

FRESH AIR

JOURNAL

The Green Scene In Eugene

City of Eugene Buys Wind Power

How green is Eugene?

Well, not to be outdone by the Emerald City in the L. Frank Baum classic *The Wizard of Oz*, Eugene weighed in as the #1 green city from among major metropolitan areas nationwide in a 2006 report released by The Green Guide, a

news and information source for green living. The report “recognizes cities across the country that are providing the most energy-efficient, least polluting and healthy spaces in which to live, giving special recognition to the top 10.”

“Eugene has worked for years – and continues to work hard – on environmental stewardship because we know it is the right thing to do for the future, and because it is a strongly held value in our community,” says Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy.

As part of this commitment to sustainability, the City of Eugene also signed up as a 25 percent EWEB Windpower customer for its core facilities, becoming Eugene Water

& Electric Board’s largest windpower customer by purchasing about 2.5 million kilowatt hours per year of clean, renewable wind energy. As a result of the City of Eugene’s commitment to EWEB Windpower, the program is now fully subscribed (see story at left).



The Eugene Public Library received an Energy Edge Award

“We felt it was a great way to expand our existing sustainability efforts,” says Lynne Eichner-Kelley, Sustainable Operations Analyst, noting that the City of Eugene has a legacy of sustainability work dating back to the 1980s.

For example, the City of Eugene has had an aggressive energy

Fresh Air Journal is a publication of Eugene Water & Electric Board for EWEB customers who support energy resources that are renewable, sustainable and have minimal impact on the environment.

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management program for many years. Both the Hilyard Community Center and the Eugene Public Library have received EWEB's "Energy Edge" awards for achieving 30 percent more energy efficiency than Oregon building code requires in new commercial buildings. These buildings, along with many others, continue to save energy and money every day by tracking usage and by implementing dozens of efficiency projects, both large and small.

In addition, the City of Eugene has also focused on alternative transportation options, wetlands and habitat restoration, solid waste and recycling, methane recovery and energy generation at the wastewater treatment plant, solar water heating at city pools and fire stations, low-energy LED traffic lights and incorporating hybrid vehicles into the city's fleet.

"In gathering data for a complete inventory of greenhouse gas emissions for the community, we became aware that EWEB has some of the cleanest power available," says Eichner-Kelley. "We are very glad to be able to support that effort and help insure that our power source remains as clean as it can in spite of future load growth."

City staff has also stepped up sustainability efforts to include expanded internal recycling, use of biofuels in fleet vehicles, using 100 percent recycled paper and establishing a green building policy.

"We didn't realize that our purchase would get EWEB to its goal of full subscription," says Eichner-Kelley, "but we were happy to help them achieve that goal and begin bringing on new renewable resources for everyone in the community."