

Partners for Clean Water

Doing the right thing to protect the environment has rallied a number of businesses behind a program to reduce water pollution on the Eastside.

Sponsored by the City of Bellevue, the Business Partners for Clean Water program shows businesses how to minimize water pollution through storm drains, which empty directly into lakes and streams.

The businesses who submit written pollution prevention plans to the city are granted partnership and recognition to provide consumers with a guide when selecting services.

More than 400 Eastside businesses have attended the workshop presented by the city which outlines methods for protecting water quality. Currently, 55 have gained membership in the partnership. In June the program received a Municipal Achievement Award from the Association of Washington Cities and has served as a model for other cities.

Two of the participants provided some

insight to their philosophy as a business and how it relates to preventing pollution of the surrounding area.

"Our last resort for controlling pests is a chemical application," explained Kurt Treftz at Cascade Pest Control, one of the partners in the program. Cascade, he informed, emphasizes preventative measures to control pests first, such as reducing moisture buildup in areas where wood-destroying insects are present.

Furthermore, Treftz said, all Cascade employees are regularly trained in issues such as spill control planning and proper use and disposal of hazardous wastes. For instance, pesticides are transported in concentrated form and mixed on site to reduce chances of a large spill in transit.

Additionally, Cascade has reduced 71 percent of its wastes by recycling glass, plastic, aluminum and cardboard. Liquids such as antifreeze and oil are recycled and Cascade

uses vegetable-based inks as well as recycled paper on all printed materials.

It received a governor's award for its outstanding achievement in stemming pollution.

Europa Import Service is a small, independent auto shop but is doing what it can to protect the environment given its size. "We're just doing what we can," said Keith Jephcott, the owner. But Europa has been recognized by the state and the City of Bellevue as one of the best in terms of environmental compliance.

Even something as simple as washing floors can be a pollution problem for automotive businesses. If precautions aren't taken, solvents, oils and other fluids can easily contaminate surface waters. Therefore, Europa sweeps its floor to remove debris and spot cleans oil and other wet wastes if needed.

According to Jephcott, Europa is also conscious of the products it uses and these products affect the environment. It refilters

used antifreeze and sells it at lower prices to customers who agree to use it. Europa also refilters used antifreeze and sells it at lower prices to customers who agree to use it.

Europa has also switched its solvents to a more environmentally friendly brand which requires more elbow grease but minimizes pollution. Oil is recycled as well as other office products.

According to Julie Knott, coordinator of the program for the City of Bellevue, it is easy to underestimate the achievements of this two-man shop, but it's important to recognize their successes.

For more information on the program, either Knott or Nancy Hansen can be called at 637-5216 and 453-4895 respectively.

