

Sustainable Peralta Newsletter - Spring 2009

Sustainable Peralta

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Spring 2009

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Merritt to Host 2009 Sustainability Conference

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Richmond Mayor Gayle McLaughlan talks about her city during the 2007 Conference at Berkeley City College

Often, the language of Sustainability is couched in discussions of Global Warming, Melting Ice Caps, Carbon Footprints, Carrying Capacity, Solar Energy. But there's a whole lot more to it than that, especially on the local scale.

The 3rd Annual Peralta Conference on Urban Sustainability, held this year at Merritt College on April 24th, will be a free, interactive event, loaded with experts discussing local issues of Sustainability:

green jobs, local food, water shortages, truck pollution, asthma rates, mercury in fish, and creativity for sustainability. Over 200 people, including Peralta faculty, students, and community members will hear from people working to make the East Bay healthier and more liveable, not just for today but for the future. Two especially green names will anchor the day-long free event: Phil Angelides will speak in the morning. A gubernatorial candidate in 2006 against Governor Schwarzenegger, Mr. Angelides is now chairman of the Apollo Alliance, a national advocacy group for green jobs. Bill Gallegos will speak in the afternoon. Mr. Gallegos is director of California-based Communities for a Better Environment, a group that has brought national attention to the issue of toxic pollution in Communities of Color.

Peralta Chancellor and former Oakland Mayor Elihu Harris said, "We are excited to have people like Phil Angelides and Bill Gallegos share their dreams with us and challenge us to make them into new realities."

Joining these environmental giants is a who's who of local sustainability experts. The day-long event includes 20 speakers on panels discussing Green Jobs, healthy makeup, ecologically sensitive art, and local organic food. There's also a "Sustainability 101" panel for those wanting an introduction to principles of sustainable development. Jack Lin, the District's sustainability organizer, noted, "there are so many people from so many groups involved.. it's amazing to see the diverse connections between the colleges and the community."

The conference is a natural outcome of Peralta, a community college district that has a long history in the field of environmental education. Starting at Merritt College in the early 1960s the District initiated interdisciplinary environmental studies courses. In the 1970s Vista College developed programs in alternative energy technology and global environmental policy. In the early 1980s, the work expanded at Merritt College with the development of the Environmental Center Self Reliant House demonstration classroom and laboratory.

In recent years, Peralta Colleges Trustee Nicky González Yuen has championed the Sustainable Peralta Initiative, which has included a comprehensive and aggressive sustainability policy, a district-wide recycling program, curriculum development and green building and renovation standards.

Trustee Yuen explained, "the Sustainability Initiative at Peralta is our District's way of responding to the global climate crisis and its implications for our region. But, we also want to be a leader in helping our community adapt through job training and environmental education, key components of building a new economy and a new and sustainable way of life."

The conference closes with a celebration reception featuring green raffle prizes and the College of Alameda Jazz Band. The organizing committees at Merritt College and Sustainable Peralta Initiative have generously offered participants free breakfast and lunch if they register early on the Conference website:

<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?PeraltaCommunityColl/27710d28a1/37b6f5e46e/4a42dad692>.

Peralta faculty and staff continue to demonstrate that leadership with this conference. "A dedicated group of faculty, administrators and students, not just at Merritt College but across the Peralta system, have been working all school year to get this together," said Jennifer Shanoski, an instructor in the Merritt Chemistry department, and one of the event organizers.

Peralta Saves Energy, Money on Lighting

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The long, rectangular lights (containing high-efficiency fluorescent lamps) will replace the circular lights (containing high-intensity discharge lamps).

In December 2008, Peralta completed a massive lighting upgrade through Enlight Energy

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Efficient Lighting of Pleasanton: retrofitting 9,000 lighting fixtures at Laney College

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and Merritt College

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to save an estimated \$90,000 on nearly 800,000 kWh of electricity every year.

The project reduces Peralta's carbon footprint by nearly 1 million lbs. of CO₂ every year. This is the equivalent to approximately 73 average North American homes or 50 average North American sedans (source: BEF carbon calculator

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). Peralta will receive \$133,000 in rebates from PG&E for this project, which will help pay 30% of the \$431,000 price tag. Then, after 4 years, the District will have full recovered the cost of the project through savings on the utility bill.

Project cost:

\$431,000

PGE Rebate:

\$133,300

Annual Savings:

\$90,000

Payback:

4 years

CO₂ Diverted:

1,000,000 lbs.

PCCD Staff:

Bob Beckwith

"The savings realized through sustainability projects is a win-win for the environment and for academics," says Dr. Sadiq B. Ikharo, Vice Chancellor of General Services

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for the Peralta Community College District. "This is just the beginning of Peralta's Energy Master Planning and Implementation process that will reduce energy use and make more funds available to the classroom in a time of budget cuts."

The majority of the lighting retrofit work is replacing 9,000 fluorescent lamps and their ballasts at Merritt College and Laney College. Enlight removed Peralta's T-12 lamps with magnetic ballasts and 1st generation T-8 lamps with electronic ballasts and replaced them with 3rd generation T-8 lamps with electronic ballasts. This new combination, which uses 38 watts to run two lamps, is over 35% more efficient than the original combination, which used 60 to 72 watts for the same lumen output. The new lamps also contain less mercury, lowering the chances of mercury exposure in case they break.

This project was extraordinary since none of the old fixtures and lamps went to landfill. Though State law requires strict disposal and handling of fluorescent lamps, which contain mercury, Enlight took extra care to recycle each and every part of the lighting fixtures and lamps they removed. AERC Recycling Solutions

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in Hayward crushed the fluorescent tubes to separate glass and mercury for reuse, and even recycled the aluminum from the lamps' end-pins. They salvaged the copper wire and steel from ballasts, ballast housings and electronics. In addition, old plastic lenses were recycled by Enlight.

Energy-efficient lighting retrofits surged in 1990s with fluorescent lights, according to Matt Tracy, president of Enlight Inc. "We thought we were going to run out of efficiency in the mid-90s but manufacturers kept coming up with new technology and people in the field kept coming up with new applications," said Tracy. Since then, light bulb manufacturers steadily increased the color, efficiency and output of fluorescent lamps. The new generation of lighting closely imitates natural light, have longer life and degrade very little over time.

A major part of the work involved replacing lighting fixtures in the Laney and Merritt gyms. Previously, both had been illuminated by high-intensity discharge (HID) fixtures. Those have been replaced by new fluorescent fixtures, saving money and energy.

The technology for the HID requires a long warm-up time. In contrast, the new fluorescent fixtures enable coaches and players to instantly turn on the lights to full illumination without any warm-up time. The

fixtures, made by Ammerillium

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, take advantage of those instant-on capabilities, have built-in sensors that detect movement to turn on and off as needed.

Another environmental benefits to using fluorescent is that designers can accommodate for lighting needs very precisely. HID lamps degrade much faster than fluorescents, so engineers and designers using HID typically design lighting that is overly bright, but reaches the specified output when the bulbs have degraded.

The project was developed during Fall 2007 by Bob Beckwith, Peralta's Director of Operations, as a part of a larger energy-efficiency program for which PCCD received substantial rebates from PG&E, thanks

to a partnership between California Community Colleges and California's Investor Owned Utilities (CCC-IOU partnership

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). Dr. Ikharo encouraged the development of this and a host of other energy-efficiency measures after learning of the CCC-IOU program through office of Dan Estrada at the CCC System Office.

Recycling Education Interns 2009

[<http://cts.vresp.com/c/?PeraltaCommunityColl/27710d28a1/37b6f5e46e/3b7172d92b>]

Many people are still not aware of the importance of recycling. And, despite the prevalence recycling at home in the Oakland Bay Area, many Peralta students and faculty remain confused about what exactly can be recycled in Peralta's recycling bins. Even the handful of self-proclaimed recycling experts may pause to consider some everyday items. A juice-box, for example: paper exterior, plastic coated interior... does that mean it's recyclable? Raising awareness and educating the community about recycling at Peralta is the mission of the Colleges' 2nd class of Recycling Education Interns.

Brhett Skipper

Berkeley City College

Brhett Skipper currently takes courses at Berkeley City College to gain more skills to augment his experiences in music and massage therapy. He is a licensed massage therapist and envisions opening his own massage therapy practice one day.

Kathy Adams

College of Alameda

Kathy Adams has a love of singing jazz music. She currently attends classes at College of Alameda and works as a student employee at the Administration and Records building in the Cougar Village portables. She hopes to sing at Yoshi's in the near future.

Ceressa Allen

Laney College

Ceressa has been an active member of Laney College for the last two

years, earning in that time an AS and an AA. She has worked as an Instructional Aid in the Technology Center and the Writing Center. Ceressa loves dance and choreography, and has taken classes in jazz, modern. Ms. Allen plans to attend San Francisco State University for a B.A. in Health Education.

Tiana Drisker
Laney College

Tiana was a registered Dental Assistant with 1 year of experience when she enrolled received an AA in Liberal Arts from Laney College. She kept on working through her degree, splitting time between her role as a registered dental assistant, student, and EOPS student aid. Most recently, she has been able to utilize her 6+ years experience as an Instructor at Western Career College's Dental Assistant Program.

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Jennifer Jordan-Wong
Merritt College

Jennifer Jordan-Wong is a graduate of UCLA and currently a student in the Environmental Program getting her AA in Human Ecology, Policy, Planning and Environmental Justice. She also works as a student aide in the Environmental Program, and is a research assistant at the Brower Dellums Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies. She is passionate about sustainability and loves teaching creative reuse arts and crafts. You can find her at the Self Reliant House, at meetings of Merritt's student green club The Land and The People, and wherever there are puppies and ice cream.

District Installs Computerized Irrigation Controls

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Rainmaster DX2 controller receives weather information and limits irrigation watering.

This September, the Department of General Services Ground Crews, lead by Grounds Supervisor Sergio Angel, completed installation of modern irrigation controls that ration irrigation watering based on current weather conditions. The system garnered a \$40,000 rebate from the Irrigation Upgrade Program through the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD).

On a daily basis, the Rainmaster software collects and analyzes data from monitoring stations at Laney, College of Alameda, and Merritt Colleges, then remotely programs the controllers at the colleges with that days irrigation allowance and schedule.

The system helps Peralta save water by making sure the soil receives

the precise amount it has lost through evaporation and plant transpiration, called evapotranspiration

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(ET). In evaporation, sunlight and wind takes water out of the ground. In transpiration, plants absorb water and nutrients from the

soil and then release some of that water back into the air. The National Weather Service estimates that a large oak tree can release over 400 litres (~100 gallons) of water into the air every day. Yes. Every day.

Technicians for John Deere Landscape's Green Tech Division installed and connected the first controllers in June 2006 and Laney College and College of Alameda. Each of the controllers communicates with a computer at the Grounds Office at the Department of General Services via a telephone line, much like the way computers connected to the internet with a modem. Merritt College's hilly terrain prohibited a low-cost underground phone line to be added, so District-Wide Grounds Supervisor Sergio Angel consulted with staff at District IT office to devise a wireless connection, which was finally installed this September.

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