



MEMO

Submitted by: Ceil Scandone 
Subject: Bay Area Green Business Program
2010 Status Report and Certified Public Agency Recognition
Date: September 16, 2010

Executive Summary

The Bay Area Green Business Program (Program) was initiated in 1996 by ABAG's Hazardous Waste Management Facility Allocation Committee. The Program assists and recognizes businesses, organizations and public agency facilities that voluntarily exceed regulatory compliance to prevent pollution, conserve resources, and minimize waste.

Annually, staff provides a Program update and asks the Executive Board to recognize the public agencies and officials whose facilities have recently been designated as Green Businesses. Since the last recognition event on July 16, 2009, 15 public agency facilities have been certified (see Attachment A).

Recommended Action

Staff requests that the Executive Board recognize the 15 Certified Green Business public facilities as environmental leaders who are protecting the environment and public health. These agencies are providing safer, more healthful facilities for employees, customers and students, reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, and setting an exemplary example for businesses, residents, and other public agencies in their communities and our region.

Next Steps

Introduce and present the 15 public agency honorees with Certificates of Recognition for their environmentally responsible actions and leadership. Continue to recruit, assist and recognize public agencies interested in achieving Green Business Certification.

Attachments: Staff Memo and List of Honorees

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS

Representing City and County Governments of the San Francisco Bay Area



To: Executive Board

From: Ceil Scandone 
Senior Regional Planner/Green Business Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

The Bay Area Green Business Program (Program) was initiated in 1996 by ABAG's Hazardous Waste Management Facility Allocation Committee. The Program assists and recognizes businesses, organizations and public agency facilities that voluntarily exceed regulatory compliance to prevent pollution, conserve resources, and minimize waste.

The first businesses were recognized in 1997 in Alameda and Napa Counties. Other counties joined in subsequent years. Since 2007, all nine Bay Area counties have offered the Program. Currently, there are 2,273 firms certified, including 145 public facilities. All are listed on the Program website at www.greenbiz.ca.gov.

The Program primarily serves small businesses, particularly consumer-oriented firms. Participants include auto body and repair shops, printers, wineries, restaurants, groceries, hotels, janitorial services, retail shops, remodeling contractors, solar installers, attorneys, architects, dentists, and landscapers. On the public side, the Program has certified fleet maintenance operations, corporation yards, police and fire stations, community centers, K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, civic centers, water treatment plants and the offices of local, state and federal elected officials.

Annually, we provide a Program update and ask the Executive Board to recognize the agencies and officials whose facilities have recently become Green Businesses. Since July 2009, 15 public facilities have been added to our Directory (see Attachment A).

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff requests that the Executive Board recognize the 15 Certified Green Business public facilities as environmental leaders who are protecting the environment and public health. These agencies are providing safer, more healthful facilities for employees, customers and students, reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, and setting an exemplary example for businesses, residents, and other public agencies in their communities and our region.



STATUS REPORT

The Bay Area Green Business Program had another busy and successful year. Collectively, the nine counties added 473 businesses to the listings-an increase of 26%. The Program continues to experience high demand in spite of the economy and recent strengthening of our standards that significantly raised the bar.

Certifications occur at the county level. The County Coordinators recruit and assist businesses through the process. They also coordinate the participation of the public agencies, utilities and other partner organizations whose staffs verify that prospective green businesses meet the Program standards.

The regional office, staffed by ABAG, facilitates ongoing collaboration among the county coordinators to ensure program consistency, the efficient development of materials, and maintenance of the website and other resources. The regional coordinator also maintains the Program's close relationships with state agencies, seeks new funding opportunities to expand the local programs and support additional marketing, measurement, web and other resources at the regional level, and responds to inquiries from jurisdictions interested in initiating Green Business Programs.

County status and highlights of recent accomplishments include:

- **Alameda County** has 481 Green Businesses. One of the first counties to offer the program, Alameda is currently in its 14th year. In addition to responding to demand from new businesses seeking certification, Alameda has been recertifying businesses, some for the fourth time. The Program has made strong connections to Green Jobs and Green Economy efforts in the East Bay. Alameda has played a leading role in testing the new online system, helping to identify and correct system problems.
- **Contra Costa County** has 384 Green Businesses. Now in its 13th year of operations, Contra Costa has spent many hours making the standards consistent, up-to-date and user-friendly to strengthen the online foundation for Programs throughout the state. They are working with longer-term Green Businesses to bring them up to speed with the new standards through the recertification process. They are also working to bring these standards into Contra Costa County government.
- **Marin County** has 408 Green Businesses. The County launched their Program in 2002 with City of Novato then expanded countywide. In addition to working with businesses, the Program worked with the county fairgrounds to help them obtain certification and to organize their 2007 "Greenest County Fair on Earth" event. The fair expanded its green efforts during the 2010 fair, and achieved a 90% diversion rate. It will be featured in an upcoming PBS show, California's Gold.
- **Napa County** has 79 Green Businesses, all certified since reactivating its Program in 2007. The Program formed key partnerships with the Napa Vintners Association, which helps to recruit its members, and with the Napa County Transportation Planning Agency, which assigned staff to expand the Program to other businesses. In 2009, Napa made a concerted effort to green the hospitality industry and successfully expanded certification to hotels and restaurants.

- **San Mateo County** has 120 Green Businesses. The County launched its pilot Program in July 2007 with six cities. Since then, four more have signed on: Half Moon Bay, Pacifica, Portola Valley and San Bruno. The partnership with San Francisco International Airport and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission has so far resulted in 24 airport businesses certified. The County continues to build partnerships and seek new funding to maintain and strengthen the Program.
- **San Francisco** has 181 Green Businesses. The Program is working with consultants to develop a strategy for expansion to new sectors. San Francisco led the effort to develop the online, web-based green business tracking and measurement database that was launched in the Fall of 2009. Staff has devoted countless hours to soliciting and coordinating input from all programs statewide, then working with the contractor to design and implement a system that serves our needs.
- **Santa Clara County** has 512 Green Businesses. More than half of those businesses have been certified in the past three years, as the desire to make their business practices more environmentally sound has grown to an all time high. Santa Clara's local partners remain committed to providing the referrals, site audits and financial contributions necessary for the Program to sustain itself and grow."
- **Solano County** has 8 Green Businesses. The County launched its pilot program to auto repair shops and other regulated businesses in July 2007. The Board of Supervisors authorized expansion to additional industries in 2008. Several businesses are close to certification and a number of others are in the pipeline.
- **Sonoma County** has 101 Green Businesses. After focusing its Program on wineries for several years, in 2006 the Program established a partnership with the county Economic Development Board that provided the staffing to expand to new industries. Sonoma County initiated and has coordinated the development of two new checklists for Small Manufacturers and Commercial Property Managers
- **Regional Program:**

Checklists: The Program completed a systematic update of all checklists in 2009, raising the bar in every section. A new checklist, currently in final draft form, was developed for Commercial Real Estate Managers. This checklist will be used to engage managers of multi-tenant buildings in the systematic upgrading of building systems and common areas to meet Green Business standards. Bringing building managers on board will make it easier for their tenants to be certified.

Measurement / Management System: A generous \$90,000 grant from longtime partner Cal EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) provided foundation funding to develop an online measurement system. Local Programs contributed funds and countless hours of staff time so that the system could be enhanced to serve as a program management resource. DTSC continues its involvement and recently provided an additional grant of \$74,500 to host, maintain and enhance the system.

The system was launched internally in September 2009. Since then, counties have been working to upload checklists, train partners and transition to this new tool.

On the measurement side, the system collects data from Green Businesses and calculates the amount of energy and water conserved; waste diverted; pollution prevented; and greenhouse gas emissions reduced. For the first time in the Program's 14 year history, we will have hard data to demonstrate its environmental benefits.

The management functions are equally exciting. Procedures that have been handled by mail, email, fax and phone are automated and largely paper-free. When fully implemented, the system is expected to speed up the certification process by 30%.

The system will also convert our Green Business listings to a searchable database format. The listings will be updated instantaneously whenever a business achieves Green Business status. The system will allow Green Businesses to have more descriptive listings, and will make it easier for potential customers to find them.

System development has been led by the San Francisco Green Business Program. Coordinators in the Bay Area and beyond have participated in its design, testing, and ongoing improvement, with particular contributions from the Alameda and Contra Costa programs. This has been a significant, groundbreaking undertaking. The system will be available to Green Business Programs throughout the state. It is being closely watched by US EPA as a potential model for use elsewhere in the country.

Outreach: With ongoing interest in green business practices, the Program continues to be featured in print, and on radio and television spots. Our businesses are represented in two Bay Area coupon books: the Green Zebra and the EcoMetro Guides. We are featured in the Air Resources Board's Cool California website as a resource for small businesses seeking to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The Program is working with the Environmental Defense Fund, which has created a map of California businesses that are part of the Green Economy, to add our businesses to their listings. A generous annual contribution from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District helps to support outreach efforts.

PROGRAM EXPANSION:

The Program is a model for other jurisdictions in California and beyond. Currently Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Barbara counties and the City of Santa Monica offer Green Business Programs. Collectively, they have certified more than 350 businesses. The City of Los Angeles and Mendocino Counties are organizing programs.

To promote consistency, efficiency and innovation, Bay Area coordinators joined with counterparts around the state and Cal EPA-DTSC to establish the California Green Business Programs Network. Members meet at least twice a year. The Network has facilitated communications, information and task sharing over the past two years as the coordinators and contractor designed and built the new measurement system.

The Program has attracted attention from beyond California. Montgomery County, Maryland launched a program this year and has 20 certified businesses. Inquiries have been received from Seattle, Chicago, Westchester County, New York, and most recently from Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

CERTIFIED PUBLIC AGENCIES

In every county public agencies serve as “certification partners,” contributing staff time to verify that businesses have achieved Program standards. Many local agencies provide funding support to their county programs, and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District contributes to the regional Program.

More than 145 public agencies have taken their commitment a further step by successfully seeking certification. Certified public entities include fleet maintenance facilities; print shops; corporation yards; civic centers; fire and police stations; a city; two towns; elementary, middle and high schools; water districts; sanitary districts; waste authorities; libraries; performing arts, community and senior centers; and the offices of county supervisors, state legislators, and a U.S. Congress member.

Since the last recognition event in July 2009, 15 public entities successfully implemented dozens of environmentally-responsible measures to meet our strengthened standard and earn Green Business certification. The 2010 honorees are listed on Attachment A.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to seek green business certification for facilities in your jurisdiction, please contact me at 510/464-7961 or at ceils@abag.ca.gov or contact your county Green Business coordinator. The County Coordinators are listed on the “Contact Us” page of the program website at: www.greenbiz.ca.gov.



Attachment A

The following city, county, special district, special district and state facilities achieved Green Business status since July 16, 2009:

Alameda County

Cal State East Bay Oakland Professional Development and Conference Center

Contra Costa County

Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
Contra Costa College, Collision Repair Department
Richmond City Hall
Office of Supervisor Federal Glover
Martinez City Hall

Marin County

Sun Valley Elementary School

San Mateo County

Midpeninsula Water District
Portola Valley Town Hall
Portola Valley Library
South Bayside Waste Management Authority

Santa Clara County

Office of Supervisor George Shirakawa
Egan Junior High School
Los Altos High School

Sonoma County

City of Sonoma Public Works Corporation Yard

