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Sustainable Tallahassee makes debut Organizers hope to raise awareness, membership

By Steve Liner
BUSINESS MATTERS EDITOR

Thursday evening more than 400 ate donated food off compostable paper plates, talked conservation, took in the environmental exhibits at the Mary Brogan Museum and, Sustainable Tallahassee organizers hope, signed up to become members.

"The key point is we do as much as we can to make a positive impact," said Kristin Dozier, Sustainable Tallahassee president. "We realize it is a daunting task to accomplish this. What we need is a community resource to make this the capital of sustainability.

"This is a very large issue that encompasses concerns about the energy we use and our weekend yard work's impact on water quality," she said. "All of us should think about the products we use: where they come from, how they are used and what happens to them when we're done."

The diversity of the crowd attending surprised some who turned out.

"I don't know that many of these people," said Sheri Coven, director of intergovernmental affairs for the Florida Department of Community Affairs. "So this represents a huge cross-section of people who care about this issue."

"We all want to connect," said Kelly DeWall, an employee of Tallahassee Nurseries. "We want to see what's going on. I'm interested in seeing who's going green. I want to give them my business."

Dozier said operating in an ecologically sustainable manner will enhance the economic development "of Tallahassee and this entire area."

The evening also attracted other organizations seeking members, volunteers and donors as well as many of the area's elected officials and candidates.

"Our goal is to collect memberships," said Erica Porch of Environment Florida, an arm of the Florida Public Interest Research Group. She introduced herself to some who came and asked for them to sign up to receive follow-up information.

"This confirms Tallahasseeans care about these issues," said Leon County Commissioner Cliff Thaell, who will introduce a policy to the commission next Tuesday to reduce Leon County's greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent by 2050.

What we use, throw away and recycle in Tallahassee

Electricity/Natural Gas

- 2.727 billion kWh of electricity used (an average of 977 kWh per residence).
- 23.2 million units (100 cubic feet) of natural gas used (an average of 21 units per residence).

Solid Waste

- 159,003 tons of garbage discarded.
- 9,366 tons recycled.

Source: City of Tallahassee. Figures for Fiscal Year 2007 (Oct. 1, 2006, to Sept. 30, 2007).

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