

A Greener El Cerrito

COMMERCIAL EDITION

News from the City of El Cerrito Operations + Environmental Services Division

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Straws Upon Request

Did you know that over 500 million disposable straws are used and discarded every day in the United States. That equates to more than 175 billion straws a year that make it into our landfills, waterways and oceans.¹

How You Can Help

Provide straws only if requested or stock alternative straws made from paper, glass, or aluminum.

For a list of vendors that provide sustainable products in bulk, call the City's Operations + Environmental Services Division at (510) 215-4350.

1. Source: Eco-Cycle

Profiles in Green Business

Business Feature

This month, Greener El Cerrito is featuring two local businesses that have been certified by the Bay Area Green Business Program and have demonstrated a commitment to using environmentally friendly business practices. The program sets rigorous standards and recognizes businesses for switching to green practices. For more information about the Green Business Program visit www.greenbiz.ca.gov or contact City staff at wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.



Kevin O'Neal, Well Grounded

Well Grounded Tea & Coffee Bar

6925 Stockton Ave.
Hours: Monday - Friday
6AM-6PM, Saturday and
Sunday 7AM-4PM

Kevin O'Neal and Jen Komaromi have owned Well Grounded Coffee

and Tea for over 10 years. From the beginning they have valued green business practices. As business owners Kevin and Jen have put those values into practice by minimizing their carbon footprint. They try to source locally, from the craft beer and California wine they serve to tomatoes and basil bought seasonally at the El Cerrito Farmers Market.

Well Grounded staff recycles and composts everything from plastic packaging to food waste and paper coffee cups. The kitchen is cleaned using primarily green cleaning products and, in one of the more unique green business practices, coffee grounds are given away to local gardeners. Additionally, Well Grounded is now powered by 50% renewable energy as part of MCE's clean energy campaign.

Velocity Lock and Key

10058 San Pablo Ave.
Hours: Monday - Friday
10AM-5PM, Sat. 10AM-2PM.

For Velocity Lock and Key, green practices just make good business sense. From

energy-efficient lighting to paperless invoicing and minimized car trips, green practices not only reduce Velocity Lock and Key's environmental impact, they also reduce business costs.

Additionally, Velocity Lock and Key purchases locksmith supplies from local vendors coordinating supply pickups with locksmith jobs to reduce driving and greenhouse gases.

One green business practice in particular has always been a passion of owner Julie Pledger. As a teenager Julie took it upon herself to collect her classmates' cans and bottles for recycling. Currently, every piece of metal that passes through Velocity Lock and Key is either reused or recycled including old keys turned in by customers.



Julie Pledger, Velocity Lock & Key

Avoid Problems from Fats, Oil, and Grease (FOG)

No one wants untreated sewage backing up into their business, home, or street. That's why it's important to properly dispose of Fats, Oils, and Grease, commonly referred to as "FOG". FOG includes products such as cooking oil, shortening, pan drippings, dairy, and meat fats. After entering the sewer system, these items can cause grease to build up, forming blockages and leading to overflows. As a result, sewage can backup into streets, buildings, and storm drains, polluting local creeks and causing an array of environmental and public health hazards.



Controlling grease discharges helps to avoid these sanitary sewer overflows, property damage, and potentially large cleanup costs. Restaurants and other food service establishments, in

particular, can have a significant impact on reducing FOG, because of the amount of grease they produce during food preparation, cooking, and kitchen cleanup.

To reduce the amount of FOG that enters the plumbing system, food service establishments should implement a number of best management practices, from frequently cleaning grease traps to placing "No Grease" signs above sinks and drains. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) assists restaurants and food facilities to improve how they control grease. For free information on best management practices and grease trap maintenance, contact East Bay MUD at cleanbay@ebmud.com or call **(510) 287-1651**.

Recycle Your Cooking Oil!

In the Bay Area, there are also a number of locations that allow businesses to recycle cooking oil for use as bio-diesel. Visit search.earth911.com for a directory of used cooking oil drop-off locations near you.

Mandatory Commercial Composting

The State of California passed a commercial organics recycling law (Chesboro AB1826) in October 2014, which establishes a timeline for commercial accounts to adopt organic recycling. Commercial accounts include apartment complexes, businesses, and institutions.

Commercial accounts with the following characteristics will need to adopt an organics recycling program by the following dates:

- **April 1, 2016** – Commercial accounts generating eight cubic yards of organic waste per week
- **January 1, 2017** – Commercial accounts generating four cubic yards of organic waste per week
- **January 1, 2019** – Commercial accounts generating four cubic yards or more of solid waste per week

Organic waste includes food waste, landscape & pruning waste, nonhazardous wood waste, and food-spoiled paper waste that typically is mixed in with food waste.

For more information about AB1826, please visit www.calrecycle.ca.gov/recycle/commercial/organics/ or contact the Operations & Environmental Services Division at (510) 215-4350.

#OptUp to 100% Renewable Energy

The City and the Environmental Quality Committee have partnered with Marin Clean Energy (MCE), the City's Community Choice Energy Aggregator, to celebrate the City's 100th anniversary by launching the '100 for 100' Deep Green initiative. This initiative encourages residents and businesses to Opt Up to Deep Green, MCE's 100% renewable energy service. Deep Green is an affordable and easy way to make a big difference for the planet and generations to come, at a cost of just 1 cent more per kilowatt hour.

The City of El Cerrito recently opted to go Deep Green for all its municipal accounts. To join the City, visit www.mcecleanenergy.org/elcerrito/ to learn more or to enroll in Deep Green.

For more information about the Deep Green Campaign and the latest developments on the City's Climate Action Program contact City staff at wprovost@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us.

