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MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

News Release

For Immediate Release: 12/16/2009

Leggett Announces Launch of Green Business Certification Program; Program is Unique Collaboration between the County, County Chamber and Montgomery College

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett today recognized the first 11 businesses and organizations to be certified under the County's new Green Business Certification Program that recognizes voluntary efforts to protect, preserve and improve the environment. To be certified as a green business, a company must demonstrate its commitment to environmental stewardship, conservation of energy and water, carbon footprint reduction, and waste reduction and recycling. The program includes an extensive online resource guide that also encourages businesses to expand their "green" activities.

"Many businesses are taking steps to incorporate environmentally sound practices into their operations, thus creating a greener environment and economy and improving their bottom lines," said Leggett. "With the Green Business Certification Program, the County is encouraging environmental responsibility, and customers will have a way of recognizing which businesses are going green. Businesses are telling us that our comprehensive program is actually motivating them to further expand their green activities." The County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce and Montgomery College are program partners.

"It can be challenging to run a business in Montgomery County because of regulations, taxes and high rents, but many companies still choose to make environmental responsibility a priority," said Montgomery County Council President Nancy Floreen. "It is only right that we recognize these businesses for the extra steps they take to safeguard the environment. Our companies that have long been known as the gold standard now will be recognized for their green standard, as well."

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in developing the program with DEP. They assisted in recruiting more than 40 businesses to provide input on the program and test the application and certification process before it was finalized.

"Business leaders understand that by implementing the best green practices, they can position themselves competitively and attract top talent, which is the key to success," said Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Georgette "Gigi" Godwin. "The marketplace is changing and our members are successfully adapting to that change, by making 'green' an important part of their overall business strategy."

DEP found that businesses are willing to engage in environmentally sound practices because it's the right thing to do and reflects their core values; they recognize the marketing and cost-saving benefits of green activities; and they have socially aware customers motivating them to be more responsible. Businesses responded favorably to the idea of special recognition and awards for green business practices. Certified green businesses will be listed in the County's online Green Business Directory, receive a certificate and window decal, and have use of the program logo.

Montgomery College joined the partnership to provide training classes that will assist businesses in making the changes needed to get certified, including: "Crash Course on How to Become a Green Certified Business," "The Business Case for Greening Your Operations," and "Leading Environmental Change Within Your Organization."

"As the community's college, Montgomery College ensures that course offerings reflect the priorities of the community," said Dr. Hercules Pinkney, interim president of Montgomery College. "Our partnership with Montgomery County and the Chamber provides local businesses with the quality education necessary to become good environmental stewards. Creating an environmentally sustainable future is another example of how Montgomery College achieves its mission of changing lives and enriching the community we serve."

The 11 businesses, non-profits and organizations that were the first to be certified are:

- **Bethesda Green**, Bethesda, through the generous support of local businesses, recently renovated its space with every effort to go green, including green building materials, low or no VOC paint, lighting, kitchen appliances, cork flooring and recycled paper countertops. By replacing fluorescent fixtures with LEDs, Bethesda Green projects an annual savings of more than 12,000 Kilowatt Hours. The color copier uses blocks of color pigment, like crayons, instead of cartridges.
- **Building Maintenance Systems, Inc.**, Rockville, strives to advocate environmental responsibility through adoption of everyday practices such as collecting data electronically; e-waste recycling; providing environmental education to staff; use of environmentally safe vendors and products; and donating equipment for reuse in the community.
- **Calvert Group, Ltd.**, Bethesda, secured commitments from its landlord as part of a new lease agreement to obtain existing building LEED certification, establish a dedicated area for recycling; provide additional secure bicycle storage; comply with Green Seal standards; replace lighting with high efficiency bulbs and LED fixtures; install photocells and/or motion sensors in all hallways and offices; and install "green" carpeting, replace bathroom fixtures to achieve water use reductions.
- **The Center for a New American Dream**, Takoma Park, practices a four-day workweek that reduces its environmental footprint and increases employee quality of life. The center's office has undergone a green renovation, complete with cork flooring, low-VOC paints, recycled carpet tiles, Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood furniture and chairs made from post-consumer recycled material.
- **Clean Currents, LLC**, Rockville, encourages its employees to live sustainably with an innovative green benefits package that includes incentives for public transportation, car sharing and biking to work; subsidies for EPEAT computers and Energy Star appliances; and funding towards membership in green community organizations.
- **Hallman Orthodontics**, Chevy Chase, began the transition to eco-friendly practices three years ago, reducing its consumption of paper by 85 percent, electricity by about half and plastics by about 40 percent, providing a model of sustainability for its patients, staff, friends and family.
- **Honest Tea**, Bethesda, supports the growth of sustainable agriculture through the purchase of millions of pounds of organic ingredients from countries around the world. In 2009, the company introduced a new plastic bottle which is 22 percent lighter than comparable packages and should decrease Honest Tea's consumption of resin by more than one million pounds. The company's office is outfitted with bamboo floors, reclaimed brick, windows that open, kitchen counters made with recycled glass and concrete, CFL lighting, used furniture and showers so employees can bike or run to work.
- **Marriott International, Inc.**, Bethesda with more than 20 years of energy conservation experience, has been nationally recognized for its commitment to protecting the environment. The company's "Spirit To Preserve" environmental strategy calls for: Greening its \$10 billion supply chain; further reducing fuel and water consumption by 25 percent per available room; expanding its LEED hotel development ten-fold in five years; educating and inspiring employees and guests to support the environment; and helping protect the rainforest.

- **Pepco Customer Service Center**, Rockville, earned the second highest utility score in The Carbon Disclosure Project; received the second-highest utility ranking in Newsweek magazine's Greenest Big Companies in America; and implemented an array of general awareness and energy-efficiency programs under Pepco's "Blueprint for the Future."
- **Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Pordy & Ecker, P.A.**, Potomac, uses recycled office furniture, carpeting, kitchen flooring and shelving, and Energy Star compliant appliances in its new building, which is LEED Silver Certified. It also uses supplies and vendors, when possible, that offer greener alternatives.
- **Social and Scientific Systems, Inc.**, Silver Spring, has a volunteer Green Team that encourages sustainability in choosing office supplies, printing vendors, electronics and paperless forms of communication; meets energy efficiency standards; promotes telecommuting, videoconferences and Web-based meetings over travel and recycling; and provides financial incentives to use public transportation. The company also has a comprehensive intranet site offering tips to employees on how to green their households, along with a "Sustainable Solutions" column in their weekly newsletter.

By going through the certification process, businesses become aware of the numerous financial incentives offered by the County, State and/or Federal Government that may assist with implementing green measures, such as rebates, tax incentives, free products and services.

Other features of the program include on-site verification of green actions by third party sustainability-trained experts, recertification of businesses every two years and public recognition of the certified businesses. DEP researched other green certification programs around the country and modeled the County's program on their best features.

The certification application is judged on a checklist of actions in seven categories: organizational commitment; waste reduction and recycling; environmentally responsible purchasing; energy efficiency and renewable energy; efficient runoff management and water use; pollution prevention; and transportation and travel.

Although certain checklist actions are required within each category, the certification process is very flexible, allowing businesses to choose from a broad range of actions. Businesses can also develop their own innovative actions that are consistent with the program's principles. Requirements vary, based on business size and whether the business owns or leases space. The cost of the two-year certification, is \$100 for small businesses with fewer than 25 full time staff and \$250 for large businesses.

Program emphasis is on day-to-day operations and policies, distinguishing it from Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) certification, which primarily focuses on building construction and major systems.

To view the online certification application and other information about the program, go to <http://mcgreenbiz.org/>.

For a listing of upcoming courses at Montgomery College, go to <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/bits/goinggreen.html>.

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