

Welcome to the Foster City Environmental Sustainability Task Force's (ESTF) quarterly eNewsletter! Our goal is to keep you informed about environmental sustainability activities in and around Foster City.

EVENTS

- FREE Foster City Earth Day Fair and Swap Meet!

On **April 16, 2011**, the City of Foster City and the Environmental Sustainability Task Force are hosting an Earth Day Fair from **10 AM to 3 PM** in City Hall Plaza, 610 Foster City Blvd. The 2011 Earth Day Fair will be focused on the 3Rs of Sustainability: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**, to encourage everyone to reduce the amount and toxicity of trash they throw away by reusing products, recycling as much as possible and buying products with recycled content and/or the least environmental impact.

Fair Activities. This family-friendly fair will feature food, live music, children's arts and crafts activities throughout the event and magician/juggler performances at 11 AM, 12:30 PM and 2 PM.

Green Vendors. Vendors will showcase green products and services to help attendees reduce their impact on the environment, save money and live greener and healthier lives. Examples include jewelry made of recycled materials, reusable bags and green home design services.

Education and Information. Booths will be set up to teach about easy and convenient ways to recycle and compost. Attendees will learn how to get rebates for reducing energy use, options for alternative transportation, and how to be involved in environmental initiatives in the City of Foster City.

Safe and Sustainable Disposal. Unneeded or expired pharmaceuticals will be collected for proper disposal. (Only legal pharmaceuticals in pill form are accepted.) Plastic sandwich bags and juice pouches will be collected and sent to Terracycle®, where they are turned into affordable green products. Free document shredding of up to 3 standard banker boxes per person will be available. An electronics waste recycling drop-off area will also be featured.

Active Re-use. Local non-profits will accept used goods, promoting re-use to benefit the community. A centerpiece of the 2011 fair is the Freecycle and Swap Meet area, where neighbors can drop-off unneeded household items and then "shop" the other donated items and take home a "new" treasure. All for free!

Anyone can participate by bringing used items! The following are examples of items will be accepted in the freecycle area, but check the website for a complete list: Clothing, shoes, accessories, linens, towels, bedding, housewares, small appliances, dishes, glassware, pots, pans, silverware, tools, jewelry, collectibles, toys, games, books, arts and craft items, musical instruments, sporting goods, bicycles and luggage.

For more information about the 2011 Earth Day Fair or to volunteer, visit:

www.fostercity.org/news/Earth-Day-Fair.cfm, email gogreen@fostercity.org or call (650) 286-3291. Or, you can follow us on Twitter @fearthday or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fearthday.

- FREE Go Green Speakers Series

The next Go Green Speakers Series event is **May 18, 2011**, entitled: Get a Solar Home Now: How Installing Solar Can Power the World. All Go Green events are held in the City Council Chambers from **6:30 PM to 8:30 PM**. The first half hour is a reception with light refreshments, and the talk begins at 7 pm. The events are **free**, and reservations are suggested. RSVP to gogreen@fostercity.org or call (650) 286-3291.

- Bike Advocacy Summit

Sustainable San Mateo County is partnering with the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition to present the first ever Bike Advocacy Summit on **Wednesday, April 6, 1 PM to 7 PM** at the San Mateo Main Library 55 W. Third Avenue, San Mateo. Professional advocates, politicians, public agency employees, industry representatives, and public health officials will all participate in a series of community events focused on promoting the bicycle for health, environmental security, and enhanced communities. For more information, including cost and ticket information, please visit:

<http://bikesiliconvalley.org/content/1823>.

- FREE Compost Give-Away

Back by popular demand and in appreciation of resident participation in the curbside yard trimmings program, RethinkWaste and the City of Foster City have teamed up to give away FREE compost.

The Compost events will take place from 8 AM to 5 PM, or as long as supplies last, on the following dates:

- Saturday, April 9
- Saturday, April 23
- Saturday, May 14

Residents may take up to 1 cubic yard of compost (about six full garbage cans) at no charge from the west corner of Boat Park, which is located at the intersection of Foster City Boulevard and Bounty Drive. Bring shovels, gloves and containers.

The compost is made from yard trimmings, which are collected at the curb and composted at a local composting facility. Yard trimmings make up more than half of California's municipal waste. "Compost" is the valuable, nutrient-rich soil product that results from proper composting. The compost is ideally used as an amendment to enrich soil for lawns, gardens, ornamental plants, trees, and potted plants.

- PJCC Family Health & Fitness Day

*Kaiser Permanente, the PJCC and Foster City Parks and Recreation present the 3rd Annual Family Health & Fitness Day and Farmers' Market on **Sunday, April 10** at the PJCC, 800 Foster City Blvd, Foster City. The Fair runs from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM at the PJCC and the Farmers' Market runs from 12:00 PM – 3:30 PM. Families and children ages 2-12 will have a blast at this FREE fun-filled afternoon!*

Activities include:

- Shop for produce from local farms at Foster City's only farmers' market (free shopping bags while supplies last)
- Teddy Bear Clinic (with free Teddy Bears while supplies last) with Kaiser Permanente physicians

- Nutritional cooking demonstrations for families
- Children's' fingerprinting station by Foster City police
- Plus Family Gym, Jump House, fire truck tours, and much more!

For a complete schedule, please visit www.pjcc.org.

- Free Compost Workshops

Each month, San Mateo County Recycleworks and the City of Foster City present a free 2-hour Compost Workshop taught by a volunteer Master Composter. By composting, you can reduce the amount of trash going to the landfill, reduce the amount of chemical fertilizers and pesticides needed to grow healthy plants and always have a free supply of compost for your garden. The workshops are held at the Foster City Recreation Center, usually in the Preschool room.

The schedule for 2011 is:

Wednesdays

4/13 630-830p

5/25 630-830p

7/20 630-830p

Saturdays

6/25 10a-12p

8/27 10a-12p

9/24 10a-12p

10/22 10a-12p

11/19 10a-12p

Check the current Leisure Update or <http://www.fostercity.org/Services/recreation/index.cfm> for more information and to register for a free class.

- Drive Less Challenge

April 22 - May 5. The Drive Less Challenge www.drivelesschallenge.com is a great follow-up to the Earth Day Fair and Swap Meet. It is a web-based friendly social competition in which participants challenge themselves, their friends and co-workers to reduce their number of solo driver car trips. Those trips are a huge cause of climate pollution. Participants log in each day's mileage and method of travel - solo driving, carpool, public transit, bike, or walk. The web tool automatically computes how green that travel was and adds it to your total.

Even better, participants create and join groups so they can compare their groups' performance with others. Groups could be families, schools, neighborhoods, business departments etc. After two weeks, results are totaled and top performers get bragging rights. For the electronic version of a flyer to give to your friends contact drivelesschallenge@gmail.com.

TAKE THE CHALLENGE! Happening in twelve communities from San Francisco to Morgan Hill.

- FREE Shredding Events (2)

The RPEA-Retired Public Employees Association, San Mateo County Chapter 46 will be hosting a FREE shredding events on **Thursday, May 12, 2011**, from **1 PM to 3 PM** at the San Mateo Elks Lodge, 229 W 20th Ave, San Mateo. Shred-it will be providing the service. Bring your old confidential papers, checks, financial documents, etc. No hard media—cds, dvds, discs, etc.

The City will host a FREE shredding event on Saturday, June 25, 2011 in City Hall Parking Lot, 610 Foster City Boulevard. More information will be available on the City's website in coming weeks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Third Green Footprint Series Episode Now available

The third installment in the Green Footprint™ Series, entitled “The HVAC System” is now available at www.fostercity.tv. Tyler Lewis, a whole house performance specialist explains how to make your HVAC more efficient and healthy for your home.

Produced in conjunction with ESTF, Green Footprint™ features eco-trends to help consumers recognize and understand a variety of environmental and sustainability efforts that they can undertake for themselves and their homes. Each episode focuses on green alternatives to minimize negative environmental effects and offer sustainable solutions. The first three episodes—*Home Performance 101*, *Water Wise Ways*, and *The Energy Roadmap*—are also available for on-demand streaming at www.fostercity.tv.

- Missed the last Go Green Speakers Series Event? Watch the video on FCTV!

The video recording is now available from March 16th Go Green Speakers Series event: “Water Wise Gardening with Beautiful California Natives.” Visit www.fostercity.tv and click on “schedule” to see future air dates. You can also view the PowerPoint presentation at: www.fostercity.org/news/Go-Green.cfm.

- “Just Check It” to reduce your use

Foster City is teaming up with the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery ([CalRecycle](#)), to encourage residents to “[Just Check It](#) – check your tire pressure that is!”

By checking your vehicle's tire pressure and tread depth once a month, when tires are cool to the touch, Foster City residents can:

- ✓ Stay safe on the road
- ✓ Save money with improved fuel efficiency and longer lasting tires
- ✓ Protect the environment by keeping tires out of landfills

Check out these links for more information and tips about the benefits of monthly tire maintenance:

- Download a free tip sheet on monthly tire maintenance in [English](#), [Spanish](#) or [Chinese](#).
- Watch this [You Tube video](#) and learn how to save money at California gas stations.
- Test your tire smarts with the fun and interactive [Just Check It quiz](#). You could win a prize!
- Learn more about tire maintenance by watching the Just Check It TV public service announcement in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

For more information about the “Just Check It” campaign, visit www.JustCheckIt.info or come to the Foster City Earth Day Fair on April 16th and get a free tire pressure gauge.

- Home Energy Efficiency Rebates available

Through grant funding from Energy Upgrade California™, PG&E is offering rebates of \$1,000 to \$4,000 to program participants who perform a variety of home energy upgrades. During the pilot program phase, work must be completed by an approved Energy Upgrade California™ contractor. The contractor can help you meet all the requirements to receive your rebate. Visit www.cbpc.org/ or www.energyupgradeca.org for more information.

- Door-to-Door Household Hazardous Waste Pick up now available

Properly and safely managing residential Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) and other items such as fluorescent lamps, computers and sharps, is now as easy as picking up the phone or sending an email. Curbside Inc will conveniently collect from your home your HHW and other eligible items that cannot be disposed of in your garbage or recycled in your curbside recycling program. The cost for this service is included in your existing garbage bill—**there is no additional fee for this service**. Visit www.rethinkwaste.org/residents/beyond-cart/household-hazardous-waste for more information.

- Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency Lawn Be Gone! Program

The Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) Lawn Be Gone! Program provides rebates to approved customers that convert water-thirsty lawns to water-efficient landscapes. To be eligible for this program, an applicant must be a customer of a participating BAWSCA Member Agency (Estero Municipal Improvement District, serving Foster City and parts of San Mateo, is a member agency). For more information about this and other rebates, please visit <http://bawasca.org/water-conservation/>.

- Former ESTF member receives Sustainable San Mateo award:

Jason Bade, former member of the Environmental Sustainability Task Force, recently won an award from Sustainable San Mateo County for his efforts to promote sustainability throughout San Mateo County. Watch this short YouTube video about his efforts: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRyQwwG1Km8

ARTICLE

DUAL FLUSH TOILET CONVERSION: An Easy Way to Save Water and Money

By Jerry Terstiege, ESTF member

Are you looking for simple, inexpensive ways to save water and money? Did you know that major users of water indoors are your older toilets, showerheads, washing machines and dishwashers? I was looking for a quick solution to save water in my bathroom without having to replace my whole toilet. So, I decided to try a dual flush conversion kit.

The advertising on the box says “Convert any size toilet to dual-flush,” that it “saves water,” “installs without tools,” that it “eliminates common toilet problems,” and that it “saves up to 15,000 gallons of water year after year.”

It all sounded very good, so I bought one to install on the “older” toilet in our home, the one that hadn’t yet been converted to low flow of 1.6 or the newer standard of 1.28 gallons per flush.

I started by carefully reading the instructions, which were presented in a logical manner, complete with lots of illustrations that explained the process pretty well. It didn’t hurt to have adjustable pliers handy to loosen and tighten, saving your fingers.

You start by shutting off the water to the toilet at the valve coming out of the wall on the water line supplying the toilet. Then flush, emptying the tank, after marking the water level in the toilet.

The old lever-type flush handle is removed as is the flapper in the bottom of the tank that releases the water. The new control is installed on the overflow tube to fit above where the old flapper valve had been. The new two-button control is installed where the old lever had been. Adjustments are made according to the instructions.

The actual work took no more than about 30 minutes. But reading, understanding, rereading and careful consideration took at least another 30 minutes, perhaps longer.

It is a relatively simple installation that could be safely done by anyone who is even slightly handy or anyone who is willing to try it. The dual flushes now work as intended. Pushing the upper button releases just part of the water in the tank, while pushing the bottom button releases it all.

Best of all, dual flush kits like the one that I bought can be found at Costco and at Orchard Supply Hardware (OSH) for less than \$20.00. It’s definitely an easy fix that can get you on the road to reducing your indoor water use and saving money on your water bill.

ESTF is an ad hoc citizen task force established by the Foster City Council in 2008 to develop a recommended action plan for community-wide environmental sustainability in Foster City. We completed our plan in 2009 (follow this [link](#) to see our plan). The plan is composed of recommendations in four main categories – energy, water, air quality, and solid waste. ESTF was re-commissioned by the City Council for a 3 year term (through June 2012) to continue to promote environmental sustainability within our community. We are working with the City to implement our recommended actions and to engage in public outreach and education. In 2011, ESTF is focused on waste reduction and energy conservation. To learn more about ESTF, follow this [link](#).

The ESTF mailing list SOLELY consists of quarterly ESTF e-newsletters and announcements on ESTF or ESTF- related events. If you do not wish to continue to receive emails from ESTF, please reply to this email with the subject header: UNSUBSCRIBE. Thank you for your interest.