

What Can You Do?

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We all strive to do what is best for the environment and future generations, but aren't looking to construct a windmill or add solar panels to our facilities (not that it wouldn't be great if we did). There are a lot of articles about how we can reduce chemical, fertilizer and water use and increase habitat and native areas on our properties. There are, however, several small things that we can do to reduce our footprint and at the same time make our operation more efficient and profitable. Here are some simple things that we have found to be easy ways to reduce our environmental impact, often reduce costs, and/or improve our public or customer relations.

- **Paint fuel tanks** (\$60) - A dark colored tank will heat up and increase evaporation. A gallon of expandable light colored paint from your fuel supplier will keep your tank cooler and reduce fuel losses to evaporation.
- **Adopt-A- Highway** (free) - By committing to organize a group of staff, members or customers twice a year to clean up a 2-mile section of highway (generally a couple hours) you will improve your community while promoting your facility. It also allows a superintendent great face time with staff, clientele or both in a laid back setting (off the course for a change). The Adopt-A-Highway program provides the bags, safety vests, and



collects the bags of trash.

- **Energy audit** (free) - Most power companies will conduct a free energy audit upon your request. An energy consultant will tour your facility identifying areas of inefficient energy use. They will then produce a report suggesting unplugging unused appliances (soda machine in the winter), sealing doors better, improvement of light fixtures, possibly a load control for times of peak energy use, condition of utilities (water heater, furnace, etc.), etc.

- **Recycle** (\$10 month) - The addition of a recycling program reduces waste from your facility and closes the circuit material consumption. Find an individual within your operation to spearhead the program. Staff gains the sense of contribution for the better good of the environment.

- **Cancel unwanted catalogs** (free) - We all receive catalogs from suppliers that we have no need to purchase from (playground equipment, silverware, etc). Call them and ask to be removed from their mailing list. Less paper wasted and less junk mail to sift through.

- **Lawncare Class** (free) - Put together a presentation to educate your members or customers as the Best Management Practices for their home lawn. Touch on mowing practices (sharp blades, 1/3 rule, height of cut), responsible fertilizer programs (selection, calibration, and application), pesticide use and application (spot spray, timing), and irrigation use (deficit irrigation).

- **Birdhouse Sponsorships** (free) - Member/customer makes a \$20 donation to sponsor a birdhouse, you buy \$16 birdhouse and a \$4 name plate, and your facility has free birdhouses. The sponsor gains a feeling of contribution and ownership, and boasts to their playing partners that they now have a house on the course.

I have enjoyed implementing these practices into our maintenance operation and hope that some may find their way into yours for the good of all. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like more details on any of them.



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