

# Green Living in McAllen

This newsletter, produced bi-monthly by the McAllen Chamber of Commerce, is to help our community residents save money and live greener, more sustainable lives. Please email [nmillar@mcallencvb.com](mailto:nmillar@mcallencvb.com) with comments and submissions.

## How to Go Green

### Smart ideas

- If people recycle 70% of the bottles they purchased for a year, **greenhouse gases could be reduced by 20,000 metric tons** of carbon equivalence.
- The **seven numbers associated with recycled plastic** each represents what that product can be recycled into. [More information on the Plastic Identification Codes visit [http://www.americanchemistry.com/s\\_plastics/bin.asp?CID=1102&DID=4645&DOC=FILE.PDF](http://www.americanchemistry.com/s_plastics/bin.asp?CID=1102&DID=4645&DOC=FILE.PDF) ]
- Plan your route before driving can potentially minimize your driving time and **save fuel**. UPS discovered that waiting for left-hand turns cost their delivery trucks additional 51,000 gallons of fuel than creating routes that led to an average of four right-hand turns for every left. UPS tested the same strategy with average citizens running frequent errands, and it still worked. So take some time to figure out the shortest and quickest route possible to your destination.
- Don't Throw Away Your Old Phone Book!

**Recycle your old telephone books with Project ReDirectory March 1-31 at the following locations:**

**City of McAllen  
Recycling Center**  
4101 N. Bentsen Rd.  
M-F 8 am - 5 pm

**Walmart**  
29th and Nolana  
**Burton Auto Supply**  
108 E. Bus. 83

**H-E-B Food Stores**  
3600 Pecan  
3200 N. 10th St.  
901 Trenton

## Recycle Your Old Cell Phone

You may not be so excited about your old cell phone anymore, but chances are that somebody else will be. Better still, you might even get paid for it. For example, a Motorola Razr V3 is worth \$21.

### How this helps

Recycling your old phone keeps it and its (likely toxic) battery out of the landfill. Your phone also contains precious metals including copper and silver. If these are recycled it lessens the demand for mining new metals. The Environmental Protection Agency says that recycling a million phones will reduce greenhouse gases by the same amount as taking 1,368 cars off the road for a year.

### More information

- Visit [ripmobile.com](http://ripmobile.com) and check out how much your phone is worth. You can trade it in for gift certificates that you can use at [terrapass.com](http://terrapass.com).
- US EPA's "[Easy Call](#)" program.
- Read about the [precious metals in cellphones](#).

Visit <http://www.terrapass.com/blog/posts/recycle-your-old-cellphone> for more.

Local phone stores may also accept your old phone. **Wireless Toyz** at Business 83 and 10<sup>th</sup> Street will recycle used phones.

## Valley Spotlight On:

**Dr. Gene Lester**, Lead Scientist for postharvest research and human-nutritional quality studies of fresh fruits and vegetables for the USDA- Agricultural Research Service in Texas, has been elected as Chair of the **McAllen Chamber of Commerce's Green Living Committee**. Dr. Lester received his PhD in Plant Physiology and Biochemistry at Michigan State University and pursued postdoctoral training in Plant Science at U.California-Davis. His research focuses on understanding the influence of pre-, and post-harvest production and plant genetic factors on composition, retention and stability of human-health compounds (e.g. vitamins, minerals & drug interactive), consumer preferences, and market quality of stored and transported organic and conventional fruits and vegetables.

**H.E.B.** has erected a wind turbine at its distribution center in Weslaco and is considering erecting more to power its stores, capturing that wind to lower electricity expenses.

The first LEED project south of San Antonio will be a new **U.S. Customs and Border Protection** building in McAllen, slated for completion in April. The **Boys & Girls Club** building will be the second.

Fifteen students at the **Science Academy of South Texas** in Mercedes are working with Texas A&M engineers to build a small turbine at a local colonia and then to create a "how-to" manual.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) **Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Storm Water Task Force** has been conducting local school classroom presentations at Harlingen, Harlingen South, Santa Rosa, Mission, Mission Veterans and Weslaco East High Schools. The organization presented to over 1,000 high schools students.

### **International/National Spotlight on:**

**Brazil** is establishing the Brazilian Whale and Dolphin Sanctuary, to protect all large ocean mammals in its coastal waters, which stretch 5,000 miles along eastern South America.

The **American Institute of Architect's** 2- minute "Deconstruction" video explains how salvaged materials from demolished buildings can gain new life in new uses, reducing the new building's carbon footprint and bottom line as well. Other videos in the series cover topics such as on water conservation, radiant heating and cooling, vegetation and sun control, green roofs; choosing green materials, and carbon offsets, among other subjects. Videos are on the [Walk the Walk](#) site.

A record number of **endangered manatees** in Florida was recorded last month by state researchers with a preliminary count of 3,807 manatees. However, 2008 manatee mortality figures also are at record highs, predominantly for juvenile animals, and primarily due to watercraft strikes and newborn deaths. Numbers for both were above the five-year average. A migratory species, manatees are primarily found in shallow, slow-moving rivers, estuaries, saltwater bays, canals and coastal areas in Florida, and at times can be found as far west as Texas and as far north as Virginia.

## Green Thumbs Up:

New York's legislature recently voted to **require recycling of plastic bags** in stores across the state. The stores now are mandated to provide collection bins for used plastic bags, to recycle them, and also to keep records on the amount recycled.

A **"green" roof** now graces a part of the Main Interior Building in Washington, D.C. The green roof will help ease storm water runoff problems by absorbing and using the rainfall.

As well as storm water retention, green roofs have many other advantages, such as providing habitat for birds and insects and helping to lower energy costs by insulating the roof from the sun and from outdoor noise.

Several European countries recently reiterated their commitment to their plan to **battle climate change**. Major tactics Europe is using are the growth in renewable energy sources and a planned 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

## Issues and News

**Time Warner Cable** is going for the green! For information on ads positioning your business or organization, contact Kate Littleton at 682-4976 Ext: 20 or 956-907-3734.

CBS News/Associated Press: Search for **Ivory-billed Woodpecker** to Begin.  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/12/02/ap/tech/main4641998.shtml>

Both businesses and consumers continue to increase their **demand for environmentally friendly products and services**, according to FairGreenTrade.com. Until now, both groups were spending inordinate amounts of time simply trying to find these items. The website offers a directory of "green" and "sustainable" offerings.

Mom and pop fisheries may be the largest single threat to some **sea turtle** populations. These smaller fisheries often use gear that inadvertently tangles and drowns the turtles.

## Yikes!

The jellyfish are coming! The jellyfish are coming! That's according to the National Science Foundation. Huge swarms of jellyfish off the coast of the U.S. and other locations have been spotted. At least 150 million people around the world are exposed to jellyfish every year, according to the NSF.

## Upcoming Green Valley Events

October 17 -2<sup>nd</sup> annual Green Living Festival, McAllen Convention Center. Watch for details!

## Upcoming Green National Events

Connecting Municipal Government, Local Organizations and Related Public Entities with Cost-effective, Environmentally Sustainable Solutions and Partnerships March 9-11, Dallas. Download a copy of the Save the Date Brochure here

<http://www.cleanairinfo.com/sustainableskylines/documents/Save%20the%20>  
[0](http://www.cleanairinfo.com/sustainableskylines/documents/Save%20the%20)

- **The EPA's Sustainable Skylines Initiative is presenting the Sustainable Communities Training Conference March 9 - 11 in Dallas.** Download a copy of the Save the Date Brochure here (pdf) <http://www.cleanairinfo.com/sustainableskylines/documents/Save%20the%20>  
[the%20](http://www.cleanairinfo.com/sustainableskylines/documents/Save%20the%20)
- **2nd Annual Lean and Green Summit**, June 8-9, 2009, Savannah, GA. Register using promo code "december" and receive \$200 off the standard registration fee. [www.leanandgreensummit.com](http://www.leanandgreensummit.com)
- **Green Cities Florida May 19-21. To register, go to [www.GreenCities.com](http://www.GreenCities.com).**
- **Go Green Expos:**
  - [NEW YORK CITY - 04/26/2008 to 04/27/2008](#)
  - [LOS ANGELES - 01/23/2009 to 01/25/2009](#)
  - [PHILADELPHIA - 03/13/2009 to 03/15/2009](#)
  - [NEW YORK CITY - 04/17/2009 to 04/19/2009](#)
  - [ATLANTA - 06/26/2009 to 06/28/2009](#)

## **Stuff Greenies Like to Know**

**Natural sea sponges.** According to the University of Florida, sea sponges are collected with knives or long hooks. If enough of the sponge is left behind, it will regenerate. So the sea sponge is a good candidate for sustainable harvesting. Being a natural product, sea sponges are also biodegradable, non-endangered, and lack a nervous system so don't feel pain.. And here's a plus: as with many products from the sea, sea sponges may kill cancer cells

Studies show that washing your hands with **soap and water** is as effective as using special germ-killing products. A good reason to avoid antibacterial products is that even those made with alcohol increase the risk of antibiotic resistance.

## **Websites and blogs to check out**

**[Aid to Artisans](#), [The Crafts Center](#), and [Ten Thousand Villages](#)**

**[Fairtrade Labelling Organizations](#); [www.ecomall.com](http://www.ecomall.com)**

**<http://ww2.earthday.net/>**.

### **Lean Toolkit**

The U.S. EPA offers a lean toolkit that addresses lean thinking in green initiatives. Save resources with little effort. Check it out.

**[www.epa.gov/lean/toolkit/](http://www.epa.gov/lean/toolkit/)**

### **Lean and Green Newsletter**

Former IndustryWeek's New Media Editor, Tonya Vinas, will publish a new, complimentary e-newsletter aimed at the emerging "Lean and Green" movement.

**[www.leanandgreennews.com](http://www.leanandgreennews.com)**

## **Editor's Pick-Quote for Today:**

"Never too late to be the treehugger you might have been." George Eliot

**If you would like to be removed from the newsletter, please email [nmillar@mcallencvb.com](mailto:nmillar@mcallencvb.com).**