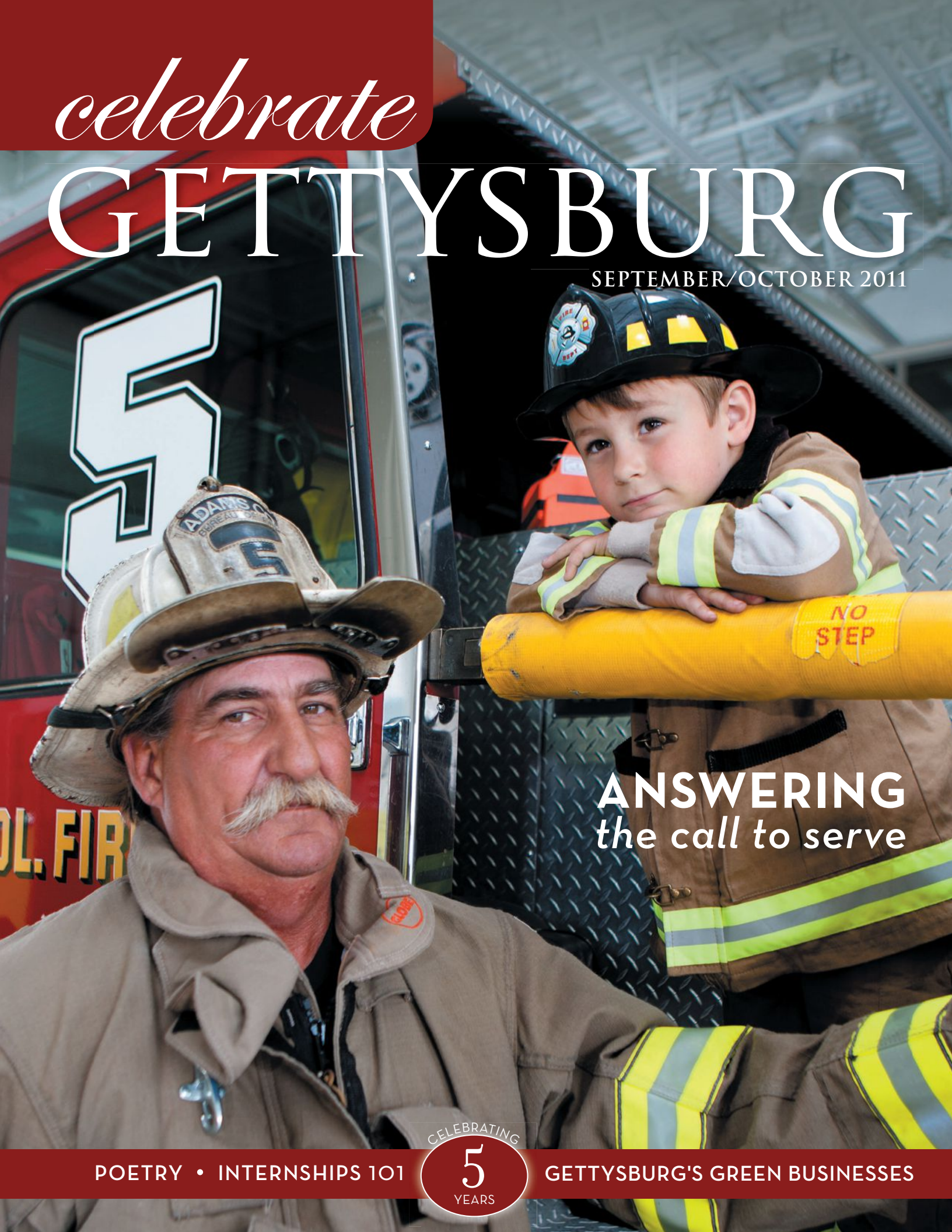


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GETTYSBURG

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011



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YEARS

GETTYSBURG'S GREEN BUSINESSES

GROWING GREEN BUSINESSES

It's a question that faces more than a few Gettysburg businesses these days: How to integrate "green" practices into the business plan so as to work toward a more sustainable future?

Many business owners and environmental experts say the need to even consider such a question is being driven by increasing consumer demand for environmentally responsible products and services. And that's good news. Consumers seem to be better informed and are using their spending power to help maintain the ecohealth of their communities.

Clearly, it can be good business to be green. It can increase profit, improve efficiency, potentially lower operating costs, enhance brand image, increase the ability to attract and retain like-minded employees and reduce the carbon footprint of a business. Adopting eco-friendly practices can even reduce pressure from green activist groups and the media.

According to StartupNation, an online business resource for entrepreneurs, being green requires an attitude toward sustainability—environmental, economic and social sustainability—and habits that can be integrated into daily living. Some examples include clicking the "power save" mode on electronic devices, purchasing and using biodegradable products, employing energy efficient hand dryers or installing a heating and cooling system that harnesses energy from beneath the earth. Being a green business means simply changing the way a business operates in order to create a positive impact on the environment.

By Kim Weaver • Photography by Anastasia Tantaros



(left) William Wills, owner of Gettysburg Eddie's on Steinwehr Avenue, has adopted environmentally sustainable business practices at his intown pub. (right) Eco-friendly takeout containers are some of the biodegradable products used at Gettysburg Eddie's.

How does a business take measures to become sustainable? Are there any benefits? One way to answer these questions is to take a look at how a few local businesses are implementing green practices.

Gettysburg Eddie's lowers utility bills, reduces paper consumption

When William Wills, owner of Gettysburg Eddie's on Steinwehr Avenue, changed the name of his restaurant three years ago, he decided that he and his company of 22 employees would work toward environmental sustainability. "It's just the right thing to do," says Wills, who has owned the restaurant, previously known as the Gingerbread Man, for 16 years.

Wills had heard about a restaurant in Harrisburg that had made some significant changes in favor of sustainability and that subsequently was certified by the Green Restaurant Association (GRA). The GRA is a Boston-based national nonprofit that has provided environmental consulting and

certification to food service operations for 20 years. He visited the restaurant and after seeing its new processes, and subsequently realizing certification might validate to his customers his own green commitment, Wills contacted GRA.

Following the association's strict requirements and standards, Wills outfitted his intown pub with on-demand electric water heaters, motion sensors and programmable thermostats to control lighting, heating and cooling. He swapped paper towels for energy efficient hand dryers and now uses rice-, soybean- and potato-based dinner napkins, trash can liners and takeout utensils and containers. He placed GRA logos along with table tents around the restaurant to educate the public about Gettysburg Eddie's biodegradable products and its energy conservation efforts. What about the restaurant's used cooking oil? Wills sells it to a Winchester, Virginia-based recycling company for conversion to biofuel. Gettysburg Eddie's is now among 12 food service operations in Pennsylvania—and

the only restaurant in Adams County—certified green by the Green Restaurant Association.

"We are confident that we are not shifting the problem to another part of the environment," says William Wills.

"This is one of the ultimate problems that the GRA avoids while working with businesses in the food service industry to achieve environmentally sustainable goals," he says.

Partnering with the GRA is a commitment Wills takes seriously. The association certifies restaurants based on a comprehensive evaluation of seven environmental categories, including water efficiency, sustainable furnishings and building materials and disposables. Under a new reward system, restaurants must achieve a



Structures at The Lodges at Gettysburg, a 62-acre private retreat, are shown. The Lodges has incorporated green technology at the property in the form of an underground, vertical closed loop geothermal system.

minimum of 100 points overall, as well as a minimum number of points in each category. They also must have a full-scale recycling program, be free of Styrofoam and must improve their score each year to maintain certification. As the market changes and provides more plentiful and better environmental solutions, it is important, Wills says, that restaurants continue to make improvements.

Sound stringent? Wills is frank—there have been some financial challenges in his quest to help save the planet. “To be honest, I’m spending more on my supply order. It has doubled in price. The stuff is very expensive. I’ve had to figure these [higher] costs in the prices on the menu,” he says. Still, he says, you do have to look at the big picture when going green. Wills has lowered his restaurant’s utility bills, reduced paper consumption and was recently bestowed a Gettysburg Adams Chamber of Commerce Environmental Stewardship award. Impressed customers who make a comment in

person or on travel review websites about Gettysburg Eddie’s green initiatives make him especially proud. He says that feedback helps him to measure if his eco-friendly ways are bringing in new customers and creating customer loyalty.

As for the future, Wills wants to continue setting a good example for the business community. He says he will keep working with the GRA to advance his mission; new energy efficient equipment and alternative energy are possibilities. And, he wants to keep scouring industry magazines and the Internet for articles that might help him decide if a much greener plan is in his future.

“I’d like to build an entire green restaurant,” he says.

The Lodges at Gettysburg incorporates geothermal technology

Green technology can be found nestled in the rolling green hills of Freedom Township where, on one of the highest ridges in all of Gettysburg, is a buried geothermal heating-and-cooling

system. That system functions by using the earth’s energy—in the form of a constant subterranean temperature of about 55 degrees F.—to help maintain temperatures in a new 12,500-square-foot stone-and-wood lodge aptly named Gloryridge.

“When you look at the environmental impact, the efficiency and energy conservation of geothermal, it is what is right long-term for the Adams County community and the country,” says Shawn Cassidy, one of four partners in The Lodges at Gettysburg, a recently opened 62-acre private retreat that also includes 24 small lodges and a 3-acre lake stocked with popular game fish. The group bought the property—a former summer camp and retreat locale—in 1996 from the Diocese of Harrisburg and started on the master plan for renovation and building in 2009. “The partners collectively felt it is a priority to go green,” continues Cassidy. “We want to be a leader on that front.”

In its most basic terms, geothermal technology is the transfer of energy



A geothermal system at The Lodges at Gettysburg heats and cools a lodge building.


through a heat pump from the building to the earth in the summer (cooling) and the earth to the building in the winter (heating), according to Ray Harbaugh, owner of Harbaugh's HVAC/Refrigeration Inc. in Blue Ridge Summit, who put in the retreat's system and has been doing geothermal work since the 1980s. Because Cassidy and his partners wanted to disrupt the landscape as little as possible, they installed an underground vertical closed loop system which required the drilling of 20 boreholes, each 300 feet deep. A high-density pipe with a U-bend at the bottom was inserted into each hole and then connected to a horizontal pipe that circulates a mixture of water and nontoxic antifreeze to and from the heat pump room—what Cassidy calls “the brainchild of the geothermal system”—inside the main lodge.

Geothermal is renewable and has long been known to benefit the environment by eliminating greenhouse gas emissions produced by traditional oil and gas systems. The initial costs of installation are considerably higher than conventional energy sources. In the case of The Lodges at Gettysburg, it's 25 to 30 percent more, says Lou Lupin, another Lodge partner. In addition, the underground loop has an expected life greater than 50 years, and the low-maintenance unit can save up to 50 percent on heating and cooling costs, according to Randall Alexander of Randall Alexander Well Drilling in Fairfield who drilled the boreholes into the landscape at Gloryridge. Alexander, who has been involved in the geothermal industry since 1983, says if installed and sized properly, the payback on investment is five to seven years.

“Geothermal systems are gaining popularity due to the advantages they have to offer,”
Randall Alexander says.

He points out that more than half of his well drilling work is associated with commercial and residential geothermal installation. “It has taken society a while to implement the technology,” adds Harbaugh. “It’s not been the buzzword, but society is becoming more aware of the cost of fossil fuels.”

Although The Lodges at Gettysburg has been open only a few months, Lupin says he is confident that all of the investment in the geothermal system will pay off over time. The ecoagenda of The Lodges consists of making their business more sustainable. Lupin and his partners also plan to be part of the Gettysburg Adams Chamber of Commerce’s upcoming plan to lead and engage the business community in green initiatives. What they most hope to convey to the community through their centuries-old practice of reduce, reuse and recycle is that “old” green and “new” green can decidedly coexist.

“When people see the rustic and elegant interior of Gloryridge, they will be taken aback and say, ‘I didn’t realize geothermal could serve a building like this,’” Cassidy says. 

Gettysburg Eddie's

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More Adams County businesses integrating green practices

Adams County Trout Unlimited
 Adams County Winery
 Adams Electric Cooperative
 Adams Rescue Mission
 Gettysburg College
 Gettysburg College Environmental Studies Department
 Gettysburg Hospital
 Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center

Harrisburg Area Community College-Gettysburg Campus
 Hundredfold Farm
 Knouse Foods Cooperative Inc.
 Land Conservancy of Adams County
 Mason Dixon Farms LLC
 Rice Fruit Company
 Schindler Elevator Corporation