



The Closed-Loop Scoop

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Sustainability, the Brazilian Way

A report from Emma Johnson, our South American correspondent

With other planning enthusiasts from the Northwest, I recently visited Curitiba, the "Ecological Capital" of the state of Paraná, in southern Brazil. Numerous books and magazines hail this city (pronounced Kureh-cheeba) as a model for sustainable development. We arranged a tour of the city with the Free University for the Environment, who showed us aspects of green spaces, transportation, social programs, and waste management.

Upon our arrival in the city, nothing immediately stood out as remarkably progressive and environmental. The city is 309 years old and is about the size of Seattle, with 1.6 million people living in 432 square kilometers. It is located about 100 miles inland, and is more rainy and cloudy than many other parts of Brazil. In fact, Curitiba feels similar to Seattle in character, weather, and density.

Curitiba has everything a typical city has: automobiles, litter, graffiti, and poverty. After four days of exploring the city, we came to realize that Curitiba is an extremely hopeful example of sustainable development. In other Brazilian cities, including Rio de Janeiro (pop. 12+ million) and Sao Paulo (pop. 21+ million), the reality of a large young population, a lack of rural employment, and land ownership policies which have hyper-developed the urban areas and resulted in extreme



concentration of wealth. Homelessness and large, growing favelas (slums) that lack sanitation services are typical conditions of Brazilian cities, although there are many pockets of wealth, tourism, art, and stability. Planning and development is often sporadic and opportunistic, depending on government leadership or immediate needs. Diesel buses and taxis snarl the traffic in the large cities, causing poor air quality and lots of noise. Rural areas I have visited, especially in the Northeast, are typically poor, lack good health services, and have significant rates of illiteracy.

Curitiba began to plan for a different type of development in the early 1960's, under the leadership of mayor Jaime Lerner. This foresight has created a city that has 51.50 square meters of green space per inhabitant. There are 120 kilometers of bikeways, 110 kilometers of integrated bus lines, and 72 kilometers of segregated bus lines. Treated water is available to 99% of the population, and 99.5% of the houses have garbage collection services. They have reduced the maternal mortality rate 69% between 1994 and 2002 and reduced the numbers of new AIDS cases 23% since 1997. In the last decade, the number of poor people in Curitiba fell from

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Sustainability, the Brazilian Way, cont.



"... families trade garbage for free vegetables and fresh, locally-grown fruit, ..."

13.48% to 7.52%, with the average income increasing to \$3,700 a year (from \$2,400). The recycling rate is 13% of the garbage collected (the highest in Brazil), though they have 60% organic material content going to landfill. Enterprising citizens usually scavenge recyclables, looking to sell them, before the city truck comes around. In the state of Paraná, disposal fees for garbage are about \$3 per ton! Remarkably, the city is incredibly clean of litter.

The buses are fast and quiet, and travel along bus-only streets. These buses have the capacity for 270 people each and are often full. The buses load and unload in tube stations or terminals, allowing for easy transfers. Along these high-speed streets, high-density development is allowed, but in other areas, buildings cannot exceed six stories, meaning you can see the sky when you are walking!

More for citizen recreation than for tourism, Curitiba has 28 parks and woods throughout the city. Each park has a cultural theme, representing the array of heritages among the people of southern Brazil. There is often wild space located adjacent to these parks;

through careful planning and incentives for developers, city planners are trying to create wildlife corridors.

Health care is free for low-income families. Children have access to one free meal a day at community centers that teach environmental education. Low-income families trade garbage for fresh, locally-grown vegetables and fruit, supplementing their diet with healthy food that significantly improves nutrition and simultaneously supports rural farmers. For every five kilos of garbage, they receive \$1.70 in food. We learned that this is in fact the least expensive garbage collection program in the city!

After spending six days talking with local community leaders, seeing the parks and community centers, playing with the local children, and riding the transportation systems, I left the city feeling that life was good in Curitiba. People had access to resources to make their lives better, giving them dignity rather than desperation, and most seemed to have hope for their future.

The rest of my trip included visiting an eco-tourism island (Ilha do Mel), spending time in Rio de Janeiro, and visiting the surfing town of Ubatuba. But that's another story...

Calendar of Events

May 18, 2004: Curitiba, Brazil: Creative Solutions to Community and Environmental Challenges. Darcy Hitchcock recently returned from an educational tour of Curitiba, a city famous for sustainability innovations around urban planning, transportation and social programs. Come hear what she learned that could help us improve the livability of the Northwest. May 18, Multnomah County Main Library Noon-1pm, sponsored by the Oregon Natural Step Network. Free.

July 9-14, 2004: National Solar Energy Conference—A Solar Harvest - Growing Opportunities will take place in Portland. For more information, contact the American Solar Energy Society, 2400 Central Avenue, Suite A, Boulder, Colorado 80301-2843, P: 303.443.3130, F: 303.443.3212, e-mail: ases@ases.org, web site: www.ases.org.

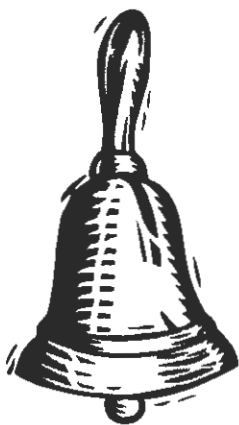
September 26-29, 2004: 6th Industrial Ecology conference - "Profitable Sustainability: the Future of Business" will be held in Seattle. For more information, email conference@nbis.org or call Mary Rose at 206-296-2469, 8am-5pm PST or leave a message, or visit their Web site at <http://www.nbis.org/conference/>.

Ecology Rewards Schools for Sustainability Efforts

A salute to 21 schools



"This award program recognizes schools for their successes managing materials and wastes in a sustainable fashion."



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On May 7th, students from 21 schools from across the state received awards from the state Department of Ecology (Ecology) in a ceremony that celebrated the schools' exceptional environmental sustainability efforts. The Terry Husseman Sustainable Schools Awards were presented at the St. Martin's Worthington Conference Center in Olympia. Award amounts ranged from \$500 to \$3,000.

Three years ago, Ecology decided to refocus the Terry Husseman School Awards so that they supported our state's Beyond Waste vision and sustainability priorities. The purpose of the new awards program is to help schools establish sustainability programs and to provide incentives for improving existing programs.

A panel of judges evaluates the schools on the creative features of their programs, their purchasing practices, and their overall success at reducing waste and increasing recycling. This program honors schools and teachers for developing innovative curricula or operating long-standing programs. Additionally, schools that submit outstanding proposals will receive seed money to assist with the implementation of their proposals.

The Terry Husseman Sustainable Schools Awards Program provides awards to schools in three categories: The Seed Award, The Sustainable

School Award, and the Environmental Curriculum Award.

The purpose of the Seed Award is to assist schools with the cost of starting up programs. This year, nine schools won Seed Awards in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000. The Sustainable School Award provides acknowledgement for schools with ongoing waste reduction or recycling programs.

Twelve schools took the honors in this category with \$500 awards. The Environmental Curriculum category is intended to encourage the development of sustainability-related curricula to help teach environmental awareness in Washington schools.

Since no applications were submitted for Environmental Curriculum, the money earmarked for this award was used to provide additional awards under the Seed and Sustainable School categories.

Seed Award

The intent of this category is to encourage schools to take steps necessary to embrace the five areas of sustainability and to assist with costs involved in initial start-up of basic sustainability programs or improvements of programs or projects that move them closer to sustainability. This year we selected the nine applicants below for this award.

Seed Award Winners – 2003-2004

Taholah School, Taholah School District #77, \$1,500.00
Manitou Park Elementary, Tacoma Public Schools, \$1,240.00
South Whidbey Intermediate, South Whidbey School District, \$1,400.00
Issaquah Valley Elementary, Issaquah School District, \$1,225.00
Chloe Clark Elementary, Steilacoom School District #1, \$3,000.00
Lister Elementary, Tacoma School District #10, \$1,889.00
Burton Elementary, Evergreen School District, \$3,000.00
Orcas Elementary, Orcas School District, \$1,000.00
Liberty Bell Jr.-Sr. High/Methow Valley Elementary, Methow Valley School District, \$1,500.00

Ecology Rewards Schools for Sustainability Efforts, cont.

Sustainable School-\$500 each

To apply for this category a school must exhibit elements including, but not limited to, the following five areas of sustainability: Resource/Energy Conservation, Biological Diversity, Waste & Toxicity Reduction, Social Harmony, and Health & Wellness. This year we selected the 12 applicants below for this award.

To find out more:

For more information contact:
Michelle Payne, School Award
Coordinator, 360-407-6129,
mdav461@ecy.wa.gov, or visit
our Web site at
[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs
/swfa/terryhusseman.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/terryhusseman.html).

Sustainable School Award Winners – 2003-2004

Eisenhower Middle, Everett Public Schools
Langley Middle, South Whidbey School District
North Mason High, North Mason School District
Orchard Heights Elementary, South Kitsap School District
Montlake Elementary, Seattle School District
Tolt Middle, Riverview School District #407
Cashmere Middle, Cashmere School District
Komachin Middle, North Thurston School District
Kendall Elementary, Mount Baker School District
Harmony Elementary, Mount Baker School District
Acme Elementary, Mount Baker School District
Mt. Baker Jr./Sr., Mount Baker School District

2004 Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices



The Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices is looking for candidates for the 2004 competition. These awards are open to any Washington business, organization, school, or public agency that is actively preventing pollution and pursuing sustainability.

You might already be a winner!

If your facility is preventing pollution or using sustainable business practices, you could win the 2004 Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention and Sustainable Practices. Businesses, government agencies, schools, and organizations are all eligible and have until June 4 to get their applications in for the prestigious award. Winners will be honored at a fall ceremony with Governor Gary Locke and will receive additional publicity about their achievements.

The award competition is open to any Washington facility that is in good standing with environmental regulations. The Department of Ecology is particularly interested in enterprises that have reduced or eliminated the use of toxic materials, waste and emissions, or that have switched to practices that conserve resources and energy.

For an application brochure or to get more information, contact Mariann Cook Andrews, Governor's Award Coordinator, 360-407-6740, or e-mail: maco461@ecy.wa.gov, or visit the Web site at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/sustainability/GovAward/gov_awards.htm.