



Sustainability Initiatives

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1. Overview

Virginia Green is the statewide voluntary program that works to reduce the environmental impacts of Virginia's Tourism Industry. It is run as a partnership between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Tourism Corporation and the Virginia Hospitality and Tourism Association.

The Virginia Beach Convention Center is a participant in Virginia Green, the first convention center in Virginia to meet the program's "Core Activities" for Convention Centers, which include recycling, minimized use of Styrofoam/disposables, water efficiency, energy efficiency and supporting green conferences and events. It is also a partner in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ENERGYSTAR Challenge. The ENERGY STAR Challenge, launched by EPA in March 2005, calls for an energy efficiency improvement of 10 percent or more for the more than 5 million commercial and industrial buildings in the United States. Through their involvement in the program over the next twelve months, the VBCC anticipates savings of nearly \$95,000. Their goal is to implement twenty cost saving measures by the end of the year, which include measuring and tracking the energy performance of the organization's facilities, developing and implementing a plan to achieve energy savings, spreading the word about the importance of energy efficiency to facility staff and the community, supporting the ENERGY STAR Challenge, and highlighting the achievements with recognition offered through the program.

According to James B. Ricketts, Director of the Virginia Beach CVB, "The Convention Center's commitment to the environment is a well sought after amenity by meeting planners looking to book their conventions. Recent trends in the tourism and hospitality industry indicate that clients are more interested in doing business with environmentally conscious organizations." The VBCC's sustainability initiatives began during the planning and design stages. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, LLP (SOM), the building's architects, in conjunction with their local partner, Norfolk-based Clark Nexsen, had the foresight to incorporate renewable resources into the building including elements such as the Cumaru wood for floors, meeting suite veneers and outdoor decks. The building design also integrates an energy efficient glass system that limits ultra violet (UV) light penetration and solar energy in the large pre-function spaces.



2. Program Establishment

On July 17, 2008, the Virginia Beach Green Team announced that it had met its goal to provide visitors to Virginia Beach with a wide array of green alternatives. Virginia Beach now offers 20 restaurants, 16 hotels, 4 attractions, 5 events, and the Virginia Beach Convention Center that are certified Virginia Green participants. On August 15, 2008, Governor Kaine participated in a ceremony marking the designation of Virginia Beach as the Commonwealth's first Virginia Green Destination by meeting and surpassing goals to reduce environmental impact.

3. Goals & Benchmarking/Outcomes & Environmental Benefits

The VBCC's commitment to being environmentally responsible is conveyed throughout several departments including operations, housekeeping, food and beverage, landscaping, maintenance and administration. The building has an active recycling program through Tidewater Fibre Corporation (TFC) for paper, plastic, aluminum and cardboard. Items are collected in pre-function spaces, offices, meeting rooms and all back of house spaces. Co-mingled materials are compacted and transported to TFC's off-site sorting facility. The building has begun the process of using recycled paper for select promotional materials.

State-of-the art lighting and HVAC systems are programmed based on the event schedules to minimize usage during non-peak times and to conserve energy and permit facility staff to turn heating, air conditioning and lighting on and off at the touch of a keyboard. Many lights have been switched from incandescent lamps to more energy efficient compact fluorescent lighting. Further energy conservation is derived from motion sensors that turn off lighting when no motion is detected after a specified period of time. The 50-acre site is landscaped with over 2,000 trees and shrubs and the automated irrigation system measures rain accumulation and regulates irrigation demand. Further, storm water is retained on site and mitigates solid surfaces of building and pavement.

The housekeeping staff uses environmentally-friendly housekeeping products and hand towels, "Green Seal Certified" cleaners, vacuums and floor scrubbers. Bathrooms are equipped with sensors for sinks and hand towels to conserve water and paper, and foam soap that requires less water to remove. Microfiber cloths and floor cleaning pads are washed on site for reuse. The building's food and beverage operator donates food overages to local homeless shelters and has begun using bio-degradable and recyclable material in their concession stands.

Major initiatives include:

RECYCLING

- The following items are collected in pre-function spaces, offices, meeting rooms and all back of house spaces. Commingled materials are compacted and transported to an off- site sorting facility
 - Glass
 - Steel cans
 - Aluminum cans
 - Plastic
 - Office paper
 - Cardboard
- Mercury is captured from proper disposal of fluorescent lamps via an on site disposal system
- Battery recycling from all touchless plumbing devices
- Use of renewable resources in the construction such as Cumaru for wood for floors, meeting suite veneers, and outdoor decks.
- Cooking grease is removed from the site and reused

WASTE REDUCTION

Food and Conference Facilities

- Eliminate the use of Styrofoam
- Use dishware and glassware and minimize use of disposables
- Disposable containers made from:
 - Bio-based materials
 - Recycled content
- Use of water pitchers that minimize use of single-use bottles
- Food overages are donated to a local shelter for the homeless.
- Effective food inventory control to minimize wastes
- When available, purchase locally grown produce and other foods

Office/Purchasing

- Purchase recycled-content paper-towels
- Purchase from vendors and service providers with a commitment to the environment
 - Cleaning products
 - Printing vendors
 - Print cartridge suppliers
- 2-sided copies/printing
- Use electronic correspondence and forms
- Purchase recycled content paper
- Purchase of durable equipment and furniture

Maintenance

- Use of Latex Paint
- Aggressive carpet maintenance program to maximize the life of carpets

- Reuse of paint thinners
- Proper recycling and/or disposal of thinners and solvents
- Preventative maintenance of all appliances, HVAC systems, plumbing, and vehicles
- Last-in/first-out inventory & effective labeling systems
- Less toxic materials
- Minimize use of pesticides and herbicides (spot treatment)
- Use of environmentally-friendly housekeeping products including the following:
 - Paper products (hand towels)
 - Microfiber cloths and mops that are washed on site for reuse.
 - “Green Certified” cleaners such as Buckeye Star Spray window cleaner and Buckeye Marauder all purpose cleaner. www.buckeyeinternational.com
 - “Green Certified” vacuums such as the Nobles Viper and the Windsor Chariot I Vacuum www.windsorind.com and www.nobles.com
 - “Green Certified” floor scrubbers Tennant 7400/Nobles EZ Rider that uses a “Green Certified” Fast Foam Scrubbing Technology. www.tennantco.com and www.nobles.com.

WATER

- Tracking overall water usage and wastewater
- High efficiency dishwashers
- Microfiber technology mops
- Low flow restrictors on faucets
- Hand sinks and soap dispensers with motion sensors
- Landscaped property with over 2,000 trees and shrubs on a 50-acre site
- Effective landscape management plan which utilizes drought tolerant species, metering and rain gauges, and minimizes lawn areas.
- Effective storm water management
- Automated irrigation system measures rain and limits irrigation demand.
- Minimization of impervious areas (paving, concrete, etc)
- Vegetative buffers around streams and ponds

ENERGY

- A program has been initiated to change out incandescent lamps to a more compact and energy efficient fluorescent lighting
- Energy efficient glass system that limits ultra violet (UV) light penetration and solar energy in the large pre-function spaces
- Lighting & HVAC systems programmed based on event schedules to minimize usage during non-peak times and conserve energy.
- Non-essential items turned off when spaces not in use such as escalators, video walls and similar items.
- Tracking overall energy bills with established goals to reduce and High Efficiency Heating & Air Conditioning (HVAC)
- Individual thermostats for each room
- Use of natural lighting
- Lighting sensors that turn lights off when rooms are unoccupied



- Thermal-rated windows and insulation
- Use of directional (downward-facing) lighting in parking areas and other outdoor areas

The *Virginia Green* program has also certified other Virginia Beach operations including The Founders Inn and Spa, Croc's 19th Street Bistro and the Oceanfront Inn. The Virginia Beach Hotel/Motel Association (VBHMA) is receiving the designation as a *Virginia Green* Association. Other local hospitality businesses are currently in the process of becoming certified. The Virginia Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau itself has officially joined as a *Virginia Green* "partner" and is encouraging other area restaurants and hotels to follow suit and implement the *Virginia Green* program into their establishment to further enhance Virginia Beach's standing as a top destination city. Once a sufficient number of facilities have "gone green," the CVB hopes to also brand Virginia Beach as a "green destination."