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Purdue grounds crews get ready for Green Week

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Today opens Green Week 2009 at Purdue University.

The events of the week are meant to get Purdue students and staff to focus on the university's sustainability efforts.

Gary Evans has been Purdue's grounds director for a year and a half and has played a part in this year's Green Week events. The grounds crew will be sponsoring multiple events for the week, including the announcement of a new recycling plan today.

Here, Evans talks about his part in the Green Week activities and why sustainability is important for the campus.

Question: What are your goals for the upcoming Green Week?

Answer: As part of the grounds department, we are preparing for three presentations. (Today), we will announce our new Purdue Recycles plan, which is the result of 15 months of research for ways to improve recycling in the Purdue community. For example, we will put recycling bins at staff members' desks so recycling is more convenient. We will also give a Monday afternoon presentation describing our participation in the Recyclemania competition in the spring of 2010. Friday, we will give a presentation to establish Purdue's campus as a registered arboretum.

Q: Who do you hope to reach through the Green Week activities?

A: Anyone interested in the messages of making our community environmentally aware -- students, faculty, staff and visitors. The students on this campus now are driving us to do more and more in the efforts of sustainability. We are striving to meet the demand and expectations of the students who are leading the way.

Q: How will this year's Green Week differ from previous years?

A: This year, the grounds crew will publicly announce a revolutionary approach to recycling. A lot more planning has gone into this year -- more than previous years.

Q: What steps do you take to be more green?

A: My role is to implement plans once they are approved and seek funding for the plans. I try to use any influence I have to promote recycling and bring forth any proposals that are needed.

Q: Why is being environmentally aware important to you?

A: It's not just about being a good steward of the university's resources, but it's about being a good steward of the earth's resources. It is important that future generations have the same access to our limited resources.

Q: What are the easiest steps toward sustainability?

A: Turning off the lights when you leave a room is one of the easiest things. Just reducing your consumption of goods, reusing items. Reduce, reuse and recycle. That's what it's really about. Also, walking, biking and using mass transportation help cut down the use of cars. If everybody does a little bit, it will make a big difference.

Additional Facts

Q and A with Gary Evans

Age: 44

Occupation: Director of grounds at Purdue University

Hometown: Lafayette

Education: Bachelor's degree from Indiana Wesleyan University; master's degree from Valparaiso University

Family: Wife, Darla; son, Shane, 23; daughter, Kiley, 19

Hobbies: Reading, traveling, walking and watching sports
