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YOUR Green Fast Facts

According to McAfee, a computer security company, spammers generated 62 TRILLION junk emails. The electricity used sending the emails could have powered 2.4 million homes for a year or driven a car around the planet 1.6 times.



Get YOUR Green On

Volume 1, Issue 2



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Successful Earth Day 2009

The City of Des Moines had a successful Earth Day this year. A number of events- tree planting at Harwood and Cummins Parkway, the Trash Bash, a Climate Conversation and the Annual Mayors Bike Ride, all contributed to the success. Residents across the Des Moines metro area took advantage of the opportunities to learn and became more engaged in creating a sustainable community.

The inclusion of all age groups played a major role in making Earth Day so successful. The tree planting was attended by students from Hanawalt, Greenwood and The Downtown Elementary Schools who planted trees in the public right-of-way at Harwood and Cummins Parkway This educational event encouraged hands-on activities and allowed the children/participants to see firsthand how they can help the environment and the importance of trees.

The Second Annual Trash Bash was a resounding success. About 34 organizations from the Des Moines metro area and approximately 750 volunteers participated in this years' clean-up along the Des Moines River. The volunteers set a new

record working 2 1/2 hours for a total of 1,875 hours of work, doubling last year's record. Items as small as cigarette butts and as large as tires, were picked up. Volunteers collected an estimated 23,000 pounds or about 93 cubic yards of trash. An interesting calculation: if all the trash were put in 3x3 foot boxes, the trash collected would be almost 28 stories high. At the end of the clean-up a Trash Bash celebration was held to thank all those who participated.

The Climate Conversation in the evening was led by Mayor Frank Cownie. The conversation presented information on the actions the city has taken to become a more sustainable organization. The city has expanded the recreational trail system, become a bike-friendly community, purchased electric and hybrid vehicles in the fleet, built LEED buildings, uses of green cleaning supplies, uses of alternative fuels and others initiatives. These sustainable activities illustrated to those in attendance the commitment the city has in creating an environmentally responsible workplace and community.

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The Mayor's Bike Ride



The annual Mayor's Bike Ride for Trails was held on Saturday, April 18th and celebrated it's 22nd year. . An estimated 900 bike riders braved the rain and cool weather to ride either the 20 or 30 mile route through the city. The ride encourages alternative, green transportation and raises funds for the Des Moines Recreational Trail System.

Successful Earth Day 2009 (continued)

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One area of sustainability that surprised many participants was the number of acres the city has converted from unmaintained grass to more natural plantings and grasses. Of the 3,500 acres of parkland owned by the city, approximately 2,900 acres have been converted. This work by the Parks Department has drastically reduced the number of hours mowing that is required, thus, reducing green house gases. In addition, the natural areas reduce or eliminate the need for irrigation watering, fertilizers and driving of vehicles for hauling maintenance equipment.

Those in attendance at the *Conversation* were all passionate about creating a more

green and sustainable community. The group suggested a wide range of initiatives including:

- developing a "green friendly" building permit system with incentives for individuals and businesses to develop green projects on their properties;
- reduce property taxes for green projects,
- linking green organizations/groups to the city's green website and others.

The one area that generated a lot of discussion was education. There was a consensus among the group that there needs to be more educational opportunities for people of all ages so they can become knowledgeable in how to live a more sustainable lifestyle. Some of the organizations in atten-

dance agreed they would look into seeing how they could improve this area.

Finally, it was agreed upon by all that it will take the effort of not just government, although it should be a leader, in making sustainability a part of the fabric of the community. Participation by both public and private sectors is needed to make real progress towards Des Moines becoming a sustainable city.

Overall, this Earth Day and all the associated events were a great success. From the educational elements of the tree planting to the celebrations of the record breaking Trash Bash, and the progressive conversation of Climate Control the City of Des Moines is taking the necessary steps to become a sustainable community and invites

Amazing Race Host, Phil Keoghan, Visits Des Moines



Phil Keoghan, host of the hit CBS series *Amazing Race*, addresses a crowd at the State Capitol West Terrace. "Phil's Rides Across America" which supported the National Multiple Sclerosis Society took him from coast to coast.

Phil Keoghan, host of CBS Network's *Amazing Race*, stopped in Des Moines on his bike ride across America. On Phil's 90-mile route across the extensive Greater Des Moines Recreational Trail System in Central Iowa he made several stops throughout the Des Moines metro area where he was joined by teams of local riders including Mayor Cownie. Through the collaboration of GNC, City of Des Moines, Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitor's Bureau, STAR 102.5 FM and the Des Moines Partnership, a welcome celebration for Phil was held at the West Terrace of the State Capitol. He rode the trail and city bike routes all the way to the capitol.



While speaking to the crowd, Phil declared the trail system in the Des Moines metro to be "world class" and the best he had ridden.

Green Things YOU Can Do

Water is one of our most valuable resources however in discussions about sustainability the topic sometimes gets lost. The cornerstone for all living things, plants, animals and humans is water. It is essential that we all work together to maintain a source of clean water that can be used by all. Everyone can take an active role in keeping water clean. Here are some ways to conserve this essential resource from examples from the American Water Works Association .

1. Don't leave the faucet running while you brush your teeth.
2. Only turn on the dishwasher and washing machine when you have a full load.
3. Plant more native or drought-resistant plants that do not require much water.
4. Repair dripping faucets and leaky toilets. Dripping faucets can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water each year in the average home. Leaky toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons per day.
5. Help preserve the quality of the available water supply by not overusing pesticides and fertilizers, avoiding flushing medications down the toilet or sink, and disposing of hazardous materials properly.

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We welcome YOUR green ideas!
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