



# Devens Eco-Efficiency Center 2008 Annual Report

Dona Neely, Executive Director

January 2009

## About the Center:

The Devens Eco-Efficiency Center (DEEC) was created to provide educational forums, support services, and partnership opportunities that enable businesses and not-for-profits in the region to stay informed of pollution prevention practices and to use energy, water and materials more efficiently. The DEEC's activities respond to the growing expectation and urgency for enterprises to adopt more sustainable practices and minimize their environmental footprint in response to global climate change concerns.

The DEEC also partners with the Devens Enterprise Commission to promote eco-industrial park development and serve as a model for others interested in advancing sustainability concepts.

This report highlights our 2008 activities and accomplishments.



## EcoStar

EcoStar is a voluntary environmental stewardship program with a unique branding and recognition component. This initiative was launched in 2005 with a mission to "promote sustainable development by integrating economic, social and environmental needs while maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base in the Devens area."

EcoStar Standards provide a guide for organizations interested in taking a comprehensive approach to decreasing their environmental footprint. If a member makes progress with 15 of these Standards, it earns the designation of "EcoStar Achiever" and the related branding and recognition benefits.

In 2008, EcoStar gained five new members and it closed the year with a total of 30. Members included 19 businesses, five non-profits, two educational institutions, and four government entities; these establishments came from eight different surrounding communities. Two of these entities committed to pursuing Achiever status.

### Member Activities

Throughout the year EcoStar assisted members in their quest to green their operations, including:



Increasing participation in the paper recycling program at American Superconductor;



Creating a green loan program that would encourage sustainable development projects in conjunction with the Ayer Planning Department;



Promoting accomplishments related to BMS's water recycling initiative to OTA (MA Office of Technical Assistance), who then chose to use them as a demonstration site; and



Documenting SpringHill Suites Hotel's green initiatives and an action plan to earn the EcoStar Achiever designation.

EcoStar also interacted with other local organizations, including:

- Accepting a large donation of products from Gillette, which were redistributed to several shelters and pantries, including Loaves and Fishes and Our Fathers House; and
- Reviewing options and strategies for Loaves and Fishes to establish a recycling program.



DEEC Director Dona Neely speaking to local businesses and EcoStar members about ways to incorporate more sustainable approaches in their day-to-day operations.

### EcoStar Workshops

EcoStar hosted two workshops during 2008. "Campaigning for Energy Conservation" focused on the basics of no cost opportunities to decrease utility bills and provided participants with an overview of the components of a successful conservation campaign that engages employees in "power down" strategies. "Green Building and the Bottom Line" featured a review of the economic, environmental, and social benefits of sustainable building design and included a tour of Fidelity Bank's new headquarters, which was designed and constructed using the New Buildings Institute's Advanced Buildings Benchmark rating.

## Roundtables

This series has provided a valuable venue for professionals with similar areas of responsibilities and interests to come together and learn from the sharing of resources, best practices, workplace challenges, and developing trends. Roundtables are held quarterly and participants take turns facilitating a topical discussion. This forum has been instrumental in attracting entities new to the DEEC; these forums draw an average of 15 attendees. Thirteen Roundtables were held in 2008; topics and outcomes included:

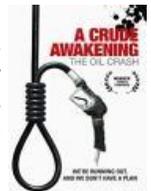
- **Compliance:** An OTA analyst and environmental law professor facilitated comprehensive reviews of local, state and federal regulations that pertained to water use and wastewater discharge and hazardous waste management practices.
- **Environmental, Health and Safety:** The group shared experiences and knowledge pertaining to employee training, electrical safety, OSHA, crane safety, fire safety, and zero waste strategies. Attendees found the dialogue to be so valuable they chose to meet on a monthly basis.
- **Green Building:** Representatives of construction and architectural firms exchanged information about energy efficiency programs and strategies for adaptive reuse. This group also discussed low impact development practices and organized a visit to UNH's Stormwater Center.
- **Transportation:** This collaboration spurred the pursuit of partnerships that could decrease empty vehicle miles traveled and transportation costs for area businesses and the evaluation of ride share programs for Devens employees. They also discussed the pros and cons of using biofuels in their fleets.



Chris Francis of BMS provides an overview of safety issues at an EH&S Roundtable.

## EcoFlicks

Educational activities took a lighter approach over the summer months with the new EcoFlick series that featured lunchtime showings of informative and entertaining environmental documentaries. The toxic comedy "Everything's Cool" portrayed the different messages coming from the scientific and government communities regarding global climate change. "Crude Awakening" told a compelling story about the impacts of our addition to oil. The films drew a good crowd and the series will be continued next summer.



## Great Exchange

Many of the EcoStar members continue to be active "exchangers;" the majority of the "waste" streams are redirected to Guild of St. Agnes (Devens), For Arts Sake (Harvard) and Extras for Creative Learning (Dorchester) for use in children's art projects. Materials redirected include:

- Excess paper inventory, plastic and cloth bags, Styrofoam sheets from Eglomise Designs;
- CD containers, CD label film, paper trimmings, spiral binder trimmings from Image Software;
- Worn sheets and towels from SpringHill Suites Hotel; and
- Sheets of plywood, fiberboard containers, and fiberboard cores from Sunny Delight/Veryfine. (This company redirected more than 2,600 pounds of "waste" in just one week!)



Donna Cail from Cains Foods and students from the Parker Charter School discuss potential reuse opportunities for a waste stream at the Great Exchange!

Other exchanges between businesses and organizations also continued, including Cains' plastic bags being used by several local businesses and the swap of bubble wrap between Peak Manufacturing (formerly Waiteco) and Parker Hannifin. These partnerships save participants money via reduced waste management costs and avoided purchases.

## EPA Merit Award

EPA New England recognized EcoStar with an Environmental Merit Award for its “outstanding contributions on behalf of our region’s public health and our natural environment.” The award specifically addressed the accomplishments related to The Great Exchange and the partnerships that facilitated the reuse of by-products and waste streams and ultimately diverted an estimated 35 30-yard containers full of materials and saved participants approximately \$63,000 in avoided operating costs in the first six months. This was a prestigious honor for the program.



## Power Down Devens



Several energy-focused tools and services were developed and made available during 2008 to help area establishments decrease their energy consumption and lower their utility bills. These include building energy-efficiency benchmarking with Energy Star’s Portfolio Manager, a conservation savings assessment that uses a Kill-a-Watt meter to calculate the energy draw of office equipment, the documentation of an opportunity analysis and action plan, and a customizable energy conservation campaign to engage employees in “power-down” activities. These services uncovered an average savings opportunity from “no cost” activities that exceeded \$1,500 for the first three companies that took advantage of them. These initiatives were sponsored by a grant received from the New England EPA.



Kill-a-Watt meter.

## Partnerships

Several collaborations and long term relationships were established during 2008 that will help the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center be more effective in pursuing its mission. Partnerships include:



**Colchester Redevelopment Authority:** An agency based in Nova Scotia and responsible for redeveloping a former military base. This group is interested in integrating the EcoStar program throughout their industrial park to promote sustainable business practices. This collaboration will help the exchange and adoption of eco-industrial park concepts.



**Groton and Harvard Locals:** These grassroots organizations are committed to promoting local sustainability initiatives throughout their community. The DEEC will serve as a resource for them and they will help make their town’s businesses aware of our programs.



**MassRecycle:** This state-wide program is focused on increasing recycling activities, primarily at the municipal level. This partnership will lead to joint collaborations to educate the business community.



**OTA (Office of Technical Assistance):** This entity, under the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, provides expertise in the areas of water and energy consumption, regulations, toxics. Their free services will be promoted to the DEEC’s target audience to expand our realm of offerings.



**TURI (Toxics Use Reduction Institute):** This organization provides educational and research services pertaining to environmental management systems and the elimination of toxic materials. Their offerings will also be promoted to area businesses.



**WasteWise:** This program, jointly hosted by the State and the EPA, provides support services that enable businesses to create and build successful recycling programs. EcoStar is a registered “Endorser” of the initiative and the goal is to collaborate on recycling opportunities and to provide case studies to our common audience.



**Universities (Antioch, Clark, Tufts, Dalhousie):** These colleges have environmentally-focused curriculums. The DEEC will provide them with access to student project and internship opportunities that will enable us to provide more services and allow the students to gain experiences that will assist them with their career pursuits.

## Earth Day Celebration

EcoStar's first Earth Day celebration was a great success. Over 100 people attended the **Make Every Day Earth Day** event, which included 20 tables hosted by local businesses that are EcoStar members, service providers such as the DEP, and environmental organizations including the Nashua River Watershed Association and Friends of the Oxbow. Their displays featured examples of practices, processes, and actions that make more efficient use of resources, save money, and protect the area's natural surroundings. The program also featured a trivia contest with prizes, a presentation of Bristol-Myers Squibb's sustainability initiatives given by their corporate vice president of environmental health and safety, and a ceremonial tree planting. This will now be an annual event for the community.



*Dan Noberini, Sarita Croce & Sue Voigt of BMS host their table at EcoStar's Earth Day.*

## Regional Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program

The DEEC continued to facilitate progress with the development of a regional collection program that will potentially support residents and small businesses of 11 area communities. Various service models were evaluated and the top two were selected for further study and budget comparison. This program will provide annual savings to the participating towns, significantly expand the level of services provided, and help ensure that household hazardous waste is properly managed. At the end of the year, a proposal was reviewed with the town administrators, who were very impressed and supportive. It is expected that they will give their full support to this program, provided the significant infrastructure costs can be partially offset.

## Miscellaneous

A presentation of the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center's programs and accomplishments was given to Representative (now Senator) Jamie Eldridge and (now retired) Senator Pam Resor, to share with them how we are supporting local businesses.

The DEEC also provided a comprehensive overview of its activities to several representatives of the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) and engaged in an exploration of potential future collaborations. Additionally, a Roundtable forum was organized to help the DEP collect feedback from businesses on strategies to incorporate in the State's new Solid Waste Management Plan and related initiatives to decrease the amount of waste sent to landfills.

The Center assisted with the organizing of the Industrial Symbiosis Research Symposium that was hosted by the Devens Enterprise Commission, Yale University School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, and the Eco-Industrial Development Council. A presentation of our programs, particularly The Great Exchange, was given to the international audience that participated in this event.

The Devens Eco-Efficiency Center became more formally established with the filings for our non-profit status, the further organization of our Board of Directors, and the development of processes.

## Looking Ahead

The staff and Board members of the Devens Eco-Efficiency Center look forward to building on the progress and momentum that was gained during 2008 and to becoming a more valuable resource to the area companies, non-profits, schools, and municipal entities in 2009. We welcome your comments and suggestions to help us gain insight to how this can be best achieved.

Visit our website [www.ecostardevens.com](http://www.ecostardevens.com) or call 978-772-8831 x3304 to learn more.

Respectfully submitted,

**Dona Neely, Director  
Devens Eco-Efficiency Center**



33 Andrews Parkway  
Devens, MA  
01434

Phone: 978-772-8831  
Fax: 978-772-1529

[www.ecostardevens.com](http://www.ecostardevens.com)