



SPRING 2013

GEMS Newsletter



YOUR GEMS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

GEMS COORDINATOR

- Wendy Trapp

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- David Stockwell Chair
- Ronnie Smith

AFGE

- Brian Litostansky AFGE, Portland
- Jennifer Simonds, 2583 Vancouver

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- Ron Higgins

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- Renee' Lange
- Carter Carlson

Facilities Management

- John Dodier
- Travis Peake, Admin Support
- Industrial Hygiene

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- Sherri Atherton

Inpatient Services

- Diane Stief
- Constance Matson
- Sarah Koehler

Logistics and Material Management

- Andrew Heithaus

Operative Care

- Kathleen Coleman
- Karie Galvin

Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

- Trish Aswani

Pharmacy

- Joe Brooks
- Angela Loo

Projects and Interior Design

- Melisse Kuhn

Research

- Heather Parman

A Message From the GEMS Coordinator

BRRRRR! It is cold out there!, but spring is on the horizon and there is still lots of work to do.

The Committee has been busy working on this years target and objectives; patient medication disposal, programs, reducing medical supply waste, increasing alternative fuel usage for our government fleet vehicles, and station level project recycling for vinyl tile, ceiling ,and carpet.

We are beginning to prepare for the collection of environmental aspects and impacts. This is where a GEMS member will visit your work area and examine environmental effects in your department and make suggestions to improve as needed. We will be visiting your department soon! The Committee is also beginning Earth Week event preparation. See page 2 for more information about up-

coming Earth Week events.

Please be advised that there are upcoming hospital inspections coming soon, to include Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as well as Joint Commission. Both visits are very important and involve environmental issues. Unfortunately, neither visit is announced, so this requires continuous readiness. If you have any concerns or questions about item disposal, chemicals, spill response, chemotherapy agents, or any other environmental concerns, please contact me as I am happy to help!

Again, thanks to all of you for your hard work during this busy time. You work is highly valued and the GEMS program would not be the same without all of you!

Wendy Trapp
GEMS Coordinator

In This Issue:

Earth Week-Coming SOON

Page 2

Recycling Dos and Don'ts

Page 3

NEW! Bend CBOC, LEED Gold Building

Page 4-6

Microfiber Mops

Page 7

Have GEMS questions, contact
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Earth Week- Coming SOON!

April 22 is Earth Day.....

and we will be celebrating the whole week of April 15-19 with many events! April 22, Earth Day, will be our sustainability fair on the sky bridge from 11-1pm. This event partners with Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU) and invites organizers from the community to help with sustainability at home and work. It has been a huge success in the past years, and is open to the public as well as employees, so I hope you will join us.

A **tentative** schedule is as follows

- April 15 Earth week kick off table, spinning wheel, and education –Sky walk
- April 16 Earth week recycling events, athletic shoe recycling and cell phones recycling for soldiers
- April 17 Recycled Art contest and candle making work shop
- April 18 Earth week office swap 11a.m.-1p.m. Sky walk
- April 19 Waste Sort, out back by warehouse
- April 22 Sustainability Fair-Sky Bridge 11a.m.-1p.m.

Please watch e-post and Facebook for official schedule of events. Vancouver will be included as well.

Recycling Do's and Don'ts

Items that **cannot** be recycled!

Food “to go” containers

Coffee cups

Gloves

IV bags or tubing

Diapers and/or Blue Bed Under pads

frozen food boxes



Plastics:

Please make sure to rinse yogurt or other plastic food containers or fruit flies will come and we wont be able to recycle your items!

Glass:

All glass wear must be rinsed and cleaned up in order to be recycled!

Aluminum:

Must rinse soda & pop cans before they can be recycled or they will attract fruit flies!



Portland VA Medical Center Opens New LEED Gold Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Bend, Oregon

By Melisse Kuhn , Interior Designer

The Portland VA Medical Center put a new foot forward in its design and construction program in November with the opening of its first new LEED* Gold equivalent** Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), now open to patients in Bend, Oregon. Construction of the 22,000 square foot clinic –double the size of the former CBOC-- came in response to the growing veteran population in Central Oregon and a need for additional and expanded services. Audiology services, expanded eye services, as well as physical therapy and rehabilitation are now all offered in the new CBOC. The clinic welcomed its first patient November 27, 2012 after a year and a half of design, planning, and construction by an integrated design team consisting of VA engineers and biomedical engineers, VA interior design, service chiefs and Bend CBOC Operations Manager alongside private architecture firm, Steele & Associates.

The Bend CBOC remodel hallmarks the latest in a series of CBOC renovations and expansion projects that began in earnest in 2009 with the construction of the

Hillsboro CBOC and followed with the opening of the West Linn CBOC and Building 20 in Vancouver, Washington. Guided by President Obama’s Executive

Order that mandates all new Federal construction on private land meet or exceed LEED Gold Certification Standards, the new Bend CBOC shows the medical center’s dedication to achieving environmental responsibility alongside patient and staff satisfaction in its construction program.



With each new construction project comes the opportunity to pool from our past design and construction experiences and pair those experiences with published research that shows the effects of healthcare design choices. This research, called Evidence Based Design (EBD), guided decisions surrounding the clinic's floor plan, lighting, finishes and even furniture selection. The palette of materials selected for the project for example-- selections based on EBD--are as aesthetically mindful as they are environmentally responsible. Materials are selected to create an environment of care designed to increase patient and staff satisfaction and enhance health. Flooring materials range from non-toxic type of linoleum that emits omega-3 fatty acids into the air (the flooring actually promotes health!) to carpets and faux wood flooring that are comprised of recycled materials and do not require the use of harsh materials to maintain their appearance and product life. Details such as the twenty-year lease agreement and reuse and renovation of an existing building not only evince fiscal responsibility but also lessen the negative impacts of construction on the environment, namely the debris it creates for local landfills. The result is a clinic that looks and feels more like a place of hospitality such as a hotel rather than the common institutional sterility typical of a medical clinic and serves as a landmark of sustainability in our community.

**LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a holistic building approach, guided by evidence based research that focuses on more than energy efficiency. To earn LEED certification, 4 projects must accumulate a specific number of credits in five areas: sustainability, water efficiency, energy & atmosphere, materials & resources, and indoor environmental quality. Together, these credit areas guide construction and renovation projects that meet a 'triple bottom line' benefit: conserving environmental resources, improving the health of building occupants and the environment, and saving taxpayer money.*

***The Federal Government meets LEED Certification standards/criteria and does not pay the LEED Certification fees to carry the 'LEED Certification' of its buildings. The construction of the building and interior still meets the LEED standard; the difference is the cost savings the Federal Government achieves by not paying for the LEED plaque and actual certification of its buildings.*



LEED @ a Glance: How the Bend CBOC achieved LEED Gold Certification

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Design, planning, and construction done by an integrated team of engineers, designers, contractors, building owners, employees, and Veterans.

SITE SELECTION

Renovated existing building instead of constructing a new building.

Signed a 20 year lease.

Clinic is close to public transportation and local restaurants/services for staff and patients.

Bike parking provided for patients and staff. Shower rooms installed to encourage bike commuting.

Priority parking designated for fuel efficient vehicles/low emissions vehicles.

ENERGY SAVINGS

Interior lights are on occupancy sensors.

Exterior lights are on a timer.

Public spaces (e.g. waiting rooms) are day-lit.

Offices have large windows that can light the rooms with natural daylight.

MATERIALS

Reused ceiling tiles, lighting fixtures, elevator cabs/shafts.

Used low VOC paint.

Installed flooring made from natural and recycled materials that do not require harsh chemicals to clean.

Furniture meets Greenguard Certification standards and is made from recycled materials and is recyclable at the end of its life.

MICROFIBER MOPS



Portland VA Medical Center has begun using a new mopping technique involving microfiber materials. They have many environmental as well as infection control benefits. You may have noticed them on our new ward, 8D. Using microfiber mops helps eliminate chemical and water usage and are more absorbent than a standard cotton loop mop. The microfibers are positively charged which attract dust (negatively charged) to allow for cleaner surface. With a regular cotton loop mop, the bucket with chemical and water has to be changed often to reduce cross contamination between patient rooms. Microfiber mops reduce cross contamination by using a new microfiber pad for each room.

The microfiber mops are less work intensive than regular cotton loop mops so they can help eliminate work related strains and injuries.

The microfiber mops are more expensive initially due to change out of housekeeping carts and supplies, but hope to be a more affordable option in the long run. As wards are remodeled look for the microfiber mops to appear in your area!

Brian Litostansky, Housekeeping Work Leader, AFGE representative