

**Manatee Chamber of Commerce Launches Green Business Initiative: Sustainable Manatee Program to promote and assist businesses committed to environmentally responsible operations.**

While the surge in “green” concepts has revived national interest in environmentally responsible practices and energy independence, the Manatee Chamber of Commerce has launched its green business initiative called Sustainable Manatee.

It will promote the interest of businesses that are committed and engaged in environmentally responsible operations and best management “green” practices, meaning the business operates in such a way as to conserve natural resources, eliminate waste and, in the bigger picture, non-reliance upon foreign oil.

The Sustainable Manatee Program is open to current or prospective Manatee Chamber members who agree to meet application / certification requirements and to pledge to continually strive toward such business practices to ensure the greater Manatee region is environmentally healthy and viable. Members will also pledge to abide by all existing local, state and federal environmental regulations.

These eight companies have already met certification level and recognition: Air & Energy; Arrow Environmental Services, Inc.; Energy & Sustainability Consultants, “ESC”; Fawley Bryant Architects, Inc.; Flowers Baking Company; Turner Tree & Landscape; Waste Pro; and Willis A. Smith Construction, Inc.

The Mosaic Company is partnering with the Chamber in the publication of the certification manual. An electronic version on CD will also be produced in the near future. A green website is also under way.

The first company to receive this designation was Turner Tree & Landscape. “Over the years, we have consistently recognized the importance of energy efficiencies,” said Darrell Turner, President of Turner Tree & Landscape. “We are pleased to share best management green practices with other businesses through the Chamber’s Green Business program.” In addition to receiving recognition for their eco-accomplishments, several companies

have seen cost reductions in the areas of energy, purchasing and transportation. “For receiving this designation concurrent governmental incentives are anticipated in order to create new green collar jobs,” according to Manatee Chamber Vice President of Public Policy & Small Business, Neil Spirtas. He also stated the Chamber’s Green Business Initiative Committee is the largest committee at the Chamber with 57 members.

- Some of the other benefits of receiving certification include:
- Recognition as committed to a greener Manatee region through business operations.
  - Access to the Manatee Chamber’s Green Business logo for print and electronic use in identifying as a Green Business.
  - Recognition online at [www.ManateeChamber.com](http://www.ManateeChamber.com) and at Chamber function(s).
  - Manatee Chamber Green Business window decal for their business venue.

Signs Now and Waste Pro have also donated green recycling bins for Chamber events.

Demonstrations of green practices are in the following pillars / categories: Recycling / Reuse; Commodity Conservation; Energy Conservation; Water Conservation; and Innovative Concepts.

“The Manatee Chamber of Commerce is encouraged by the response of its members who are proactively engaging in green business practices and operations,” stated JB Taylor, Fawley Bryant Architects, Chairman of the Chamber’s 2010 Green Business Initiative Committee and author of the Sustainable Manatee Green Business Certification Manual.

Chamber President Bob Bartz agrees, “Although not the panacea for industrial expansion, green collar jobs provide growth and diverse opportunities for the emerging green economy. Through Sustainable Manatee, the Manatee Chamber is facilitating and connecting with our governmental partners and connecting members with green focused businesses and resources in order to foster sustainable businesses and practices.”

For more information on the Manatee Chamber of Commerce Green Business Initiative call (941) 748-4842, ext. 124 or email [NeilS@ManateeChamber.com](mailto:NeilS@ManateeChamber.com).