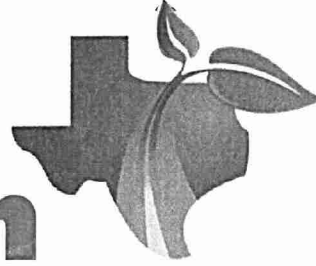


Paint the town green



Expo provides a slew of recycling opportunities

By Kim Nguyen
 Staff writer

While the economy is slowing, why not find shortcuts to save money?

The third annual Live Green Expo, scheduled to take place April 18 at the Plano Centre in Plano, offers attendees a plethora of tips and tricks to save money by going green.

"Living green and incorporating conservation into a family's lifestyle does not require much sacrifice," said Melinda Haggerty, Plano's sustainability communications coordinator. "And on the positive side, living green minimizes our affect on the Earth and more importantly, saves money."

Haggerty said living green begins with some very simple changes, such as recycling plastic containers and products, reusing plastic grocery bags or proactively maintaining the household to reduce wasteful outflow.

The highlight speaker of this year's expo is Ed Begley Jr., environmentalist and star of the hit HGTV show "Living with Ed," who will present a step-by-step approach to green living. Expo attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and share stories with the celebrity throughout the day, while a keynote presentation detailing his personal journey into a green lifestyle will headline the event.

An environmental activist long before celebrities started driving around in hybrids, Begley lives in a self-sufficient home powered by solar energy. He is a tireless leader in many ecological causes, from recycling to forest preservation.

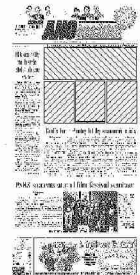
"It's wonderful to want solar and electric cars — I have both. But pick the low-hanging fruit first; don't get all 'I have to do everything today' or you'll drive yourself crazy trying to build a whole system the way I did," Begley said in a prepared statement. "Do the common-sense approach that makes good business sense today: compact fluorescent lamps (CFL), energy-saving thermostat and good insulation."

Attendees will also discover the benefits of shopping locally and purchasing organic at Food Alley.

Food Alley will feature cooking demonstrations with a variety of notables, including restaurateur, Kent Rathbun. Drawing on Southwestern, Mediterranean, American, Cajun/Creole and Pacific Rim influences, Rathbun's signature

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nature blend of flavors became the foundation of Abacus Restaurant in uptown Dallas. Abacus, Jasper's, Shinsei and Rathbun's Blue Plate Kitchen are four of the Dallas area's leading gastronomic sensations. While busy opening restaurants, Rathbun managed to become a national celebrity by winning the Food Network's "Iron Chef America" with his Atlanta-based chef-brother Kevin. The Rathbun boys beat Iron Chef Bobby Flay by



four points.

Healthy and creative tastings from local growers and manufacturers will tantalize taste buds, while local farmers will be on hand to answer questions about the benefits of organic food and how to shop for the best-tasting, most nutritious food.

"The farther the food travels, the more carbon emissions are released into the air by the truck used to transport the produce," Haggerty said. "Plus locally harvested foods are much fresher because they were harvested just a few days before being put on the market."

Attendees are also encouraged to bring plastic grocery bags to the Bag Exchange Booth at the Expo and exchange them for a new, re-usable bag.

In addition to the Bag Exchange Booth, the Green Bag lady will demonstrate how to make a shopping bag from reusable materials around the home. She will give a free handmade fabric shopping bag to attendees who commit to use it instead of paper or plastic. Each recipient's name, city, country and bag number will be recorded on her Web site, www.greenlady.blogspot.com, where the use of these bags worldwide is documented.

Other recycling collection services will operate from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in

the parking area located west of Plano Centre. Participants will need to use the Spring Creek Parkway entrance. Bring personal documents, limited to two file boxes, for free, secure on-site shredding.

New and gently worn athletic shoes in good condition will be collected to benefit area shelters, refugee services, hospitals and Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Dallas. New or worn clean clothing items will be accepted for distribution to Third World countries at affordable prices. Eyeglasses, frames and sunglasses will be collected by the Lions Club for worldwide distribution. Books collected at the event will support library programs. Recycled cell phones will be sorted, tested and dispersed of according to EPA guidelines. All electronics, including TVs and computers, will be accepted for recycling.

A nominal fee will be collected and payable to Erecycler for responsible destruction and recycling of materials

"It's imperative to everyone to reuse as much as possible to reduce wastes in our landfills," Haggerty said. "It's being thoughtful to our natural resources and to those who are less fortunate."

The expo is scheduled to take place on April 18 at Plano Centre, located at

2000 E. Spring Creek Parkway in Plano. Admission is free and the expo is a family-fun event.

The Live Green Expo is a fun, family event which provides North Texas families with the information and resources to make solid decisions and take responsible action to lead more healthy lives with less impact on our environment. The expo will feature more than 100 exhibitors, a kite fest, an art show, hybrid vehicle ride and drive, a one-stop drop off for recycling and shredding, plus a featured area which focuses on local and organic foods. Children's activities will be available throughout the day.

The city of Plano has partnered with the cities of Allen and Richardson to bring the Live Green Expo to North Texas. Another partner for the Expo is the DART light rail; attendees are encouraged to start the day with a green initiative by riding on a free shuttle from the Parker Road DART station.

Expo organizers are anticipating the expo to attract more than 15,000 environmentally-motivated residents from throughout the region.

Visit www.livegreenexpo.net for more information, directions or partnership and exhibitor opportunities.