

Published September 17, 2008

City Offices Officially Green

By Cathy Tyson



Janneke Petersen, summer intern extraordinaire Photo provided

It took a fair amount of work, a dedicated college student intern, Janneke Petersen, and a willing property manager, but the result was worth it: the Lafayette City offices are now officially certified Green by the Bay Area Green Business Program. "We thought that if the City were going to encourage Lafayette businesses to go green, we should set the example," said Community Development Director Ann Merideth. "Janneke did all the work and she did a terrific job." Petersen, a senior this year, is an Environmental Studies major at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. "Everyone was very receptive to the changes and actually many of the ideas were suggested by city employees. For example, one person had the simple and effective idea to get a dish rack to dry lunch dishes on to reduce paper towel waste from drying. There were already a number of things the city was doing locally for the environment - it just made sense for the government offices themselves to be green." Because the city rents space for their offices in Desco Plaza, collaboration with Terry Turner, the property manager, was vital. "It would be impossible to do this without him. He was great to work with. For example one of the requirements is low flush toilets, as opposed to standard 3 gallon models. He has agreed to replace all the toilets in the building by mid 2009," said Petersen. It ain't easy being green. To become green, businesses and public agencies must meet criteria in four categories: waste reduction, pollution prevention, energy conservation and water conservation. "For example the city cancelled its contract for bottled water with Alhambra - saving money and reducing lots of plastic bottle waste. Now employees drink tap water via a Britta pitcher," noted Petersen. The City Offices also uses 100% post consumer content recycled paper, reduces paper waste in creative ways, has switched over to a green cleaning product, uses energy star rated computers and printers, and has a green purchasing policy, among other initiatives. Petersen also worked with the police (who share the building) to find a more environmentally sound way of washing their vehicles. Following the completion of the lengthy list of requirements, audits by P G & E, EBMUD and the Solid Waste Authority personnel were required to obtain certification. "There is a strong role for local government to play in addressing environmental issues, especially since our federal government is not adequately addressing them. Now that the Lafayette City Offices are certified green, they can truly "walk the talk" as they move forward and promote sustainability in the community," said Petersen.



Reach the reporter at: cathy@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA