



Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network

Network News

Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network Newsletter September 2009 Vol 2, Issue 1

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Network Meetings

PVSN Meeting:
Wed, Sept. 9, 2009

Location: Chicopee
City of Chicopee
Dept of Public Works
115 Baskin Drive
Chicopee, MA 01020

Meeting Agenda:
8:00-Food/drink and informal networking
9:00 Present and Future of the Sustainability Network
10:30 EPA Project Update
11:00-adjourn

Quick Links

[Pioneer Valley 350 Climate Activities](#)

[The Natural Step](#)

[Coop Power](#)

[350.org](#)

Greetings!

Dear Network Members,

If you don't know the importance of 350, then we are all in trouble. Stop reading this right now and go to www.350.org!

350 is the number that leading scientists say is the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide-measured in "Parts Per Million" in our atmosphere. 350 PPM-it's the number humanity needs to get back to as soon as possible to avoid runaway climate change. Right now we are at 390 PPM. So we have our work cut out for us, but it is absolutely not too late to make a change. We're like the patient that goes to the doctor and learns he's overweight, or his cholesterol is too high. He doesn't die immediately-but until he changes his lifestyle and gets back down to the safe zone, he's at more risk for heart attack or stroke. The planet is in its danger zone because we've poured too much carbon into the atmosphere, and we're starting to see signs of real trouble: melting ice caps, rapidly spreading drought. We need to scramble back as quickly as we can to safety. (from the 350.org website)

Many groups and individuals in the Pioneer Valley are doing all they can to get our world back to 350 PPM. The Pioneer Valley Climate Coalition has a great local website for political action. The Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network and Five College Climate Week have organized a calendar of local events to raise awareness about the need to get us back to 350 PPM. Our goal is to have 350 events in the Pioneer Valley between now and October 24th all designed to raise awareness about the urgent need to address our climate crisis. If you have already organized an event and posted it at 350.org, please add it to the local calendar at www.350.pvclimate.org. And if you haven't yet planned anything-get started now and don't forget to post it.

All activities are welcome. The goal of the activities is to raise awareness and put political pressure on our elected officials to ACT NOW! By the way, if you haven't yet seen the film, "The Girl in the Café" you should see it and then get going.

[Pioneer Valley Sustain. Network](#)

[Earth Thrives](#)

[The Natural Step](#)

Organize an event locally and post it at
<http://350.pvclimate.org/>

Thank you for all you do.

Catherine

Member News UPDATE!!

Woody Tasch of the [Slow Money Alliance](#) has accepted our invitation to be the special guest at our first annual members' only dinner party this Fall. The date is not yet fixed, but stay tuned.

Member Profile



"Getting to Know the Network"

An interview with Lynn Benander of Coop Power

How long have you lived in the Pioneer Valley?

I've lived here most of my life... since I was 17, except for a few years in Boston. I love it here. I've raised my family here. I feel connected to the people and the land in a powerful way.

Tell us about your vision for your business/organization & how it relates to sustainability.

Co-op Power is a multi-racial, multi-class movement for a just and sustainable energy future. It's a big vision, one that calls me and carries me through each day. We work where social, economic and environmental justice come together. We help people build community-ownership of energy to use our own buying power and our own investing power to shape our energy future.

I was just meeting with a group of members and supporters talking about our vision today. We talked about protecting the natural environment and stewarding the remaining resources well. We talked about justice and the moral imperative to do something now so that the most vulnerable communities won't pay a price they can't afford in the changes ahead. We talked about the value of community ownership. And then we talked about the happiness and peace that comes from living a simple and just life. I'm drawn to all of these.

Why are you interested in sustainability?

For me, sustainability is a profound commitment to people and to the natural world. It's an agreement to keep looking for another way until we live on this planet in harmony, until we use less and replenish more, until we hate less and love more.

My grandmother was so connected to the natural world. She taught me to love it on our walks through meadows and woods, smelling herbs and flowers, listening to the bird calls and the wind, finding just the right stone for a design, pressing flowers, melting into the ground lying on our backs.

My father was so connected to people and justice. He taught me to love people and to see how not everyone had the same opportunities or carried the same burdens. As a preacher in Chicago, he marched with Martin Luther King, and I remember feeling proud of him. I don't think we can talk about sustainability without talking about economic and social sustainability, without looking at where the worst environmental devastation is and who has paid the price most dearly for it. It's all so interconnected.

Why did you get involved with the PVSN? What is your vision for the network?

I got involved with PVSN because I believe organizations and businesses working for sustainability have much to learn from each other and many resources to share with each other. My vision for the network is to be a learning community where new ideas are born and brought to life, where leaders are supported and reinvigorated for the important work before them, where connections are made that create a more sustainable way of life here in the Valley.

What is the future of sustainability in the Valley?

We have so much going on here in the Valley. It's an exciting place to be. So many people are looking for ways to green their homes, their jobs, and their communities. And there are innovative ideas appearing every day for how to do that. I'm eager to see what we all come up with over the next ten years.

Book recommendation: Influential reading for you.

I'd recommend The Great Turning by Korten, Small-Mart Revolution by Shuman, Peak Everything by Heinberg, Citizen Powered Energy Handbook by Pahl, and Companies we Keep by Abrams.

Status of Deliverables

Introducing the New Pioneer Valley Sustainability Network Website

Come visit the new PVSN web site at www.PVSustain.org and see how far we've brought it! The old site has been rebuilt using content management, which provides for both a more organized presentation of the material available from the old site as well as the ability to add advanced features. Since the new site is built on Joomla, there are some 3000 add-ons to choose from, making for a highly versatile and user-friendly venue. The new site now contains current meeting minutes, a calendar of upcoming meetings and details on the various recent projects of the PVSN, as well as the final versions of the group mission and vision.

It is now possible to open and view current and past issues of the PVSN newsletter at the new site, as well as get in contact with us directly to recommend materials to submit and new useful resources. In fact, a viewer can now find a readable copy of works in progress, such as a list of categories for the searchable skills database being developed by the network members.

Recent PVSN projects have been added to the site, including pictures and videos of the '**The Table Set for Forever**', the winner of 'Art of Sustainability' contest, and the 'Sustainability Decision Tool' spreadsheet developed by Professor Erin Baker and Ben Ewing of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. We hope that this information will entice more community members to become more involved with the outstanding efforts of PVSN.

The site has been moved to the Joomla Content management system and updated with the help from the folks at www.EarthThrives.com; where you can find out more about what is going on in the valley that is green and sustainable.

By Rich Roth and Suzanne Bowles - EarthThrives

Decision Support Tool

After Ben Ewing's graduation, Rose Zdybel, a UMass graduate student, is continuing the work on the decision support tool under Erin Baker's supervision. On-going work includes adding uncertainty for oil, natural gas and electricity prices, and accounting for how those prices are inter-related. Additionally, in response to suggestions from the network members, we are writing up an overview of the tool including clear explanations of how to use it and what assumptions have been made. We are investigating posting the tool on the web using Google Docs so that the user is not required to have local spreadsheet software such as Excel or Open Office.

By Erin Baker & Rose Zdybel



Artist Jane Wegscheider

Art of Sustainability

We need communities to host the show. If you would like to host the Art of Sustainability winner, "A Table Set for Forever" please contact Catherine at cmiller@pvpc.org or call 413/781-6045. We will bring the art to you and set it up.

Local Activism

Western Mass Green Consortium -Launches "Project Retrofit"

Western Mass Green Consortium <http://www.westernmassgreengreenconsortium.org/> rolled out its first supported project - "Project Retrofit" - at a Wednesday, August 12 meeting. The project is focused on making deep energy retrofits (DER's) affordable for the average home owner. A DER is a renovation or remodeling strategy that substantially improves the comfort, safety, air quality, and durability of a home, or building that results in a 50 to 90 percent reduction in energy usage. A DER goes beyond weatherization, taking internal energy usage into account as well. Sean Jeffords from [Beyond Green Construction](#), an Easthampton based business specializing in DERs, and consultant, Doug Snyder, M.S., of DS Greenbuild, led the Project Retrofit ([Read More](#))

Regional Energy Auditing and Building Efficiency Services Available

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, using regional services funding provided by the Massachusetts Legislature and administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, is overseeing a multi-community performance contract with an experienced

energy service company, or ESCO, to work on behalf of the region's cities, towns, and school districts.

A performance contract with an ESCO can help communities achieve significant energy efficiency and conservation improvements and cost savings in municipal buildings with no up-front costs required. PVPC has hired Beacon Integrated Solutions to assist participating cities and towns with a "Request for Qualifications" RFQ process to engage the services of an ESCO. To date, 21 of 43 cities and towns and 3 school districts in the Pioneer Valley region have expressed interest in participating in this regional initiative. For more information contact PVPC's Catherine Ratté (formerly Miller) or Tony Dover at (413) 781-6045.

Boston Bike Share Program

Boston is entering into talks with a Montreal-based company to create what would be the nation's largest urban bike-sharing system. City officials are hoping to reach a decision with the Public Bike System Company in the next 60 days to install a network of 2,500 bikes and 290 stations across the city by next summer, with the option of expanding to a 5,000-bike system encompassing the neighboring communities Brookline, Cambridge and Somerville. [Read more...](#)



GreenComm Leads Effort to Bring Green and Sustainable Orgs to Virtual Forefront

GreenComm, Inc has launched a two-pronged effort to support the visibility, strength and vitality of environmentally progressive groups in their regional organizing. The GreenComm mission is to facilitate online communications, and/or Internet services for groups and individuals engaged in locally-oriented green or sustainable missions.

[Earth Thrives](#) is the online public project of GreenComm, Inc. that provides a central clearinghouse for all relevant green and sustainable data. At Earth Thrives there are great features that an individual, organization or business in the Pioneer Valley can use to submit press releases and to get the word out about initiatives and events.

[Taking Green Virtual](#) facilitates an organization's online or web presence, taking it to a new level. GreenComm director Kirsten said "Making a web site today is easy, while we do the hard part, matching a group's needs and operating style to the right social media and moving the group along to a complete online presence. "

CONTACT: Kirsten Bonanza at 413-559-9118 or Kirsten@TakingGreenVirtual.Org

GreenComm, Inc is made possible with substantial support from Rich Roth and TnR Global,Inc, in Greenfield, MA.

PVPC Receives NADO Innovation Award

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has received a 2009 Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan.

The award program recognizes regional development organizations and partnering organizations for improving the economic and community competitiveness of our nation's regions and local communities. PVPC is one of 45 organizations nationwide and the only one in New England to win this year's Innovation Award.

The [Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan](#) aims to minimize our impact on the earth's climate through efficient use and generation of safe, clean, ample energy that helps sustain our regional economy. The plan articulates four clear and measurable goals: reduce our region's energy consumption, generate new clean energy capacity, reduce our region's greenhouse gas emissions, and create local green jobs. The plan was produced in 2008 with support from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments in collaboration with the Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Collaborative. Grant funds were provided by the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Renewable Energy Trust Fund.

NADO is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery, and comprehensive strategies. For 20 years, NADO's Innovation Award has been granted to regional development organizations throughout the country to showcase creative projects and to advance growth and sustainability in the nation's regions.

Pioneer Valley Sustainability News and Websites

A New Sustainability Website Launched

I'd like to invite you to take a look at the new web publication on sustainability and sustainability politics I've just launched, **Sustenance**, at www.SustenanceToday.org.

What will it take to sustain our communities, our regions, our country over the long run? That's the question we'll tackle at **Sustenance**, with news reports and analysis, links to important websites, articles and resources, and, coming soon, regular audio interviews.

To help advance the growing politics of sustainability, **Sustenance** will be looking at the new practical experiments and innovative thinking emerging in: local and organic agriculture, alternative energy and energy efficiency, sustainable economics, energy efficient housing, healthcare for all, manufacturing, transportation, and water. But most of all we'll be discussing what it might take to link these innovations in a new culture and politics of sustainability that can transform our communities, our regions and our country.

Sustenance is based in the Pioneer Valley region in western Massachusetts, and will have a particular interest in the practice and politics of sustainability in this region, and in the Connecticut River valley to our north and south. But its reporting won't be confined to this region or even to this country.

If you have ideas for articles, or just want to pass along links to interesting organizations, articles or reports, or if you have suggestions for interviews **Sustenance** should do, feel free to drop a line, via publisher@sustenancetoday.org.

Rudy Perkins

Sea Change Radio Covers Sustainability in the Pioneer Valley -- and Beyond! Sea Change Radio Co-Hosts/Producers [Bill Baue](#) and [Francesca Rheannon](#) keep their ears to the ground to cover the interconnected ways in which our region -- and nation and world -- are making transitions toward sustainability. And Sea Change's definition of sustainability is broad, encompassing not only environmental issues such as the climate crisis, water and resource depletion, and toxics, but also social issues such as human rights and social justice as well as

economic issues such as alternative economies.

Sea Change Radio airs on 5 stations up and down the Valley & podcasts from www.cchange.net

[WMUA 91.1 FM](#) | Amherst, Massachusetts | Fridays 4:30 pm

[WXOJ-LP 103.3 FM](#) | Valley Free Radio | Northampton, Massachusetts | Wednesdays 6:30 pm

[WMCB-LP 107.9 FM](#) | Greenfield, Massachusetts | Saturdays 7:00 pm and Mondays 10:00 pm

[WVEW 107.7 FM](#) | Brattleboro Community Radio | Brattleboro, Vermont | Mondays 10:30 am

[WOOL-LP 100.1 FM](#) | Black Sheep Radio | Bellows Falls, Vermont | Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 am <http://www.wvew.org/>

Check out Sea Change's regional coverage over the past couple of months:

[Urban Agriculture: Sprouting Farms on Rooftops and Empty Lots](#) features an interview with [Gardening the Community](#) (GtC) Director Ippy Amatul-Wadud and her sister Qamaria from the [35th Annual Conference](#) of the [Northeast Organic Farming Association](#) (NOFA.) Also featured is an interview with [Alice Leung and Akshay Kolte](#), co-founders of [Top Sprouts](#), Boston-based a startup company that puts [greenhouses atop downtown buildings](#).

[Growing Food - Growing Community](#) features interviews with NOFA Conference keynoter [Will Allen](#) of [Growing Power](#), as well as with presenters Abby Youngblood of [Just Food](#) and Scott Kellogg, author of [TOOLBOX FOR SUSTAINABLE CITY LIVING](#).

A Calendar of Sustainability Events Happening in the Region

See <http://www.earththrives.com/calendar/>

In doing research for the newsletter I often run across interesting websites/new technologies/ resources that might be useful (or just entertaining) to further our work toward sustainability.

If you have any links you would like to share with the network email me at adover@pvpc.org

Moving Toward Sustainability

The Natural Step's Toolkit for Sustainability

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are proud to share two new core resources with you. The Natural Step's [Toolkits for Sustainability](#) have been created to share best practices based on our work with thousands of corporations, municipalities, academic institutions and not-for-profit organizations around the world. Our partners and clients have proven that moving strategically toward sustainability leads to innovation, new opportunities, reduced costs, and dramatically reduced ecological and social impacts.

The challenge to all of us is to inspire and become the sustainability champions that are needed to lead this change and create a better tomorrow. In the few short weeks that these toolkits have been available, they've been downloaded thousands of times from Jasper to Jakarta!

We are also proud to be offering intensive 2-day sustainability training for leaders across

Canada this fall as well as a 5 month course in community planning towards sustainability. Please see our [website for more](#).

Sincerely,
Kelly Hawke Baxter- Executive Director
The Natural Step Canada

To learn more about our work on an ongoing basis, visit our website at www.thenaturalstep.org/canada

New Sustainability List Serve at UMASS

This list is intended as a network of individuals interested in supporting and advancing sustainability at UMass Amherst.

<https://list.umass.edu/mailman/listinfo/sustainableumass-l>

In The News

National

Livable Communities Act

Senator Dodd [CT] was joined by Senators Menendez [NJ], Merkley [OR], Bennet [CO] and Akaka [HI] in introducing the Livable Communities Act of 2009 ([S. 1619](#)). The bill would fund the development and implementation of regional plans to link transportation, land use, housing and economic development to create prosperous, sustainable communities.

McKinsey Energy Efficiency Report - Global management consultant McKinsey & Co. produced a new report entitled [Unlocking Energy Efficiency in the U.S. Economy](#). The report concludes that if the U.S. can craft a comprehensive and innovative approach to unlock energy efficiency as a resource, it could result in gross savings worth more than \$1.2 trillion by 2020, along with 1.1 gigatons of greenhouse gas abatement.

Federal Feed-In Tariff Bill authored by Massachusetts U.S. Representative in Congress

Feed-in tariffs have been shown to increase the pace of renewable energy development as well as level the playing field for distributed, locally owned generators. U.S. Reps Jay Inslee and Bill Delahunt are trying to replicate the successes of the feed-in tariff in the United States with a new bill in the 2009 Congress. [Read more about Feed-In Tariffs](#)

Update on the "American Clean Energy Leadership Act"

This update looks at a measure that already is eligible for debate by the full Senate: S.1462, the "American Clean Energy Leadership Act of 2009," which would comprehensively overhaul the US energy system. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee agreed to the bill by a bipartisan vote of 15-8, with four Republicans in favor and two Democrats opposed.

Like the Waxman-Markey bill, S.1462 covers appliance energy efficiency, building energy codes, the reliability of the US grid for electricity transmission, renewable electricity standards, carbon capture and storage, energy market manipulation, and aid for deploying clean energy technologies. The single biggest difference between the two may be that S.1462 would not control US greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. But, on some energy issues, most notably promoting new sources of oil and gas, S.1462 goes even further than Waxman-Markey ([Read](#)

[More\)](#)

Massachusetts

PUBLIC HEARING

On Wednesday, Sept 9, 10am in Room A-1 at the State House in Boston, the Legislature's Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy will hold a public hearing on Bills H3087 and S1527 to allow new municipal electric utilities ("munis") in Massachusetts. For more information from a pro-muni point of view, contact: Patrick Mehr- Lexington Electric Utility Committee (781)367-2229 www.massmunichoice.org

World Wide Views on Global Warming - Saturday, September 26, Museum of Science. At this day-long event, selected participants from over 40 countries will explore global warming in-depth and work toward recommendations for the December United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. The Museum is among several sites across the country that are participating in this worldwide event, and 100 Greater Boston residents will be chosen to join (the Museum is seeking people who are not working in climate issues professionally). Organized by the Danish Board of Technology, these global deliberations offer participants the opportunity to join an international conversation about environmental policy options that affect us both locally and globally. Consider a variety of questions regarding emission reduction, implementation, and funding; watch videos from worldwide experts and advisors; and share policy recommendations electronically with participants at other sites. At the end of the day, the sites send these recommendations to the United Nations for consideration before its deliberations to replace the expiring Kyoto Protocol. The Museum also hosts a follow-up event on Sunday, September 27 to share results of the local and global discussions with friends and family, policymakers, and the public. To apply to be a participant, go to the [Museum of Science website](#).

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency- New England Regional Office News

A Record 150 New England Communities Take Steps to Save Energy and Money:

EPA New England's Community Energy Challenge program reached a new milestone by accepting its 150th participant recently. Reflecting a growing national interest in greening local government, municipalities that join EPA's Community Energy Challenge pledge to reduce energy consumption in their municipal facilities by at least 10 percent. Collectively, the communities participating in the Community Energy Challenge represent more than 30 percent of New England's population.

Participants in the EPA New England's Community Energy Challenge include 150 communities from all six New England states (57 Massachusetts communities). They are: [Read More](#)

3 New England Facilities Agree to Pay Penalties for Oil Spill Planning Failures

Three southern New England facilities that store over a million gallons of oil each agreed to pay penalties for failing to take adequate precaution to prevent and contain oil spills. Specifically, EPA alleges that the following oil storage facilities had failed to adequately prepare and maintain Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure plans (commonly called "SPCC" plans) and/or Facility Response Plans ("FRPs"): DDLC Energy of New London, Conn.; Taylor Energy of Broad Brook, Conn.; and Northeast Products Co. Inc. of Fall River, Mass.

Northeast Products Co. Inc. is located at 52 Ferry Street in Fall River Massachusetts and it

includes a commercial warehouse building utilized for the processing and packaging of lubrication oils and a bulk oil farm. At the time of EPA's inspection the company failed to develop an adequate FRP. More specifically, the plan failed to provide evidence of contracts or other approved means for ensuring availability of personnel and equipment in the event of a spill. In addition, there were no records of testing, inspection or deployment of response equipment. Also, the company failed to comply with certain notice requirements under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. To settle this case, the company has paid a \$81,132 penalty. [Read More](#)

EPA Awards \$3.1 Million in Recovery Act Funds to Clean Up Underground Petroleum Leaks in Mass.

In an effort to protect people where they live, work and play, EPA has awarded \$3,118,000 to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to assess and clean up underground storage tank petroleum leaks. The greatest potential hazard from a leaking underground storage tank is that the petroleum or other hazardous substances seep into the soil and contaminate groundwater, the source of drinking water for nearly one-third of all Americans.

This money is part of \$197 million appropriated under the Recovery Act to address shovel-ready sites nationwide contaminated by petroleum from leaking underground storage tanks. The funds will be used for overseeing assessment and cleanup of leaks from underground storage tanks or directly paying for assessment and cleanup of leaks from federally regulated tanks where the responsible party is unknown, unwilling or unable to finance, or the cleanup is an emergency response. EPA regional underground storage tank programs will enter into cooperative agreements with MA DEP in the coming weeks. These cooperative agreements will include more detailed descriptions of state spending plans. [Read More](#)

Educational Resources

Photovoltaic Practitioner Certificate Program

The Center for Business and Technology has set Fall dates for its very popular Photovoltaic Practitioner Certificate Program. The next program will begin on Monday, September 21 and is expected to fill up long before the start date. Complete details are at <http://cbt.stcc.edu/descriptions/ztec-018.asp>

Alternative Energy Workshops:

- Design and Documentation of Photovoltaic (PV) Systems beginning on September 12
- PV (Photovoltaic) Primer on November 14
- General Solar Applications for the Consumer on October 17

Complete details on these and other alternative programs are at http://cbt.stcc.edu/specialinterest/index.asp#Alternative_Energy

Green Buildings Online Courses

There is a rapidly growing need for those in the building, remodeling, or trade industries to understand green buildings. The Center for Business and Technology (CBT) at Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) offers two, 30-hour, online courses. Participants will have access to the courses 24/7 and will be able to complete the coursework at their own pace.

◆ Principles of Green Buildings ◆ Performing Comprehensive Building Assessments

Complete details are at <http://www.gatlineducation.com/stcc/> (click on Skilled Trades and Industrial)

BAC Sustainable Design Courses - [Boston Architectural College](#) has announced its fall schedule of online sustainable design courses. Several new courses are offered including *Economics of Green Building*, *Sustainable Design and Preservation*, *Solar Energy: Design with the Sun*, and *Green Residential Remodeling and Renovation*. See the BAC website for course and registration information.

Harvard Extension Course on Climate - [Investing in a Sustainable Future \(ENVR E-157\)](#), co-taught by Harvard Public Health Professor Jack Spengler and Michael Gillenwater, executive director of the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute. Focuses on assessing the sustainability strategy and performance of a company. Classes held on Tuesdays at 5:30 pm; begins September 1.

Are there topics you would like to see included in future issues? Do you have a success story you would like to share with the community? Are you hosting an event? Please let us know your thoughts by sending an e-mail to adover@pvpc.org with "Newsletter" in the Subject field.

Tony Dover
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Sustainable Development Planner
(413) 781-6045 Ext. 334

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