design elements can help businesses reduce outdoor irrigation costs, improve aesthetics, and improve the quality of the local environment. With water restrictions, sustainable landscapes become more attractive as a way to avert high water costs while preserving the aesthetics of the property. Below are a few strategies on how Equinox Landscapes incorporates sustainable practices when they design a landscape.

For Equinox, everything begins with making sure the soil is healthy. Using organic material and reducing pesticide usage helps promote the health of the soil, which in turn improves the health of the plants and promotes beneficial, soil organisms and increases the soils water-holding capacity.

cles on biodiesel, propane, or uses an electric/gas hybrid. Additionally, it has converted to all electric-powered equipment and tools reducing greenhouse gas emission and noise. According to the California Air Resource Board, a 2006 gas-powered lawnmower contributes 93 times more smog-forming emissions than a 2006 passenger automobile.

When moving to a new office in Petaluma after 16 years in Marin, Equinox was able to reduce costs dramatically and reduce consumption by purchasing recycled doors, toilets, and other fixtures bought at local recycle stores, "Restore" and "Recycle Town". Additionally, all of the acoustic tiles used in the office were donated by Sonoma Mountain Village. Overall the savings are estimated to be close to \$10,000 if completely new fixtures and doors had been purchased instead of recycled products. The move to Petaluma also allowed many employees to be closer to work including owner Patrick Picard, who bikes to work 3 times a week.

The company is a certified Marin County Green Business and a Bay-Friendly certified landscaper. Last July, Equinox was awarded Jared Huffman's Sustainable North Bay Award for innovative and environmentally responsible business practices and the San Francisco Chronicle's awarded them "2nd Place" in its Best of the Baylist for Landscape Design.

Their commitment to and passion for the environmental has appealed for years to their Marin clients and is helping them expand into Sonoma County. Equinox provides design, installation, and sustainable landscape management (maintenance) to both commercial and residential communities.

For more information:

www.equinox-landscape.com

Sonoma County Energy Independence Program



The Sonoma County Energy Independence (SCEIP), which recently received the Board of Supervisors approval on March 25, can help your business finance energy-efficient, water-efficient, and renewable energy improvements. SCEIP works by allowing commercial and residential property owners to finance improvements through an assessment on their property, similar to a loan.

These assessments are attached to the property, not the owner, and are paid back through the property tax system in semi-annual installments over time, making the program not only energy efficient but also affordable.

Only improvements that are permanently attached to a property are eligible for the program. Improvements like insulation, cool roofing, heating and air conditioning systems, waterless urinals, solar panels, and energy-efficient windows are acceptable. Additionally, there is a custom track, which is available for innovative projects that achieve energy usage or water reductions.

For commercial properties, a PG&E onsite energy audit is required to participate. PG&E has a dedicated energy-efficiency evaluator available at **(707) 577-1080**. Additionally, water assessments are highly encouraged. The Business Water Project can arrange free water assessments for most businesses in Sonoma County, excluding Santa Rosa. To set up a free water assessment, please call **(707) 565-7257** or **(707) 543-3985** for Santa Rosa businesses.

Applications for the program and information are available on the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program website:

<http://www.sonomacountyenergy.org/>.

8 Businesses Certified as Green at Board of Supervisors



Left to Right: Bruce Riezenman (Park Ave. Catering), Erick Rojas (MA Silva Corks), Jeff Kunde (Kunde Estate Winery), Supervisor Shirlee Zane, John French (Cartridge World), Mark Milazzo (World Speed Motor Sports), & James Colbenson (SGBP)

SANTA ROSA – The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors recognized eight businesses on March 14 for achieving Green Business certification under the Sonoma Green Business Program. These businesses join the ranks of

more than 1200 certified Green Businesses in the nine-county Bay Area. To be certified, participants must be in compliance with all environmental regulations and meet program standards for conserving resources, pre-

venting pollution, and minimizing waste. The Business Environmental Alliance offers its congratulations to Boden Plumbing, Cartridge World, Guttman & Blaevoet, Hahn Automotive, Kunde Family Estate Winery, M.A. Silva Corks, Park Avenue Catering, and World Speed Motorsports.

For a list of all Sonoma County Green Businesses visit:

http://www.sonoma-county.org/sonomagreen/green_listings.htm.

For information on how to become a certified Sonoma County Green Business contact, James Colbenson at jcolbens@sonoma-county.org or 707-565-6455.



State Water Board Order Bans Commercial Turf Irrigation

April 6, 2009- The California State Water Resources Control Board ordered the Sonoma County Water Agency to decrease diversions from the Russian River by 25%. The State Water Board ruling also prohibits the irrigation of commercial turf grass within the SCWA service area for the period of May 1, 2009 until October 2, 2009.

The water board handed down its decision as it approved a request by the Water Agency to reduce flows in the Russian River to conserve water in Lake Mendocino, which because of the lack of rain this year is critically low and would be empty by the fall run of Chinook salmon. Despite recent rain, Lake Mendocino remains at only 60% capacity, far below last year's level.

For the latest on the State Water Resources Control Board Order visit

<http://www.scwa.ca.gov/newsroom/stateboardorder2009.php>.

Business Water Project: Free Water Assessment

The Business Water Project can help your business prepare for upcoming water rationing with free indoor and outdoor water assessments and water-saving tips.

The Business Water Project assists Sonoma County businesses in adopting water-efficient, cost-effective practices. The goal of this project is to help businesses save money by conserving water. To facilitate this, the Business Environmental Alliance (BEA) is offering free indoor and outdoor water assessments to businesses within Sonoma County. Participants receive:

- Free water-use assessment conducted by a qualified, independent contractor
- Voluntary action plan for the reduction of water use and wastewater production at your facility, focusing on ways your business can save money
- Post-assessment assistance to help put water and wastewater reduction ideas into practice
- Public relations assistance to highlight the accomplishments of your business

The Business Water Project focuses on commercial, industrial, and institutional businesses as well as large irrigation properties. Most businesses are eligible except in some areas. Businesses using well water are not eligible.

If you are interested in receiving a free water assessment, please contact the BEA by email at bea@sonoma-county.org or by phone (707) 565-7257, or find more information at www.sonomabea.org/svbwbp. If your business is in Santa Rosa, please contact Sean McNeil, smcneil@srcity.org, (707) 543-3986 or call the water conservation hotline (707) 543-3985.



**BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENTAL
ALLIANCE**

401 College Ave, Suite D
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Phone: 707-565-7257

Fax: 707-565-7231

Email: bea@sonoma-county.org

www.sonomabea.org



PARTNERS

If you are interested in becoming a BEA Partner or receiving a free water assessment, please contact the BEA at (707)565-7257 or bea@sonoma-county.org.

**“PROFITABILITY THROUGH
SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL
PRACTICES”**

BEA Mission:

The Business Environmental Alliance (BEA) promotes the economic benefits of responsible environmental practices and provides resources to enable businesses to implement these measures.

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Sonoma County Farm Trails
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Sonoma County Tourism Bureau
Sonoma County Vintners
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Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers
Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau
U.S. Green Building Council
Windsor Chamber of Commerce

*A project developed by the Sonoma
County Economic Development Board*