

Future Looks Green

Conference to focus to energy, sustainable practices, recycling

By John Dayberry

A human resource group is going green with its annual leadership conference.

The 63-year old Piedmont Human Resource Association will present "Growing Green in the Piedmont" from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Park Inn Gateway Conference Center on U.S. 70, SW.

Open to the public, the event is designed to explore how an organization's sustainable practices, green energy and green technologies can benefit employees, boost revenue and increase economic development.

With energy prices, green technologies and the environment all hot topics, it seems appropriate to devote this year's leadership conference to green practices, said Crystal Glenn, vice president of the association.

In her role as director of industrial training at Catawba Valley Community College, Glenn knows how important green initiatives have become in the manufacturing sector; and said they are commanding attention at all types of businesses.

Guest speakers at Tuesday's conference will address such topics as managing energy cost, trends in green technologies and initiatives that are under way or planned in the Catawba Valley.

Speakers will be John E.P. Morrison, assistant secretary for energy in the North Carolina Department of Commerce; Barry Edwards, director of utilities and engineering for Catawba County; Scott Millar, president of the Catawba County Economic Development Corp.; and Erin Meezan, vice president of sustainability for Interface Inc., a Georgia based carpet manufacturer and a leader in environmental sustainability.

Each speaker's presentation will be followed by a brief question-and-answer session.

Glenn and David Hartsoe, Piedmont Human Resource Association's public relations officer; hope Edwards' presentation on Catawba County's EcoComplex will be an eye opener for many in attendance.

Located at the Blackburn Landfill off Rocky Ford Road in Newton, the EcoComplex is a public-private partnership designed as a center for green energy, and agricultural and environmental innovation.

Among operations at the EcoComplex is a gas-to-energy facility, which uses methane gas from the landfill to produce electricity.

"A lot of people don't realize what is in our own back yard," Glenn said.

"It could be very beneficial for people to hear about some of the cutting-edge things that are being done at the EcoComplex."

The award winning EcoComplex was featured on CNN's "Your Money" in August.

Glenn and Hartsoe said that going forward, green initiatives and energy will only gain in importance.

“Policies are being shaped now”, Glenn said.

“We think that bringing in these experts to address the issues is important.”

DETAILS

Event: “Growing Green in the Piedmont”

Purpose: To explore how sustainable practices, green energy and green technologies can benefit employees, boost revenue and increase economic development

Sponsor: Piedmont Human Resources Association

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 15, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Location: Park Inn Gateway Conference Center, 909 U.S. 70, SW, Hickory

Cost: \$30 per person, including breakfast

Web: www.piedmonthra.com