



# USDA Headquarters Greening Updates

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**Greening Updates:**  
**Sustainability  
Operations Council**

**Green Team**

Office of  
Operations &  
Environmental  
Management  
Division

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## Sustainable Landscaping – People’s Garden

As many of you know, on Earth Day the Secretary declared the entire grounds of the Jamie L. Whitten Building part of “The People’s Garden”. He also challenged all USDA facilities around the world to install similar gardens. The Office of Operations has been working to incorporate sustainable practices into the landscaping. In addition to the organic vegetable garden, rain gardens are also planned for the Whitten grounds. The next phase is to develop a Sustainable Landscape Master Plan. The plan will tie together all the Whitten landscape features, use landscaping plans that will demonstrate environmentally responsible practices, and educate and engage the public through accessible exhibits.



There are many interesting features about the new garden. One is the planter boxes. The boxes are made from D.C. urban trees (Black Locust and Oaks.) D.C. sends trees that have fallen or had to be taken down to a sawyer for reuse as lumber.

## Remember to Recycle!

Items that can be recycled:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Telephone books
- White & colored paper
- Computer paper
- Shredded paper
- Paperback & hard cover books
- Staples & paper-clips
- Catalogs
- Envelopes & boxes with plastic "windows"



The lumber for the planters was cut at Seneca Creek Joinery, which is located in Montgomery County. The photo above shows a Black Locust being cut into lumber for our planters.



A load of freshly cut lumber is being picked up for the People's Garden.

Remember to shut  
off your lights when  
you leave the room!



## Storm water Runoff

Storm water runoff from urban areas is a major and growing source of pollutants (sediment and nutrients) that are causing dead zones in the Chesapeake Bay. Our facility can help revive the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River by retaining and cleansing storm water runoff before it leaves our grounds. The Jamie L. Whitten Building grounds are located on D.C.'s Combined Sewer Overflow zone. That means that when it rains, the storm water runoff goes into a combined sanitary and storm water main. With all the hard surfaces in D.C., a lot of storm water runoff is produced, so much runoff that even during a moderate rain the combined sewer lines become overwhelmed and dump sewage into the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and Rock Creek. Each year billions of gallons of sewage overflow goes into our waterways. This year, the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority (WASA) is starting an Impervious Surface Area Billing Program which charges facilities a fee based on the amount of impervious (hard) surfaces on their property. The fee is being used to help implement control plans to greatly reduce the combine sewer overflows. The more storm water runoff from your facility, the higher the fee will be. One way to reduce this fee is to use sustainable landscaping features (similar to those proposed for the Whitten grounds) that retain and cleanse storm water like rain gardens and green roofs.

## Waste Minimization and Recycling

The Headquarters Complex continues to maintain a 40% recycling rate. Employees and Operations Staff have continued to help in our efforts to reduce waste in our facility. On Earth Day, Sodexo began offering customers a reusable cold drink bottle. Customers who use these bottles not only help us reduce waste, but also get 24 oz of soda for the cost of a 21 oz drink. So far, the response has been very good. Well over 100 bottles were sold in the first few days. You will notice that the petroleum-based Styrofoam soda cups were replaced with paper soda cups.



In April, Green Team members conducted a training session for the Janitorial Staff (OBSI) and USDA Operations staff on the Headquarters Waste Minimization and Recycling Program and solicited their observations and ideas.



Remember to shut off your fan when you leave your room.



During the training session, the OBSI staff noted that many USDA employees were confused about what paper waste can be recycled. One of the employees recommended posters describing the paper waste that can be recycled (magazines, books, colored paper, etc.) If you would like to help us by posting one of these posters in your work area, we can get you a poster.

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive recently announced the 2009 White House *Closing of the Circle* awardees. The award recognizes outstanding achievements of Federal employees and their facilities for efforts that resulted in significant contributions to, or have made a significant impact on, promoting environmental stewardship. Fifteen winners and 13 honorable mentions were selected from nearly 200 nominations in the areas of environmental management systems, pollution prevention, recycling, green product purchasing, alternative fuels, electronics stewardship, and sustainable buildings. The USDA Headquarters Recycle Program was given one of the 13 honorable mentions. USDA Forest Service (the Deer River Ranger District and Extreme Makeover Team) won a **Sowing the Seeds for Change** award for their Extreme Makeover Project at the Deer River Ranger District.

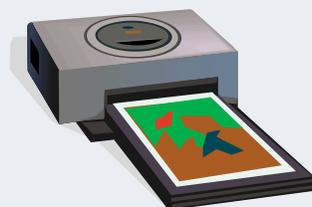
## Interesting Reuse of Headquarters' Waste

Dozens of one-liter water bottles collected in our recycle bins were used to make vermiculture containers for a D.C. elementary school. Vermiculture, worm composting, is another great way to reduce waste! Are you interested in making your own worm composter at home using those 1- or 2-liter plastic bottles? See the below web site for more information.

[http://www.greencitybluelake.org/images/education/Worm\\_PopBottleDirections.pdf](http://www.greencitybluelake.org/images/education/Worm_PopBottleDirections.pdf)



Remember to print only what you really need, Saving paper saves trees.



## Headquarters' Energy Updates

Energy use in the facility continues to decline. Electric and steam use since the last update continue to show significant reductions. The recent energy reductions are due in large part to the Utility Energy Services Contract work that has been occurring over the past few months. Since February over 6,000 florescent light fixtures were retrofitted to use energy efficient ballasts and lamps. Retrofit work in the South Building Kitchen has already resulted in significant savings in our steam usage (close to \$40,000 in April alone).

The *Federal Times* recently reported that the Obama Administration is reviewing all the existing goals and determining whether they should be updated, modified or otherwise revised to reflect the administration's green government commitments. These changes could result in changes in the way we manage the Headquarters Complex. If you are interested in reading about the new administration's ambitious greening goals for federal facilities, see <http://www.federaltimes.com/index.php?S=4057267>.

Remember to stop mail you do not want to receive, such as catalogs, etc.



## Outside Headquarters - Energy Savings Using a New Frictionless Compressor

As part of an Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) with Chevron Energy Solutions, the Center for Medical, Agricultural, and Veterinary Entomology (CMAVE) in Gainesville, Florida is implementing a number of energy saving technologies. One of the newer technologies is an Oil-Free frictionless compressor made by Turbocor. This compressor is part of a new 240-ton SMARTD air-cooled chiller unit to be installed. With this technology CMAVE is expected to save over \$30,000 annually on their utility cost. In addition to its energy efficiency, this new unit requires no oil, uses environmentally responsible refrigerant, and the sound level generated by this compressor will be less than 75 dBA. This will eliminate the risk of oil spills and make what was once a noise hazardous environment a place where hearing protection is no longer required.

For more information about the Turbocor compressor go to <http://interactions.smar dt.com/Docs/TurbocorProductBrochure.pdf>

For more information about the SMART chiller being installed go to [http://interactions.smar dt.com/Docs/Smardt\\_GeneralBrochure.pdf](http://interactions.smar dt.com/Docs/Smardt_GeneralBrochure.pdf)

## Federal Environmental Symposium Coming in June, 2009

The Federal community is cordially invited to attend the 8th Annual Federal Environmental Symposia, sponsored by the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive. This year's theme is "Focusing on Progress and Transition" with presentations including topics on: Environmental Management Systems, Green Buildings & Sustainable Campuses, Pollution Prevention and Toxics, Recycling/Waste Management, Electronics Stewardship Greenhouse Gas Management and Reduction, Green Purchasing, Fleet Petroleum Reduction and Alternative Fuel Use, Energy, and Natural Resources. There will be two conferences held -- Symposium West, hosted by EPA Region 10 on June 2-4, 2009 at the Hilton Bellevue, Bellevue, WA, and, Symposium East, hosted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on June 16-18, 2009, at the Natcher Conference Center in Bethesda, MD. Registration is now open for Symposium East and Symposium West! Go to [www.FedCenter.gov](http://www.FedCenter.gov) to see the agenda and to register. There is a small fee for attending.

