The Green Door

Nov/Dec



The Green Door is a monthly newsletter of sustainable living and real estate geared to present and future homeowners.

"We are no longer able to think of ourselves as species tossed about by larger forces-now we are those larger forces. Hurricanes and thunderstorms and tornadoes become not the acts of God but acts of man." -- Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature*

Local Forecast: Drier, Hotter Summers and Wetter Winters with Less Frost

In October, the University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group issued a report, www.psat.wa.gov/climatechange, commissioned by the Washington Governor's Office. It illustrates how our region will be affected over the next century. Wetter winter months with fewer frost days will be followed by drier, hotter summers. Over the next 10 to 30 years, worldwide temperatures will likely rise by three degrees Fahrenheit. Regional temperatures are expected to increase by two to four degrees by 2040. These may not sound high, but even subtle changes in climate produce destabilizing, long-term changes.

Our local mountain snow packs are receding quickly—not good news for skiers and especially the levels of our rivers and streams. Receding snow packs and fluctuating precipitation will increase chances of winter flooding and summer dryness that would stress our water supply, hydropower, agriculture, forests, fish habitat, fragile eco-systems, and local economy. It will be a mess.

Water quality could be compromised. Coastal areas will be disturbed for people, birds, marine mammals and fish. What's more, warmer waters harvest more algae bloom, which can make shellfish toxic for people to eat.

Answering the Alarm

Recognizing warnings, our local government took action. In February, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels adopted the Kyoto Protocol to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions. By October, 187 other mayors had joined him. King County continues to purchase development rights to preserve forests and open space. In 2004, it bought 90,000 acres of the Snoqualmie Tree Farm. This is estimated to prevent 44,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions over the next 50 years—equivalent to taking 11,000 cars off the road each year. Nice job, guys.

Moreover, the county bought 235 hybrid busses and 140 cars. It is incorporating biodiesel into Metro bus and Solid Waste fleets. It created a large landfill gas-to-energy project, and has the largest fuel-cell projects of its kind in the world. Wastewater treatment systems were upgraded to capture more energy. The county established strict green building standards for government buildings. And they are developing plans so our region can adapt to the predicted impacts. "The days of the 3,000 mile Caesar salad are over." – James Howard Kunstler in The End of Suburbia. The whole prospect of global warming can be overwhelming. The best strategy is to break down how we can buffet its toll, whether at home, in the community or when conducting business:

At Home:

Buy locally produced food and products, and from locally-owned businesses. Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. The EPA says if every American household replaced five conventional bulbs with five compact fluorescents, this would equal taking eight million cars off the road. Compact fluorescents, which look more like coils than bulbs, last eight to 15 times longer and use one-quarter of electricity compared to conventional bulbs. Use energy efficient appliances. Energy Star appliances have already reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 4 percent. Turn off lights, unplug appliances and turn down your thermostat when not in use. Save trees. Use recycled, post-consumer toilet paper and other paper products. Invest in renewable energy. Ask your utility companies about green power. Air-dry your clothing when weather permits. Maintain adequate insulation to regulate the temperature in your home. Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost.

In Your Community:

Educate yourself about global warming. Here are some good resources: http://www.oprah.com/tows/slide/200510/20051027/slide_20051027_350_101.jhtml, http://www.cses.washington.edu/cig/outreach/workshops/kc2005.shtml. Vote for officials and initiatives working to slow and prepare for global warming. Encourage political representatives to take action. Plant trees. It takes four trees to offset what a person does in one month. Visit www.americanforests.org to purchase a tree they will plant for you.

No matter how far down the wrong path you have gone -- turn back!" An ancient Chinese philosopher cited by Michael Shuman in the <u>Eugene Weekly</u>

In Your Business:

Commit to ongoing reduction in emissions. Use recycled, post-consumer paper and office products. Recycle paper, computers and electronics. Give incentives for ridesharing, bussing and cycling to work. Consider telecommuting programs when appropriate. Source from local businesses whenever possible.

The American Weigh

During this fall's Bioneers Conference, author and activist Bill McKibben (www. billmckibben.com) said there is "no silver bullet to solve global warming." Even the much-admired hydrogen is not a panacea, he explained. We need to leverage every renewable source of energy while simultaneously reducing consumption. While attending the 1992 Earth Summit, the first President Bush said, "The American way of life is not negotiable." This sentiment is echoed in today's administration. But here's the hitch: It would take four or more planets to sustain the world's population if everyone consumed like Americans. Last time anyone checked, only one Earth is available—or inhabitable. While material prosperity has nearly tripled since the 1950s, the Gallop polling organization reveals that Americans' life satisfaction peaked in 1956. "Community is the answer," to changing our cultural dependence on consumption, says McKibben. We have to replace our dependence on oil consumption with something free but not easy: By building meaningful relationships with each other and our world.

Written by Heather Nordell for the monthly Green Lines column in Evergreen Monthly's upfront Evergreen News section. For the complete article visit:

http://www.evergreenmonthly.com/2005/em2112/globalwarm2112.html

Greener Seattle Highlight-Renewable Energy Subsidies are Here!!

Some of the most progressive renewable energy legislation ever proposed for a U.S. state is steamrolling its way through Washington's state legislature. With overwhelming bi-partisan support, the state Senate passed two bills that would create a thriving market for renewable energy in the state with a specific, and legislated focus on growing new, high-tech manufacturing. SB 5101 enables homes and businesses with solar PV and wind power systems to earn a credit of 15 cents per kWh of electricity generated by their renewable energy systems up to \$2000 annually. This is coupled with an additional production incentive. If a solar or wind power project's components are manufactured in Washington state the earned credit is increased from the 15 cent per kWh credit upward to as much as 54 cents per kWh. Additionally this rate would be available for a fixed 10 year period beginning July 1, 2005. SB 5111 will provide tax breaks for renewable energy businesses that currently reside in the state or choose to relocate here. And the bill goes above that to offer higher tax breaks to companies that locate themselves in economically depressed areas. Residents and businesses taking part in the production credit will be provided the per kWh credit (up to \$2000 annually) from their local utility companies. http://www.renewableenergyaccess.com/rea/news/story?id=23763

Make Your Next Choice Green

Product purchasing and consumption are the #1 wavs in which Americans act upon their environmental worries. Ask an American adult what he/she is doing to save the planet and their responses most likely will center on productrelated behaviors like turning off the lights when leaving a room, recycling products and packages (and more recycling), and looking for green labels when shopping. These activities are more prevalent than donatina to environmental groups or voting for green candidates, for instance. So maybe you can't run out and buy a green home or a brand new gas saving Prius but you can make your next choice green. Whether its buying something for your house, yourself or your Christmas list every choice counts-even choosing not to buy. Research the alternatives to everything!! http://www.ecolabels.org/ greenconsumers/ home.cfm

Seattle Sustainable Residence Diary #14

A little behind and a little over...time for catch up. The house is now insulated using the "blown in batt insulation" system. This results in fewer voids and higher R-Values (R-23 instead of R19 or R-21). It's the future-formaldehyde free of course. Drywall is almost complete and ready for combined vapor barrier primer paint –PVA paint. This is a vinyl base, but I believe it is chloride-free. So while still a chemical it is not PVC. The only option to PVA would be a "plastic" vapor barrier-not preferred in this climate. We are still sanding the recycled trim!! Yes it is worth it, but really time consuming. The next phase of painting and flooring are my responsibilities. So for those of you who know me well, don't wait, you can call me and volunteer now!! So it goes..**JRF**

The Green Door is brought to you by Cally Fulton and Danielle Johnson, both Real Estate Associates with GreenWorks Realty, Seattle and is written by JR Fulton, Architect and LEED Accredited Professional. To save trees and expand the opportunity to share information, please provide us with your e-mail address and the address of others interested in making their homes more sustainable. If you or someone you know would appreciate our real estate services please call-

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