

10 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day 2008

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EcoRooms & EcoSuites Board of Advisors recommends a few simple steps for the 39th anniversary celebration on April 22, 2008

On April 22, 1970, more than 20 million people worldwide took to the parks, streets and college campuses to protest against the deterioration of the environment, marking the first-ever Earth Day. The brainchild of Gaylord Nelson, a United States Senator from Wisconsin, and organized by Denis Hayes, the event's national coordinator, Earth Day brought together groups that had been fighting against oil spills, polluting factories and power plants, raw sewage, toxic dumps, pesticides, freeways, the loss of wilderness, and the extinction of wildlife to raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Today, Earth Day is celebrated by more than 500 million people and governments in 175 countries.

As we celebrate the 39th annual Earth Day on April 22, 2008 - with environmental concerns and awareness at an all-time high - Pineapple Hospitality and its Board of Advisors at EcoRooms & EcoSuites (www.EcoRooms.com) are doing their part to get word out on the steps the hotel industry can take to make every day Earth Day.

'Earth Day is a wonderful opportunity to energize and implement new environmentally friendly strategies,' says Ray Burger, President of Pineapple Hospitality, which operates EcoRooms & EcoSuites. 'But what's more important, especially for the hospitality industry, is that we practice what we are calling GBPs - Green Business Practices - on the other 364 days of the year as well.

'Our Board of Advisors and Members at EcoRooms & EcoSuites have proven that sustainability, luxury and profitability can and should go hand-in-hand,' Burger adds. 'With the interest in sustainability growing daily, there's never been so many opportunities for hoteliers to green their operations and bottom lines.

Top 10 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day ... April 22, 2008, and Beyond!

To celebrate this Earth Day, and guide the hospitality industry into taking green mainstream, EcoRooms & EcoSuites has compiled this list of Earth Day activities for hoteliers and their guests, along with online resources that can provide guidance on how to implement them:

1. Plant a tree(s) and/or join/sponsor Arbor Day Foundation: www.Arborday.org,
2. Encourage all staff to walk, bike, carpool, or take mass transit to work on Earth Day - consider holding a prize drawing (reusable water bottles and other 'green' promotional items) for all who participate: www.Pedrosplanet.com,
3. Offer menu specials appealing to locavores, vegetarians, and vegans using both locally grown and organic ingredients. Offer similar for employee meals that day: www.Locavores.com,
4. Serve Certified Organic Coffee & Tea in all outlets. (Ask your current supplier to assist),
5. Hybrid, Electric, or High Occupancy vehicles Park Free Day: www.HybridCars.com,
6. Clean a park, playground, street, beach or river and then consider adopting the same,
7. Join or sponsor a local environmental group or a local chapter of a national or international organization: www.CharityNavigator.org,
8. Give something away on FreeCycle (www.freecycle.org) or offer an attractive weekend package to benefit your eco charity at www.BiddingForGood.com,
9. Change ONE current SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) to a GBP (Greener Business Practice): www.ChangeOne.info,
10. Offer carbon offsets to hotel guests: www.SustainableTravel.com
11. HAVE FUN! Get creative and add to this List. Send us your suggestions and we will publish them next year to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day! (Hint: Check out www.EarthDay.net for more great ideas.)

A Golden Day

As an example of the kind of Earth Day activities hotels can perform, the Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort in Lake Placid, N.Y., is hosting a 'Keep it Green, Earth Day for Kids' Program on Tuesday, April 22.

Golden Arrow will have booths set up outside for a host of fun and educational events. For instance, kids can construct pinecone bird feeders, plant herb seedlings in tin cans and finger paint. The activities are designed to show the children how to have fun while protecting and recycling products to save this great land we live in. There also will be fun activities for adults, since you are never too old to learn how you can help Earth. Visit www.Golden-Arrow.com to learn more.

Golden Arrow's environmental commitment will continue throughout the year, as the resort strives to achieve by 2009 5 Green Leafs in the Audubon Green Leaf™ Eco-Rating Program for Hotels. (The hotel currently is one of a few dozen properties across North America that holds a 4-leaf rating.) Part of the hotel's program includes handing out gift bags to guests arriving by foot, bicycle or hybrid vehicle, installing an extensive storm water management system to keep pollutants from the building parking garages and roads out of the lake, and implementing a guest recycling program in June 2007 that has seen approximately 85% guest participation.

Furthermore, beginning in June 2008, 15 new guestrooms will go online with an in-room energy management system that will automatically turn down the heat or A/C to preset levels when the rooms are unoccupied room. Also in June, the resort will install a new 3,000-square-foot Green Roof. Green Roofs have many benefits including creating energy savings by acting as super insulators, keeping buildings warm in the winter and cool in the summer. They also serve as a storm water management systems, catching pollutants as they drain off the roofs.

'The Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort is proud to be Lake Placid's only Green Hotel. We are proud of the great steps we have taken to operate as a sustainable resort,' says Jenn Holderied-Webb, Director of Marketing for Golden Arrow. 'It's so easy being green! We thank you for being kind to Earth!'

Tips for Guests

In honor of Earth Day, Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort also presents a list of steps guests can take to make sure their stays are as green as they are great. Be sure to share these with your guests this April 22 and thereafter:

Be kind to Earth. When vacationing, stay at a green hotel. Make sure to reuse your sheets and towels too!

Before you leave for vacation, unplug as many things as you can (including televisions and cable boxes). Even though they are off, they still use up energy.

Before you leave your house, also turn your thermostat down. Not only will you conserve energy, but you will save money.

Trade your car for a hybrid or at least a vehicle that is more fuel efficient. Don't forget to watch your speed. A lead foot not only decreases gas mileage, but also adds extra CO2 to the air.

Choose reusable products instead of disposables.

Turn off the lights when you leave rooms and water off while you are brushing your teeth.

Remember to recycle while on vacation, not just at home and work.

A Few More For the Road

Going Green is the same as Growing Green - because improved profitability is a natural offshoot of smart sustainability. More and more hoteliers are realizing sustainability and profitability are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they can and should go hand-in-hand. Here are a few more socially responsible ideas for hoteliers:

Sponsor a school field trip and get kids thinking green. You can work with teachers to show how your property is helping save energy, reduce water usage and pollution, and improve the environment.

Donate leftover food from your kitchen to a local non-profit organization.

For certain food items, start a compost bin, and use the compost you produce for a vegetable and herb garden.

Encourage guests to think green in their lives. Place small plaques in rooms and common areas announcing your commitment to environmental responsibility and detailing some of the accomplishments of the eco-initiatives your property has instituted.

Provide containers for can and bottle recycling in guestrooms and meeting rooms, and near vending machines and in other prominent public spaces. This will encourage guests to help separate cans and bottles for easier recycling.

Clean up your dumpsters and separate cardboard and other materials for recycling by using separate bins.

Be sure to use compact florescent light bulbs and energy-saving lighting fixtures. You can increase the amount of light and reduce your lighting bills up to 70% (overall energy use by 30%). Payback is often measured in months and provides on-going savings for years.

Install motion sensor-activated lights in areas that are infrequently used.

Take steps to better use daylight in common areas. Consider installing skylights or changing window covering configurations to increase the amount of available daylight so you can reduce the use of artificial lighting.

Save water by installing low-flow showerheads, low-flow sink aerators and making toilet tank modifications such as early-closer toilet flappers and diverter valves.

Use bathroom amenity dispensers rather than individually packaged amenities, and use biodegradable and hypoallergenic soap, lotion, shampoo and conditioner in the dispensers.

Improve window and door seals. You will save on heating and cooling costs, reduce noise levels and decrease dust circulation.

Use products that are packaged in bulk and use less individual packaging materials. There are so many items, from food to toiletry items that contribute to waste. Work with your suppliers to specify more ecological packaging.

Identify something that is currently being discarded and find a re-use for that item.

Encourage your guests to reuse their linens during their stay using guestroom literature that communicates the reuse message.

Think green and reward green thinking. Hold 'greenstorming' sessions with your staff and challenge them each to come up with 10 more ideas. Give each participant a small tree or a shrub to plant at home to reward them and remind them to keep thinking green.

Implement a Green Guest Ideas Program to encourage guest feedback on how you can do even more to improve your environmental awareness.

Pineapple Hospitality offers many products and services that fit into putting the suggestions above into practice. Take advantage of the resources at www.PineappleHospitality.com, and please contact us if you have any questions. We look forward to sharing our "fresh ideas for hospitality" with you!

EcoRooms Criteria

Have you already implemented many of these suggestions and strategies? Then you could be in line to become the next EcoRooms & EcoSuites member property. Members of EcoRooms & EcoSuites must satisfy these Significant 7 Criteria to join:

1. Cleaning Products - General purpose, bathroom, glass and carpet cleaning
 - A. Must be less than 10% Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) by weight.
 - B. Must be diluted at least 8-to-1.
 - C. The undiluted product shall not be toxic to humans.
 - D. The undiluted product shall not contain carcinogens or any ingredients that are known to cause reproductive toxicity.
 - E. The undiluted product shall not be corrosive to the skin or eyes
 - F. The undiluted product shall not be a skin sensitizer
 - G. The undiluted product shall not be combustible
 - H. The product as used shall not contain substances that contribute significantly to the production of photochemical smog, Tropospheric ozone, or poor indoor air quality. The VOCs as used shall not exceed the following: 1. 1% by weight for dilutable carpet cleaners 2. 1% by weight for general purpose and bathroom cleaners 3. 3% by weight for glass cleaners 4. 3% by weight for ready-to-use carpet cleaners
 - I. The product as used shall not be toxic to aquatic life
 - J. Each of the organic ingredients in the product as used shall exhibit ready biodegradability
 - K. The product as used shall not contain more than 0.5% by weight of total phosphorus
 - L. The product containers shall be recyclable or Manufacturers may provide for the returning and refilling of their packaging.
 - M. Prohibited ingredients include: 1. Alkylphenol ethoxylates 2. Dibutyl Phthalate 3. Heavy metals including arsenic, lead, cadmium, cobalt, chromium, mercury, nickel or selenium 4. Ozone-depleting compounds 5. Optical brighteners
 - N. Training - The product manufacturer, its distributor, or a third party shall offer training or training materials in the proper use of the product. These shall include step-by-step instructions for the proper dilution, use, disposal, and the use of the equipment. A statement containing this information shall be provided to each supplier of cleaning products. They will sign the statement verifying that each of the products supplied complies with these standards.
2. Paper Products - Consumable paper products shall be made from recycled fibers, with the following minimum post-consumer content: A. Bathroom tissue: 20% B. Facial tissue: 10% C. Napkins and paper towels: 40%
3. Amenity Products - Property shall use refillable amenity dispensers or individual containers for shampoo, conditioner, soap, lotion, etc. Individual products shall be the smallest practical size for the length of stay and minimally packaged in recycled and/or recyclable materials. Used amenities are collected for donation to charity or for recycling where practical.
4. Linen and Towel Reuse Program - Property shall implement and execute a well designed Linen and Towel Re-use program for all Guest Rooms.

5. Recycling Program - Property shall establish and maintain recycling programs for the common areas, administrative areas, and Guest rooms. The Guest Room Receptacle must be clearly identified for Glass, Paper, Aluminum, & Plastic.

6. Lighting - All Guest Room Lighting shall be Energy Efficient. No incandescent lighting is acceptable in Floor, Desk, Table or Nightstand lamps. Bathroom lighting shall be either Linear Fluorescent, Compact Fluorescent or a combination of each type.

7. High-Efficiency Plumbing Fixtures - Property shall use the following: 2.2 GPM Faucets with 1.5 GPM or less aerators, the showerheads shall be 2.5 GPM or less, and the toilet shall be 1.6 GPF or less.

There is no such thing as 'green enough.' Even the members of EcoRooms & EcoSuites are constantly innovating to reduce their carbon footprint and environmental impact. If you have a great new green idea or innovative solution, let us know. Find out more at www.EcoRooms.com.

About Pineapple Hospitality

Headquartered in Saint Charles, Missouri, Pineapple Hospitality(TM) is The Co-Founder and Host of the ANNUAL GREEN HOSPITALITY CONFERENCE, an EPA ENERGY STAR(TM) partner bringing fresh ideas to hospitality guests' doors and owner/operators' bottom lines - including FreshStay(R) (www.freshstay.com), EcoRooms & EcoSuites (www.EcoRooms.com) Environmentally Sensitive Amenities(TM), EO(R), Neutrogena(R) and greenSPA(TM) amenities and AVIVA dispensers Energy Efficient Lighting and Controls, Custom Linen & Towel Re-Use Programs, Green Key Cards, Energy Management Systems and Controls, High Performance showerheads, the Nature's Mist(TM) deodorization system, Zero Odor, and dozens of other products and programs. For more information, please visit www.pineapplehospitality.net, or call us at 636-922-2285.

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