Activity Ideas for Business to

Celebrate Lake Michigan Day

Held annually on the second Friday of August

If you own or manage a business in the Lake Michigan basin, you can celebrate Lake Michigan Day in a variety of ways. Organize one or several of the following activities or programs to celebrate Lake Michigan Day in your business or community. Scroll down the list to find out how to do each activity.

The Lake Michigan Stakeholders look forward to a successful Lake Michigan Day this and every year, and hopes your business or community will join the celebrations taking place around the lake.

If you do any of these or other activities please let the Lake Michigan Stakeholders know about them so they can be included on the web site. This may help you network with others in your area and will show the whole basin what is being done to celebrate the lake. Send an email to janeharrison@aqua.wisc.edu.

What Can You Do to Celebrate Lake Michigan Day

1. If your business has a marquis sign, use it to promote Lake Michigan Day by posting: Celebrate Lake Michigan Day, August 14th, 2015.
2. If you are already placing a print ad for your business in a newspaper or magazine add a line about Lake Michigan Day and include the Lake Michigan Stakeholders’ web address for customers to get information (<http://www.lakemichiganstakeholders.org/>). Or, add information to your web site.
3. Purchase a special display ad to let customer know you care about the Lake and Lake Michigan Day.
4. Put a flyer about the day in each customer’s bag at cashier check out stations.
5. Talk to your chamber of commerce about sponsoring a community event with businesses. Bring a copy of the flyer to your chamber conference.
6. Donate prizes or gift certificates to community groups that sponsor Lake Michigan Day events.
7. Bookstores: Have a display of books and other items related to Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes. Offer discounts on these items for the week of Lake Michigan Day.
8. Lodging: Go to the nation Green Hotels Association for information about becoming more environmentally friendly in your motel, inn, bed and breakfast, etc.: <http://www.greenhotels.com/>.
9. Recreation/Gear Retail Stores: Offer discounts on outdoor gear and equipment. Put a display in your store of education materials or books from your local library about Lake Michigan.

**More Activity Ideas:**

Here are additional ideas that your business can do to celebrate Lake Michigan Day by reducing your impact on the air, land and water resources in the Lake Michigan basin. Keep in mind that what makes sense for one business may not be practical for another, so consider adding the steps that seem right for your business.

(List excerpted from the web site of Choose Environmental Excellence Gateway Region at <http://www.ceegr.org/>; then click on Simple Steps for Businesses for more information.)

**Company Policy**

* Make changes in your mission statement and company policy to include environmental impacts
* Create a planning committee that researches and implements environmental improvement.
* Publicize new environmental goals and policies within your company and encourage employee participation.
* Join the EPAs WasteWise program (<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/smm/wastewise/>) a national waste reduction project. Call (800) EPA-WISE for information.
* Increase recycling efforts by recycling materials that are currently discarded or by increasing the amount of currently recycled materials. Call your local recycling centers for more information.
* Review purchasing policies to eliminate any barriers to buying products with recycled content.
* Provide incentives for employees to carpool or use public transportation.
* When planning construction and remodeling, choose building design, materials and furnishings that are environmentally preferable (energy and water conserving, with recycled content, etc.)
* Offer a way for employees to contribute to environmental organizations through a payroll deduction.

**Buy Recycled – Buy Smart**

* Purchase office and shipping supplies with as high a post-consumer recycled content as possible.
* Order supplies in bulk to reduce packaging waste.
* Purchase products that are packaged in containers that can be recycled locally.
* Purchase recycled or rebuilt toner and printer cartridges.

**In the Office**

* Implement a paper-recycling program and encourage participation. Paper, envelopes, file folders, books, magazines, and cardboard can all be recycled. In most cases, the cost incurred will be offset by the decreased volume in your trash dumpster. Contact us for assistance in identifying a recycler.
* Learn what types of office paper are not recyclable in your area and limit use of those materials.
* Encourage the use of e-mail and voicemail communication to minimize printed copies of memos, etc.
* Circulate or post memos, documents periodical and reports instead of distributing individual copies.
* Proof and edit documents on the computer. Print drafts on scrap paper.
* Receive faxes directly by computer and print only the necessary pages.
* Make double-sided copies whenever possible.
* Reuse office supplies, such as file folders and manila envelopes, whenever possible.
* Use scrap paper for informal notes and phone messages.
* Use shredded newspaper as packing material.
* Keep your organizations mailing list current and eliminate duplicate mailings. Consider adding *Address Service Requested* to return addresses.
* Consider adding *or Current Resident* to mailing addresses for mass mailing of a general nature.
* Recycle inkjet and toner cartridges. Contact us for assistance in identifying a recycler.
* Reduce the amount of junk mail your company receives by visiting <http://www.newdream.org/> or writing to Mail Preference Service, Direct Marketing Association, and P.O. BOX 643, CARMEL NY 10512.

**Saving Energy**

* Call the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Energy Start Hotline at 1-888-START-YES for information on how to make your facility more energy efficient.
* Install reusable furnace and air conditioner filters and clean them monthly.
* Establish a regular maintenance routine to prolong the life of equipment.
* Install airlock entrances.
* Institute energy management programs at all facilities.
* Conduct an energy audit and prioritize recommendations.
* Purchase copiers and other equipment that feature an energy-saving mode.
* Put thermostats on timers to minimize air conditioning and heating during hours when the building is not occupied.
* Install energy-saving software on computers.
* Turn off lights in areas that are not in use.
* Install motion sensor to turn off lights in rooms that are not use frequently.
* Retrofit exit signs with fluorescent lights or replace with light-emitting diode technology.
* Service gas boilers and water heathers twice a year.
* Install heat recovery equipment on large air conditioning units to preheat water.
* Purchase hybrid-electric vehicles for company use.
* Maintain company vehicles to maximize fuel efficiency.

**In the Lunchroom**

* Use glass, china or dishwasher-safe plastic instead od disposable plates and cups.
* Use metal flatware instead of disposable plastic.
* Use linen or reusable plastic tablecloths instead of paper placemats.
* Serve sugar and creamer from containers instead of individual serving packets.
* Use pump dispensers or larger size containers for condiments instead of individual serving packets.
* Limit the use of straws and use bulk straw dispensers instead of individually wrapped straws.
* Serve milk from self-service machines instead of individual cartons.
* Use soda fountains instead of individual containers. Reduce the price of beverages for employees who supply their own reusable cups.
* Purchase reusable coffee filters.
* Donate surplus or past-pull-date food items to the food banks of shelters, if still edible.
* Compost fruit and vegetable food waste.
* Reuse ice for plant and landscape watering.

**Paper Products**

* Replace folded paper towels with roll dispensers (which usually cost less and reduce the volume of paper needed) or air dryers.
* Buy unbleached kitchen paper products with recycled content. Unbleached products reduce the amount of dioxin released into the environment.
* Use cloth hats and aprons instead of disposable paper.
* Use newspapers to drain cooking grease instead of paper towels.
* Use chalkboard or dry-erase board to post menu changes or daily specials.

**Equipment**

* Select a commercial conveyor-type dishwasher with an electric eye, so that water flows only when dishes are in the conveyor.
* Install manual pre-wash dishwashers. These units use between 0.8 and 2.5 gallons of water per minute, while automatic units typically use between 3 and 6 gallons per minute.
* Install open-door buzzers for walk-in refrigerators.
* Disconnect lights or remove bulbs in dessert and salad refrigerators. These lights create heat and are usually unnecessary.
* Install timers on hood fans, exhaust systems and hood lights.
* Use convection ovens instead of conventional ovens.
* Install grease traps in all waste traps.
* Clean grills and grease filters daily for greater heat transfer.
* Service all gas cooking equipment at least twice a year to maximize operating efficiency.
* Ensure that all refrigeration units are sealed properly in order to contain environmentally harmful coolants.

**In the Restroom,**

* Replace folded paper towels with roll dispensers or air dryers.
* Buy unbleached restroom paper products.
* Consider purchasing faucets with motion sensors and automatic shutoff.

**Cleaning Supplies and Other Chemicals**

* Purchase these items only in amounts needed. Properly dispose of unused quantities of solvents and other chemicals classified as hazardous waster. Contact us for assistance in disposing of these items.
* Replace chemical or chlorinated cleansers with citrus and water-based products.
* Use vinegar mixed with water as an everyday glass cleaner.
* Use water-basted (latex) paints whenever possible.

**Outdoors**

* Use solar timers for parking lot and walkway lighting.
* Install motion sensors to turn lights on/off when appropriate.
* Select landscaping plants that require minimal maintenance and attract bees and butterflies.
* Place sprinkler systems on a timer and monitor for leaks.
* Water lawns in the morning to avoid evaporation in the afternoon and disease from evening dampness.
* Instruct grounds maintenance personnel to adjust the cut height of their lawnmowers so that the grass is not cut too short.
* Instruct grounds maintenance personnel to leave grass clipping on the lawn to decrease the amount of water needed.
* Direct rainwater from downspouts onto plants.

**Reusing**

* Purchase remanufactured business furniture. Donate used furniture to charities or sell to used-equipment dealers.
* Rent equipment that is used infrequently.
* Donate surplus building materials to your regions Habitat for Humanity program. Go to Habitats website for more information: <http://www.habitat.org/>
* Reuse foam peanuts, bubble wrap and other packing material. Call the Peanut Hotline, (800) 828-2214, for a listing of businesses in your area that will accept foam peanuts for reuse.
* Return or reuse wooden pallets.
* Use re-refined motor oil in company vehicles.
* Use rechargeable batteries instead of disposables and recycle those batteries when their useful life is over.

**Related Topics Resources and Links**

**Economicology**

Peter M. Wege coined “Economicology,” in his new book, Economicology: The Eleventh Commandment. Economicology is the combination of economy and ecology; it is a fundamental basis for achieving sustainability.

<http://www.steelcase.com/en/Pages/Homepage.aspx> and type Economicology in the search engine.