

Welcome to the Inaugural Green Page, Courtesy of the Machen–Wingate Advisory Group

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This is a monthly piece put together by the associates at Machen–Wingate that will be used as a forum to disseminate information related to green and sustainable development and business practices, including: Current Best Practices (CBP), current trends, noteworthy projects, government actions, etc...

This month of November 2008, we would like to step way back and look at the macro picture, the global forces driving the current focus on green and/or sustainable. These forces are the reasons that we now see “Green” on just about every product and service as well as in our daily vernacular. What are these forces, why are they just now gaining so much attention?

Sustainable development, green building, reduce, recycle, re–use, are all the new buzz words now. But the practices are not. Once upon a time, one had to figure out how to properly design a community to best take advantage of the terrain, the sunlight, the availability of water, as well as for protection and defense. One also had to figure out how to best build structures with the local products, it wasn’t really an option to import many products from far away. Not only how to build with the local products, but how to build a structure that could maximize internal light, heat and internal comfort, or keep out external heat, water, as well as the occasional arrow or lead shot. One also had to figure out how to recycle and re–use products over and over as it was not an option to go out and buy new.

With the continued ‘advancements’ in society, starting really in the Industrial Age, we were allowed to get away from the old paradigm of recycle, reuse as it was just as easy to throw away and buy new. Even more so now. We are beginning to realize the error in our ways. We have begun to use up finite resources, in the process, by creating and throwing away so much; we have altered the natural cycle of some of the earth’s processes. We have entered into a ‘perfect storm’ of circumstance: fuel prices going up, global warming via excess carbon emissions, drought, famine, depleting ocean stock, all of them inter–related and intertwined.

I believe that Thomas Friedman puts it best in his book “Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution– and How It Can Renew America”. A perfect storm of Hot, global warming; Flat, the rise of the whole developing world, India and China, and all the production and consumption they’re now doing; Crowded, at current rate we will have 9 billion people in the world by 2053.

As Friedman discusses, these three factors are “driving 5 interwoven problems: energy and resource supply and demand”, “climate change; petro dictatorship, or the rise of Russia, Iran, Venezuela, all these powers, purely because of the price of oil”, “biodiversity loss” and “energy poverty’, which is about the 1.6 billion people that have no grid connection”.



What Friedman's book points out is that we have reached a tipping point, and we must embrace the ways of our forefathers: reduce, recycle, re-use. We must embrace the 'new' order to keep the balance of nature in tact, actually to reverse some damage already done and to set a stable foundation for the future generations.

And it all begins with simple steps everyone can take at home or in the office. Just as one plastic bottle going in the trash doesn't seem to make a big difference, when you multiply that one bottle by hundreds of millions being thrown away DAILY! You suddenly have a huge issue. The reverse is, just one person:

- **Turning off** unused lights and electronics
- Filling **reusable** bottles (plastic or otherwise) with tap water versus continually purchasing and throwing out bottled water. It has also been scientifically proven that most bottled waters are only as good, or worse, than your tap water.
- **Reduce** your car use by walking versus driving on one or two trips a week.
- USE YOUR MUNICIPAL **RECYCLE SERVICE!** If you don't have one, let me know, I will help your municipality get one started.

These are the simple, easy steps that are consistently paraded in the public's eye, because they are simple and easy and they really can make a difference.

Please visit www.epa.gov/oaintrnt/practices to view more easy-to-do information regarding green and sustainable practices.

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