

Eden aims to stimulate a greener Delaware

What is it going to take to get our state's economy moving toward a greener, leaner, more efficient and less wasteful future resulting in a more sustainable environment and more jobs?

Dr. Kim Furtado, a naturopathic physician, D.C. Kuhns, a veteran of the renewable energy industry, and Lori Lake, a business systems strategist – all local folks – believe the answer lies in converting environmental challenges into economic opportunities. For many years, Furtado has championed naturalistic solutions to personal health issues and has promoted associated initiatives through her Delmarva Community Wellnet foundation. Now she has joined forces with others to expand those initiatives into healthy economic stimulation by forming a community service program called Eden, an acronym that stands



» For more information about Eden and the Delmarva Community Wellnet, go to thewellnet.org.

meetings designed to bring people together who can identify green opportunities and start new businesses that will create sustainable jobs.

“Nature doesn’t create systems where waste is produced and not used by other parts of the system,” said Furtado. “That’s the way we think an ecologically minded economy should operate as well.

Kuhns pointed toward an example. “Dogfish Head has teamed up with Bella’s Cookies to use what’s left over from its hops and barley used in the brewing process to create a dog treat known as Dog Bark. They’ve already produced 500 bags of the product and more is in the works. It’s practically

for Energize Delaware Now.

By establishing a clearinghouse for entrepreneurs, business people and policy makers, the Eden initiative aims to “help the community solve some of Delaware’s resource problems while creating new permanent businesses, jobs and environmental awareness.” Starting with its 17th annual Holistic Fair, which will be held Saturday, April 24, at Cape Henlopen High School, the group will begin promoting green initiatives. It also plans to hold a series of town



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DR. KIM FURTADO, left, and D.C. Kuhns want their Eden project to create sustainable, eco-friendly jobs for Delawareans.

running off the shelves. That’s waste being recycled for reuse. That’s a business solution in harmony with the environment.”

Kuhns said the Bluewater Wind initiative, which resulted in a contract between Delmarva

Power and Bluewater Wind to support an offshore wind farm in the ocean off Delaware, sparked an interest in the state that has energized eco-friendly

Continued on page 8

Barefootin'

Continued from page 7

initiatives. "We're working with a group that will outfit a Sussex County chicken house with rooftop solar panels providing 98 percent of the house's electrical needs. In addition, we're working with another Sussex County enterprise to light the inside of the house with light-emitting diodes which are far more efficient than conventional light sources."

The Eden initiative wants to start with agricultural. Its members would like to bring a Pennsylvania enterprise model to Delaware's dairy industry. "A group there collects manure from dairy operations, paying farmers more for the manure than it is worth to them for their fields," said Kuhns. "The group creates a nutrient-rich gray water slurry and sells it to golf courses. They also have an anaerobic digester that converts manure into methane gas to power a turbine that creates electricity sold to the regional grid. They use the remaining solid residue as a compost component."

The group is also impressed by the new Millsboro municipal wastewater treatment facility built by Cabe Associates which has installed so-called purple pipes designed to make treated wastewater available for recycling. "They would like to make their treated wastewater available to NRG's Indian River power plant for their cooling towers as an alternate to using river water."

Eden hopes to help entrepreneurs tap into grants to help finance green solutions that create jobs including seeking funds available through the federal government's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. At this year's Holistic Fair, they will offer spaces to vendors showing off eco-friendly solutions and roll out some of their ideas for raising awareness and creating a consciousness that will encourage a healthier economic and environmental future.

"We want to be part of creating solutions instead of just fighting problems," said Kuhns. "It's unsustainable for the government to solve everything. This recession is offering a good opportunity to retool and we want to be part of it."